

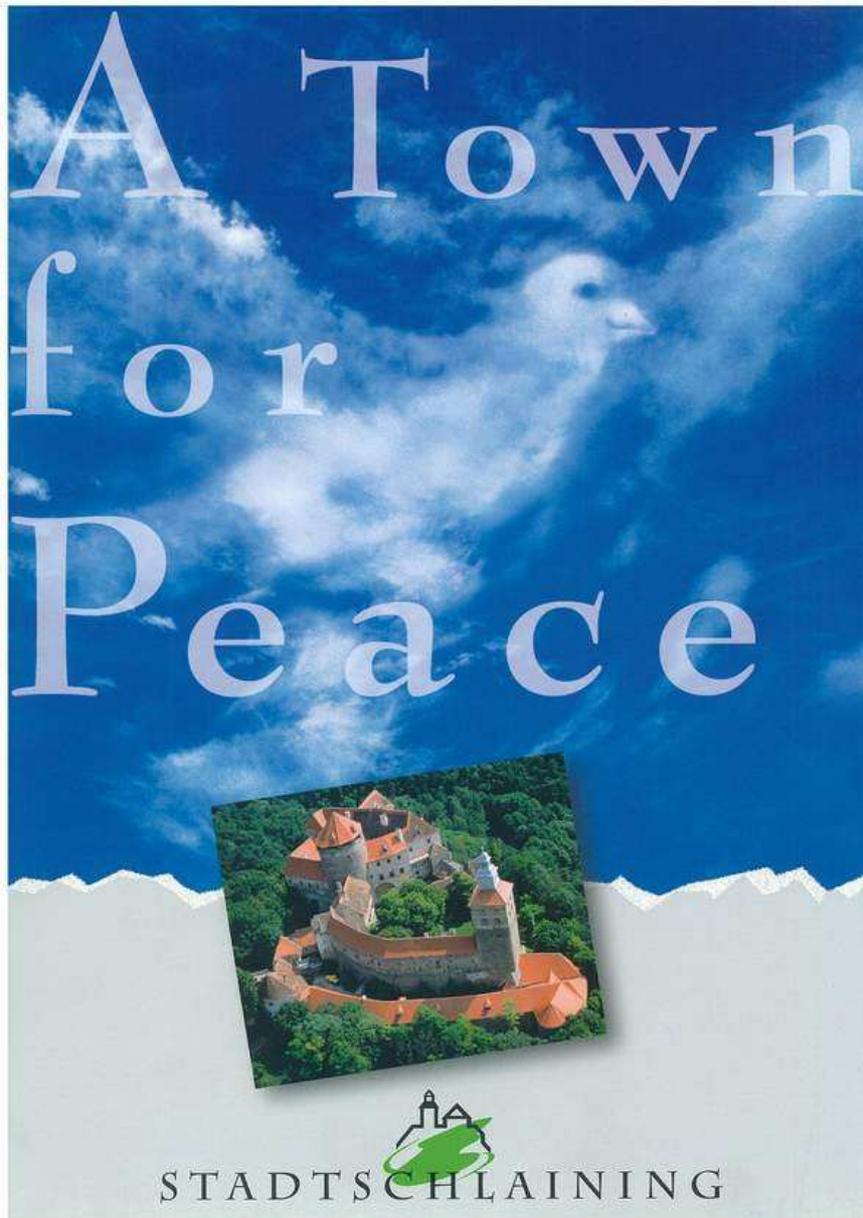


# EPU Research Papers

Issue 01/06

## TOWARDS A GLOBAL CULTURE OF PEACE

Research Project Co-ordinator: Ronald H. Tuschl



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## **Ronald H. Tuschl: Editor's Note**

The EPU (European University Center for Peace Studies) is an international, non-governmental organisation with UNESCO status, and is affiliated to the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), also located at Stadtschlaining. It was founded in 1988 by Gerald Mader in his capacity as president of the ASPR, with the support of European UNESCO commissions.

Primary Goals of the EPU are spreading the idea of peace in the spirit of the UNESCO; giving scientific and educational support to global peace; promoting a "world domestic policy" based on sustainable development, cooperative responsibility and ecological security; contributing to the development of a global peace culture; training and improving individual capabilities in peace-making and conflict resolution.

The first issue of the EPU Research Papers is the result of a research project which took place during the Fall Semester 2005 of the EPU. The authors of this first issue are describing and analyzing the transformation process of a global society, which is in transition to a global Culture of Peace.

Andrés Matos (Venezuela) analyzes the large group dialogue culture as a contribution to Peace and Conflict Studies and gives a proposal the European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU). Kathleen Godfrey (USA) describes the U.S. prison system as a structural cage for the perpetuation of direct violence and its psychological and moral underpinnings. Aron Pecnik (Croatia) elaborates the transformation process from Society to Civil Society and Adeleye Oyeniyie (Nigeria) points out the role of media in conflict and security within a global Culture of Peace.

Ronald H. Tuschl,  
Research Director and Editor

Stadtschlaining, February 2006

## **Andrés Matos: The Large Group Dialogue Culture as a contribution to Peace and Conflict Studies: A Proposal to the European University Center for Peace Studies**

### Introduction

A distinctive feature of humanity is its ability to talk, not in the sense or mere speaking, but to convey and share meaning through words. This is what dialogue is about, or least this is the meaning it will have in this paper. Its origin comes from the Greek word dialogos, 'dia' meaning 'through' (not two) and 'logos' meaning 'word', more specifically the 'meaning' of words. Negatively speaking dialogue is neither debate nor argument. Positively speaking dialogue means exploring together what are the meanings and relation behind words. It involves listening deeply without interrupting, trusting in order to express feelings and ideas sincerely regardless of how clear we are about them, and over time, an increased ability to both listen and express while being conscious of it. In more advanced stages dialogue implies the ability to suspend judgments, assumptions, and opinions, allowing collective observation, thinking and learning. Of course, all of the above is more easily said than done. It is a lengthy process that needs to be learned.

Furthermore, I am concerned with a particular 'social phenomenon': that of a relatively large number of individuals talking or dialoguing in a circle. Such a phenomenon has been somewhat observed by few psychiatrists and psychoanalysts in recent times. In their specific circles, the term 'group analysis' has existed for 30 years. Yet, it has been mainly concerned with small groups of up to 12 members, usually averaging 8, and it has been more or less limited to the family context or family therapy.

Nevertheless, 60.000 years ago, before the Neolithic revolution brought about settlement, farming and the family as the basic social unit, the large group-talk was an important human phenomenon. Back then 'hordes' of humans roamed the planet as hunter-gatherers and met in the evenings forming a circle around a fire for the purpose of sharing. In those times, humans shared some common meaning and, as it refined communicatively it became more and more exclusionist (i.e. women, foreigners, slaves, etc), reaching its apex with the Greek civilization that gave origin to democracy. Nowadays this ancient practice has been mostly lost and along with it the meaning of words and of talking. We remain oligarchic and exclusionist. As a species we seem to have lost our meaning. We are fragmented and divided by languages, ethnic, religious, class and political identities, that shape our lives beyond our human commonalities.

This paper is an attempt to show the relevance of talking and thinking together in an era of 'technical brilliance and cultural barbarity'. I will argue in favor of large group dialogue as a way of understanding within and across individuals and cultures. Indeed, there are people interested in such practices that have organized dialogue groups of different kinds around the globe. And there are appropriate settings for doing so. Aspiring an optimal equilibrium I will combine a specific approach within a specific setting. In other words, I am proposing, English psychiatrist Patrick de Mare's approach to large group dialogue, to be conducted in the multicultural setting of the European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU) in Austria, and see its results.

The students at the EPU come from several countries around the world (approximately 25). If an appropriate setting is arranged, they may have the potential to develop dialogue and their own new 'microculture'. This microculture, as it has been suggested, will enable them to distance themselves from their own cultures and become aware of their own socio-cultural assumptions and of how these assumptions block or stimulate dialogue and understanding.<sup>1</sup> As Lee Nichol explains in his foreword to David Bohm's book *On Dialogue*, "the theory of the microculture proposes that a sampling of a whole culture can exist in a group of 20 or more people, thereby charging it with multiple views and value systems" (p. xix)<sup>2</sup>. De Mare, formulated this theory in his work with groups of people of about 15 to 30 people, who sit in a circle to talk, eventually developing a sense of impersonal fellowship among themselves known by the Greeks as *Koinonia*<sup>3</sup>. Impersonal refers to gratitude towards a group of individuals with whom we share no family ties nor past experiences.

The terms, microculture, *Koinonia*, large group, dialogue, all refer to a particular phenomenon or situation. According to the point of view from where the discourse looks at the phenomenon, de Mare refers to it as

- a structure or large group, as
- a system or dialogue, as
- a cultural metastructure or microculture, as
- an impersonal fellowship or *koinonia*, or
- as a totalizing procedure.

In reality all are interrelated and overlap.

This paper can only offer glimpses of what the reality of large group dialogue is about as described by de Mare. In this attempt I have mainly draw from his writings, in particular his book, *Koinonia, from Hate, through Dialogue, to Culture in the Large Group*. I will start by describing the most distinctive features or

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<sup>1</sup> Distancing brings awareness. This can happen individually, through meditation or dialogue with one's self, or collectively through dialogue. My aim is to pinpoint the socio-cultural benefits of doing so collectively, within and through a large group of people.

<sup>2</sup> Following de Mare, I will refer to this feature as 'polylogical'.

<sup>3</sup> *Koinonia* refers not only to a 'feeling' of impersonal fellowship but also to the capacity to see the sameness in different views.

concepts of the large group as suggested by him. Second, I will describe more in-depth how I understand each of these features of the large group, which are structure (the large group itself), the process of dialogue, the content or topics, the microculture the large group eventually forms, and the possibility of totalization within the large group experience. Third, I suggest that the large group dialogue is a technique that can shed light in some still obscure but relevant areas of Peace and Conflict studies, such as group processes and group culture. In this section I will comment on how dialogue and group approaches have been incorporated within the field of conflict resolution and conflict transformation; their contributions and their shortcomings. Finally, aiming at a development in peace education, I recommend that the Median Group technique be applied in the specific setting of a Peace and Conflict educational program of the European University Center for Peace Studies in Schlaining, Austria.

## I. Distinctive features of the Median or Large Group according to Patrick de Mare

Structure or context: refers to the large group itself; approximately 20 members meeting weekly in a circle;

Process: refers to the dialogue that arises from placing the participants in the structure/context;

Content: refers to the subject matter, themes or topics;

Metastructure or microculture: “refers to the changing cultural patterns that ensue: the dialectic between individual and group, bringing about [micro] culture—the meaning of the structure [group] to the individual member at any one time” (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 24).

Totalization: it refers to the situational interaction of dialogue (system), large group (structure) and microculture (metastructure) to address ‘wholes’, such as society, culture, cosmos, truth, god, etc.

## II. Structure

De Mare uses the term structure when talking about the group because of his interest in the way of thinking known as structuralism, which involves concepts of deep and surface structure. As an example he mentions Levy Strauss’ ‘surface socialization’ as based upon a deep underlying bar on incest (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 25). However he also refers to the structure as the ‘context’ of the group.

The context or structure in which De Mare’s experiments and propositions have been formulated is a *large* group of people, by this he understands 20 to 40 persons seated in a circle and talking. He has also coined the term *Median*

*Group*, which refers to a somehow smaller unit made of 15 to 20 persons. The Median Group is what De Mare considers the necessary step in order to 'mediate' or humanize the forgotten social space that lies between family (8 to 12 members) and society (millions). However, in this paper the terms Median and Large Group are used interchangeably since they both refer to that space beyond family yet before society; and beyond slight numerical differences their main features remain the same.

The participants are to organize themselves in circular shape, and this aspect is indeed crucial for the author. Relating the importance of the structure in influencing the process or system of dialogue, he quotes James Stevens Curl, a writer and town planning consultant who has studied the seating structure of governing bodies throughout history and the world: "As far as we know only the semicircle has been used in governing bodies rather than the full circle; dialogue is therefore unlikely to occur other than dispute. Dialogue is made impossible by the very nature of architectural arrangements which create and harangue captive audiences" (De Mare et al, 1991, p.174). And in De Mare's own view, when conducting a medium-sized group he suggests a circular plan without a podium or pedestal as "the structure that favors the group-centered, as distinct from the leader-centered approach" (p 175). Here he offers the first hint of what would be a long and deep illustration of how structure (circular arrangement) affects system (in our case, dialogue) and vice versa.

It is indeed remarkable how our modern political, economical, educational and even family structures have organized themselves around square and rectangular forms, which places participants facing each other naturally encouraging linear logic, argumentation, confrontation and the dyad leader-led. On the contrary the circular structure, with participants facing one another, does not focus on any particular side of the structure or on any single individual, as in a square, rectangle or triangle. His proposal of *necessarily* organizing in a circle, can be considered indeed as promoting or facilitating in itself, horizontality, democracy, diluting leadership, and encouraging individual participation and responsibility.

As a psychoanalyst de Mare unveils one of the main possibilities of the large group: "Whilst psychoanalysis explores the individual, and small groups examine the family, only larger group settings can feasibly explore the social and cultural contexts in which we all reside usually as helpless onlookers." (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 8). However helplessness, which he also calls frustration, will occur in the group. This is primarily related to size: the large group resembles society or macroculture in the sense that it is big, unmanageable (at the beginning), has no single leader; it is 'mindless' or chaotic, and impersonal. Nevertheless the group will distance itself from society in the sense that individuals talk randomly and equally. The process of the group challenges habits and individual/cultural assumptions about leadership, hierarchies, obtaining results, setting and achieving goals/tasks, etc. It constitutes a totally new learning situation for its

members. Thus, he concludes that a distinctive feature of the large group is the generation of frustration. ( De Mare et al, 1991, p.26).

## II. Process or Dialogue

### Frustration and hate

Frustration is instinctual, a biological reflex towards the unknown, the unexpected, the endless possibilities that can arise in such a large group. At the same time "...frustration is the origin of psychic energy". This psychic energy, de Mare coined *hate*. However strange the term may seem to us today, he makes no apologies in using the word hate, a word that in ancient Greek meant *grief*. Frustration occurs in the physical body while hate occurs in the psyche, thus it constitutes an anti-instinct (p 29).<sup>4</sup> "Hate is a form of psychic energy that is neither creative nor destructive per se, not to be subdued or denied, but to be affirmed, cultivated and transformed" (de Mare et al. 1991. p ). By associating frustration with biology and hate with psyche, de Mare links hate to the formation of symbols: symbolization, thinking and culture. Since the large group dialogue experience is more frustrating than gratifying, it is harder to establish and maintain. The emphasis is upon the socio-cultural, not on psychotherapy." (p. 16)

### Dialogue and Meaning

If the group is the structure that generates hate, dialogue is the system to cope with it and transform it. As we have seen, the circular structure promotes the dialogue system, but it is not enough in itself. The group has to work its way learning how to dialogue, eventually arriving at self-regulation, a distinctive quality of all systems as stated by systems thinking. Sufficient time is crucial, and de Mare mentions groups meeting weekly from two to ten years! in order to learn how to talk freely, to transform hate.

In this sense dialogue is therapeutic, bringing coherence between thought and speech. As an example, using psychoanalytic terms: "Large groups provoke phobic responses and since panic is indigenous to crowd situations, it is not surprising to discover that people sometimes take the opportunity to talk their way out of panic. To do this raises the threshold of panic, enabling members to undertake major changes in their external lives" (de Mare et al. 1991.p 89).<sup>5</sup> In other words, we may be able to find clarity in our thoughts while talking to the

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<sup>4</sup> For Freud two main processes ruled the human mind. The primary process is made of pulsations that spring from the unconscious and lead humans towards pleasure and its satisfaction. He coined this process 'the pleasure principle'; thus gratification is biological and unconscious. The secondary process takes place in the conscious mind, and it consists in the delay or repression of pleasure in order to comply with social demands such as work, family, reputation, etc. For de Mare, the 'reality principle', being psychic, and thus socio cultural, constitutes an anti-instinct; the opposite to nature.

<sup>5</sup> In psychoanalysis a phobia is an acute fear that generates anxiety, and panic is group or crowd phobia.

group; we may find meaning to our words and thoughts, and to those of others and, most importantly, see their relations.

Dialogue is not to be confused with dialectics, discourse, rhetoric, code, message, debate, discussion, argument, free association and inter-subjectivity. Quoting Plato, de Mare refers to dialogue as the 'supreme skill', the first act of science, since it was from natural language that formal language (mathematic, symbolic logic) emerged. (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 65). It involves individuals talking as equals.

As I mentioned, the process takes time and commitment in order to evolve from mindlessness into dialogue. "In the initial stages of dialogue the group continues to operate through subcultures (small groups within the large unit) and socio-cultural assumptions that reflect chaos and mindlessness". In an attempt to deal with frustration, individuals tend to project into the group memories resulting from previous group experiences, either family experiences or contextual traumas and mass impersonal forces (war, oppression, job loss, moving country, culture shocks, etc)" (De Mare et al, 1991. p.18). These projections of previous group experiences into the new group, he calls *transposition*. When memory is 'bad', its projection may generate a phobia (anxiety) in the individual, who may run away from the group. Group anxiety he refers to as panic and individuals may repack in small groups or subcultures that resemble their families to avoid it. For de Mare this "represents a flight away from the attempt to develop conscious lateralized thinking [dialogue] back into the mindless dyad of leader and led, which represents a return to a binary relationship between two parties."(p.19). In as much as individuals treat the group as a family or repack into subgroups dialogue cannot move forward; the hierarchies and taboos that rule family life will dominate it. Finally, individuals can choose to stay and learn how to interact, how to transform the initial chaos of mindlessness and hate into a new culture of the large group. To this new culture de Mare attributes a very distinctive quality: that of *Koinonia*, impersonal fellowship, companionship. I will refer to this feature in more detail later.

The problem then is how to move from the familio-centric subculture to the sociocentric impersonal microculture of the whole group while finding *meaning* in it; in other words how to sustain transformation of hate appropriately. The convenor or facilitator plays a key role in the transformation.

His or her roles include: giving support to the role of the individual at an ego level; encouraging freedom of dialogue; attempting to recognize and uncover the quality of the ongoing subcultures and microcultures in the Median group (family oedipal or sibling culture, court of justice, a forum, a primal horde) "since they often constitute an impediment to dialogue"(De Mare et al, 1991, p.35)

### III. Content

No content or topic is excluded. However, size unavoidably brings cultural context to the foreground, thus "...the problem is not to find what is culturally unshareable but to discover which cultures treat which matters as unsuitable for sharing... in order to explore and broaden the facilities for shareability." (De Mare et al. 1991, p. 78). In individual psychoanalysis text (what is being communicated) happens as free association; and in small group analysis takes the form of group association; in large groups it becomes dialogue...encouraged by permissiveness and acceptance. Dialogue and socio-cultural content constitute a third dimension that links and transcends the logical antinomies of individual and society (De Mare, 2001). A triad comes into play in the form of a free-floating, multipersonal, multicultural, conversation. "Being multipersonal it does not follow the course of syllogistic logic. Dialogue uses language and transforms it. Large group dialogue can, given the opportunity [to form a new micro-culture], do the same with culture." (de Mare et al. 1991. p 47).

In large group dialogue, macrocultural topics can be treated in their full right, including issues of class, race, gender, politics, economics, philosophy, illness, death, religion and art. These topics and their cultural contexts have been traditionally dismissed by individual psychoanalysis as 'intellectual defenses' or excuses against the unconscious biological pulsations. Indeed, Freud stated that there were no conversations in dreams (the unconscious), and thus the individual was not capable of exploring it, needing a psychoanalyst to do so. De Mare, on the other hand sees dialogue over these topics, as precisely a way of exploring the group unconscious (our cultural background) and make it conscious. If for Freud, dreams were the royal road to the individual unconscious, for de Mare large group dialogue is the royal road to our socio-cultural, group unconscious. In this way dialogue "not only responds to the pleasure and reality principles, but is concerned in establishing a third principle as we learn to understand ourselves in terms of community and not merely organisms. The third principle is that of meaning"(de Mare, 1991, p.20).

### IV. Metastructure or microculture

Above, I have mentioned that according to de Mare, psychoanalysis treats the individual mind, while large group dialogue involves the equivalent of the group mind in the form of culture. In its turn, culture represents the collective unconscious, and is therefore at the interface between individuals and social context. It is the outcome of the dialectic between them.

We could say that culture originates and springs from individuals reacting against society. However, inevitably "... changes in culture are restructured in a dialectical spiral; what was once a cultural phenomenon becomes institutionalized, frozen, established in society and therefore social." (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 138). Once this reaction is assimilated and solidifies in rules, laws,

taboos, etc, it becomes social. Thus in no way culture and society can be used as synonyms. The former is reactive, mobile, systemic, while the latter is rigid, structural and institutionalized. He continues to say that “ the larger group can therefore serve as a situation for exploring and discovering its own projected sub, and microcultures –it is ‘anthropology in the making’.”(p 32). The sustained exploration, through dialogue, will eventually give rise to a microculture; a view point different from both individual, familiar and social, and from where to look at them... and to itself! This raising of socio-cultural awareness can be called citizenship.

Dialogue and the microculture that arises from it *distances* individuals from their respective original subcultures (the family) and macrocultures (nation, state, ethnic). Through distance, *outsight* (as opposed to insight) is possible, that is the suspension, observation and understanding of socio-cultural assumptions, with the distinction that the individuals can actually address the microculture and be answered by it. “It offers the possibility to humanize both individual and society concurrently” (p.21) as opposed to socializing the individual. In this way, the microculture acts totally different from society, being permissive, reflective, self-critical, evolving.

### Koinonia

Koinonia is a Greek word meaning communion, fellowship and intercourse. It is a distinctive feature of the microculture. According to de Mare, “ fellowship marks a transitional state between kinship (family) and lawship (society)” and refers to the humanization of the unexplored space of the larger groups. Although a Greek word, De Mare traces back the practice of large group dialogue and Koinonia, 60000 years, to the times when groups of hunter-gatherers used to talk in circles of up to 30 people. They are considered the originators of the free-floating discussion, and for a long time managed to keep a relatively peaceful co-existence.<sup>6</sup>

For over 60 years, De Mare has attempted to reclaim that ancient method in order to explore an abandoned area of social context, beyond one-on-one and small group oligarchic situations. Bureaucratic offices, for example, “...cannot by the very nature of their structure view themselves extrinsically and culturally in relation to the whole...[and] if left alone to itself emerge as a mindless manner.” Indeed those offices dominate the world today. He speaks of how larger group dialogue and its microculture constitute an example of a feasible *polygarchic* situation, (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 90) and concludes: “ the only true way of coping with redundant institutionalization, hierarchy, bureaucracy...lies in pitting large group against large group, microculture against established macroculture” (De Mare et al, 1991, p 99). He calls for a mobilization of the frozen

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<sup>6</sup> In this regard, William Ury in his book *The Third Side*, attempts to prove that for millions of years, humans, as groups of hunter-gatherers roamed earthed without resorting to organized violence such as war.

institutionalized structures of bureaucracy, unable per se to mobilize themselves, by a system that will enable their reflection against that of the society (macroculture) which they supposedly serve; Koinonic dialogue is such a system. Koinia refers not only to a “feeling” of impersonal fellowship but also to “the capacity to see the ‘sameness’ in diverse views”.<sup>7</sup> Both feeling and ability arise simultaneously as people learn how to dialogue and microcultures are built.

However, it seems evident that ruling oligarchies of all kinds have made us lose a collective sense of sanity. “To-date, we have, as species lost the ability to apply any remotely effective technique, any modus operandi, with which to address cultural issues in the sense that culture implies group mind. Having established psycho and group therapy, it remains for us to apply socio-therapy not simply as an academic theory, but as a tool, as an operational technique to save the world, why be ashamed of good intentions?” (De Mare, 2001, p 4).

## V. Totalization

Therapy is both reductive and totalizing. Is reductive in psychoanalysis’ scientific logic of cause and effect; is totalizing by “expanding and focusing on the vast context of the social and universal [as in dialogue]. But this totalizing procedure has first to address the global socio-cultural context within which the Median Group is ensconced, and whose microcultural power needs to be established.” (De Mare, 2001, p. 5). De Mare quotes Plato when defining dialogue as “the supreme art” and written expression as the “language of the dead”. Accordingly, the Median or Large Group is “the supreme agent”, linking the familio-tribal with the socio-cultural; the forgotten median space, where many answers may rest unexplored.

Totalization refers to the thinking process of the mind observing the linear (logical) and the total (contemplative), and their relationship. The mind “registers meaning and focus in the final resort on the truth.” It participates in dialogue, thereby creating microcultures, which constitute an alternative to pathological macrocultures that shatter individual intelligence. “The microculture is no longer an extension of the macroculture but a dualistic reflection” (De Mare, 2001, p.7). It is a reflection that humanizes it. “The first step towards mind is a duality of two people, of two brains, the area between brains” (idem). If we by listening and observing, integrate the other’s views, our thinking changes, our behavior too, and contradictions can be approached afresh again and again.

## VI. The Large Group Culture as a contribution to Peace and Conflict Studies

The large group dialogue approach has a potential from which peace and conflict studies could benefit, in particular the fields of peace education and conflict transformation. As we have seen, such technique can help us understand how social phenomena operate in individual minds and how it is carried into the

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<sup>7</sup> Blake, Anthony, 1998, Structural Communication. [www.Duversity.org](http://www.Duversity.org), p. 7

group. It helps us address collectively and directly socio-cultural issues that are usually dealt through institutions or avoided out of helplessness. In this section I will point out how notions like dialogue and group dynamics have been either ignored or utilized in peace and conflict studies. Later on I will explain two methods of conflict resolution and conflict transformation that have combined both notions in innovative ways.

Psychoanalytic and psychiatric circles have been unwilling to embrace de Mare's method due to their 'natural' resistance of a critique of their own culture: "Attempts to explore this context [of the large group] are treated as 'unrealistic'." (de Mare et al, 1991, p xviii). According to de Mare, another important aspect for this attitude goes back to Freud's perception that a large group functions as a large family or tribal horde. Thus the small group is the proper unit for studying group psychology. Nevertheless, the large group differs structurally (size) and systematically (dialogically) from the family or tribe. Its features are more closely linked with the 'unconscious' mind, thus with our linguistic, socio-cultural, group heritage. We as individuals are not necessarily 'conscious' of our linguistic deep structures, or of our deep cultural assumptions and how they affect our attitudes and behavior. Similarly, to understand more about group culture or group mind, then the large group must be the unit of observation and analysis. Again it must be distinguished between small and large group since their inclinations towards debate or dialogue are largely influenced, though not only, by size itself. Of course it would be false to affirm that only large groups can dialogue. Individual dialogue is known as meditation, pair dialogue as duologue and so on. What the large group offers is the possibility of exploring collectively while at the same time reflecting society's chaotic mindless and insensitive way.

It has been mentioned above in different ways that the large group is an experiential learning tool or approach, in which participants partake in the creation of a new culture (micro) or platform for cultural 'outsights' on their own sub and macro cultures. In this regard, the large group dialogue is a very different approach of those traditionally embraced by peace and conflict studies. Indeed, group phenomenon is the subject of group psychology. Peace and conflict studies have focus mainly on war as a group phenomenon and have paid little attention to experiential group processes: the interface between peace and violence where social issues and conflicts unfold.

## Two notions of Group and Dialogue in Peace and Conflict Studies

Barash and Webel (2002) in their book *Peace and Conflict Studies*, analyze the group level when they comment on the reasons for war and the prevention of war outbreaks as well. The latter occurs through "the socialization [of the individual] toward the peaceful settling of conflicts and the disapproval of the use of violence or force." (p. 154)<sup>8</sup>. Paradoxically socialization can also result in de-individuation

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<sup>8</sup> Group behavior can work in the opposite direction of socialization, by de-individuation. for psychoanalysis aggression is instinctual and needs to be controlled. Socialization is the process

and group violence.<sup>9</sup> The authors refer to 3 major components of the process of de-individuating that leads to group violence as: the effect of validation by one's peers; diminished individual profile; and contagious or imitative behavior. The large group context can be altogether different. On the one hand size and heterogeneity regulate validation by peers through difference of views and values. Contagious or imitative behavior is prevented when the facilitator points at the formation of leader-led dyads in the group. At the same time, the large group works against de-individuation promoting the individual in its full right, helping her think (to structure) and to find meaning through the group. Finally the large group dynamic operates in the opposite direction to that of society: not by socializing the individual, but by humanizing the social, by creating a 'Koinonic microculture'.

The authors also comment on the costs of forming and living in groups (p.155). One of which is the loss of inhibition than can result from immersion in a crowd. In such cases mob psychology, or in de Mare's words panic, take over. In this respect, the large group can be a container and transformer of such reactions, acting differently than a crowd, which lacks form or structure. At the same time the large group can be oppressive to an individual who has an earlier trauma from a group experience. The task here would be to overcome inhibition and over time renegotiate such earlier contextual trauma, say, from war, mob violence, leaving home and becoming a minority abroad, passing from a single to a marital state, and other traumatic experiences. In this sense the large group and dialogue act therapeutically. It is remarkable that the book, considered an introductory work into peace and conflict studies, does not include in its table of contents or in its index a single mention of the word dialogue.

Another example is the book *Peace and Conflict Studies* by Ho-Won Jeong. Neither the table of contents, nor the index, mention the word dialogue. Peace as a social phenomenon is mostly understood as 'peace movements' that originate from particular goals to be achieved, or through failed institutions that need reform. Although groups and networks are recognized as means to fulfill needs and values, no original proposals are included on how to become aware and act collectively on cultural malaises. The large group dialogue indeed can fulfill the role of not only informing and 'raising consciousness about the causes of [cultural] violence and oppression' (p. 372), but also addressing through peace education programs and disciplines related to peace-building, like conflict resolution and conflict transformation. In the next section I will examine two different approaches in order to compare de Mare's concepts with the current

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of teaching the individual what and how to control. For de Mare aggression is anti-instinctual, being the result of untransformed hate. Hate is the energy, the instinct. When left untransformed in the family, in institutions, leads to a lack of meaning and chaos and thus to aggression. Transformation occurs through re-structuring, dialoging. The large group is a proper structure for transformation.

theories and practice of dialogue and group dynamics and point out possible contributions and limitations.

## Interactive Problem Solving Workshops or Interactive Conflict Resolution

### Structure

Harvard psychologist Herbert Kelman has held problem-solving workshops on the Israeli-Palestinian and Turkish-Greek Cypriots conflicts for over 20 years. Working in both small and median group models, the first and second parties (Israelis and Palestinians) number 3 to 8, while the third party (social researchers and conflict resolution practitioners) can number over twenty ( Pomerance-Steiner in de Mare et al, 1991, p. xix). Participants seat in a round table and usually spend two and a half days, holding approximately 10 formal meetings and informal social gatherings, all of which are considered part of a single Interactive Problem Solving Workshop.<sup>10</sup>

Over time the convenors realized the need for continuity of the workshop in order to guarantee its benefits. Since 1994 the model has been expanded to what Kelman calls a Joint Working Group on Israeli-Palestinian Relations. Up to 2002 the group held a total of 15 plenary meetings and produce a series of concept papers on final-status issues regarding the negotiations.

In this model, participants are carefully chosen according to whether they are politically active and influential or potentially influential. They include parliamentarians, party leaders, journalists, writers, academics, diplomats, etc. Because emphasis is given to 'moderates' that will be willing to negotiate direct foreign policy planners are excluded. This structure is a part of the strategy of the method and the top-down goal it pursues, which is to transform key individuals who in turn will influence the policies associated with the conflict.

### Process and content

The third party proposes a 'loose agenda' depending on the stage of the conflict and the character of the group, and guides the process of direct interaction. "Although the distinguishing feature of the approach is direct communication between the parties, the objective is not to promote communication or dialogue as an end itself. Problem solving workshops are designed to promote a special type of communication with a very specific political purpose" (Kelman, 2002, p.82). Communication takes place under rules (privacy and confidentiality) and procedures following direct addressing to each other, analysis over emotions,

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<sup>10</sup> For a complete description of the method see Kelman, Herbert, (2002), "Interactive Problem Solving as a Tool for Second Track Diplomacy". In *Second Track/Citizen's Diplomacy*, edited by John Davies and Edward Kaufman, pp 81-105, Lanham, USA, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

adherence to the 'no fault' principle and the problem-solving mode. At the same time it aspires an exploration of concerns, the penetration of perspectives and the recognition of constraints of each other, in order to arrive at mutual reassurances and win-win solutions. (p.98)

Kelman, like de Mare, points at some therapeutic features of his work. Namely, the facilitative role of the third party, the analytical character of the discourse (for de Mare not only analytical but polylogical), and the use of 'here and now' experiences as a basis for learning about the dynamics of the conflict (for de Mare, oversight). Kelman stresses the latter as the focus of the interaction, which is to be differentiated from individual and inter-personal relations, which are not. However, de Mare's experience shows that precisely to overcome focusing too much in personal relations, *size* plays a key role: the larger the group the more impersonal, the more impersonal the more appropriately can socio-cultural, political and economical issues, be dealt with.

According to Kelman, the workshops contributed to the opening for the Oslo Accords. Nevertheless it is now known how those accords, not supported by the excluded parties and unknown by the population, eventually failed. This leads me to wonder whether smaller oligarchic groups can bring sustainable solutions to identity-based protracted conflicts that involve multiple actors and millions of individuals.

## The TRANSCEND method of conflict transformation

### Structure

Johan Galtung and the TRANSCEND method for conflict transformation expressly emphasizes the need and relevance of dialogue for peace work. His latest book "Transcend and Transform, an introduction to conflict work", gives a good description of Galtung's understanding of dialogue. As a structure he emphasizes the preeminence of the circle or semicircle over other shapes, even a round table for high-level political negotiations is better than a square one, because the circle " has the advantage that there is no position in the middle or at the end; everybody is equal"(p.171). Numbers will vary according to the number of the parties involved in the conflict and to their readiness to negotiate at the table.

### Process and content

Since his view of dialogue relates to conflict transformation, it is goal oriented, that is to transcend conflict finding a new overarching goal. It can involve any number of participants representing countries, nations, etc, usually from high-level politics where large group dialogue rarely takes place. As an example of dealing creatively with high-level politicians with group dynamics he proposes a mixture of a university seminar and a negotiation group. First holding dialogues,

non-violently, empathically and creatively on pairs, then changing partners, finally pulling together all brainstorming in a circle: “the many small creeks becoming a river” (p.177).

He goes on, “The big question is whether participants in negotiations at a high level are willing, and if willing are able, to do anything like this”. Can they move, not individually which probably could, but as a group, from debate to dialogue, from antagonism to cooperation, from the exclamation to the question mark? Galtung concludes that dialogues with the ministries that give instructions to their representatives are needed. But, dialogues among whom? Within ministries? De Mare argues (and I think Galtung seems to agree) that dialogue needs to be learned. Then it seems to me that education and practice of dialogue especially large group dialogue are needed at all levels of society. In particular rigid, hierarchical structures that educate our representatives need to incorporate such practices in order to become genuinely democratic. Again the large group offers a structure within a structure, a space for such changes to take place. So far it seems that attitudes need to be loosen internally, within organizations and movements, to enable cooperation with others.

#### Some concluding remarks on Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation

Both Kelman and Galtung have adapted dialogue and group dynamics to their own conflict handling approaches. Both emphasize facilitation, time and circular structures as key elements. Size however has remained a problem, due partly to the high-level political character of the participants, their attitudes, lack of time, and lack of experience in large groups. Also due to the fact that large group dialogue is not a part of modern culture, oligarchy and debate are. We need to learn dialogue, and de Mare offers us a psychoanalytic oriented version of such ancient practice. All in all, Interactive Conflict Resolution and Transcend Dialogues are proof of the perception of the need for such group dialogues, and also proof of efforts on how to expand and talk with the oligarchic structures that dominate our political, economic and cultural life today.

Indeed the large group approach can shed light on how dialogue, deep structures, and deep cultures operate within a group; Johan Galtung formulated such notions as the cornerstones for understanding conflicts, violence and peace. The Median Group can indeed be seen as a contribution for positive peace if we look at it as a peace structure. It works horizontally, among equals, not vertically, thus challenging hierarchy. It is polygarchic as opposed to oligarchic, calling for different views and their recognition, inclusion rather than exclusion

Systemically, it encourages dialogue, not monologue, debate or discussion while still providing room for them. In the beginning stages, for any participant it may seem as an oppressive structure and may create anxiety and panic. The role the facilitator is of crucial relevance at such moments, by pointing to the capacity of

the individual to recognize, trust, express, listen and understand his views. The large group also provides a time and a space that is polylogical, democratic and creative, the space of the microculture which renders deep cultural assumptions visible in the light of the group. Thus attitudes, behavior and contradictions of both individual and group are affected by individual insights and cultural insights. The large group 'smooths' the way to look at contradictions, otherwise avoided in smaller, oligarchic, homogenous discussion forums, or too easily turned into debate.

In its advanced stages, when exchange becomes more open among participants and meaning is shared, the large group can act as a tool for conflict transformation, because it can contain frustration and untransformed hate that give rise to aggression, and transform it successfully. For de Mare the successful transformation of hate (through dialogue) has a therapeutic effect over individual anxieties and collective panic; by raising the levels of individual and collective awareness and thinking it promotes mental health and transcends violence.

In addition the large group can be seen as a contribution to peace culture, because the resulting metastructures or microcultures serve as a platform from where to look and reformulate the participants' macroculture/s (society) and their own subculture/s (family). Finally, the Median group can host constant reconciliation processes as participants "learn to apologize and to accept apologies, to ask for forgiveness and to forgive, to heal and to close conflicts." (Galtung 2000, p. xvii)

Since the large group is not a structure for conflict transformation, nor dialogue a system for doing so, the question of addressing the contradiction of a given conflict remains. However, sustained large groups dialogue could 'smooth' and speed the way for socio-cultural fault lines to emerge into the group and be addressed collectively, as distinct as oligarchically or representatively; an experience that offers something very different from the feelings of helplessness individuals often feel towards the larger society. Moreover several views can lead to more creativity and different understandings of the positions and interests behind the contradiction, than those of traditionally dualistic right-wrong views accepted as irreconcilable.<sup>11</sup> If two brains give rise to mind, imagine what can forty do: a conscious group mind. As we have seen, time, trust and commitment are also key factors in this dialogue equation.

If we humans would manage to host dialogues among individuals within cultures and from different cultures around the world, and if these individuals do undergo transformation, becoming conscious of their own cultural malaise, will they simply continue to follow and support greedy leaders and their armies? Will they continue to abuse women? Will they take part silently of their own macro-cultural

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<sup>11</sup> In this regard see in 'Dialogue and the art of thinking together' the examples given by William Isaacs on how dialogue has helped overcome contradictions in businesses.

penetration? The process of becoming conscious is slow and only dialogue will make it sustainable, not revolution.

It is true that while people talk, others are starving. It is also true that revolutions starved dissidents. We must find a way thus, to talk and revolt without starving and killing each other. Here we have seen one man's proposal full of potential for doing so. We have seen that it is likely to contribute to a field in need of deepening its understanding of mind, communication, dialogue and culture in order to formulate proposals that foster peace and treat conflict appropriately. Certain tendencies in conflict transformation and conflict resolution have pointed in the right socio-cultural direction. However, having dealt with top-level political oligarchies, they still face the challenge of expansion. De Mare reminds of the need of pitting large group (microculture) against large group (macroculture) to overcome bureaucratic mindlessness. Will oligarchies accept this?

Another important aspect relates the training that peace and conflict workers, peace educators, mediators and facilitators of conflict resolution and transformation must undergo in order to appropriately handle large groups to learn to talk, listen and think collectively. Since this phenomenon is seldom a part of our daily lives, we all need to live it and learn from it. As De Mare points out, the best way is by practicing it. While oligarchies remain the biggest challenge, another way of making it available and sustainable can be to include it as a part of our educational system. Let us consider then, the large group dialogue within the context of higher education within the setting of EPU.

## VII. The setting at EPU

The University's Peace and Conflict Studies Certificate and Masters Program consists approximately of 40 to 50 students, coming from between 25 to 30 different countries, relatively gender balanced (60% women-40% men), ranging from 24 to 65 years old, belonging to different ethnic groups, races, religions, class, professional/occupational backgrounds and, with different interests relating their studies. In short, it constitutes something very close to a 'melting pot', a microcosmos of the world.

The students spend twelve weeks living and studying within the same premises: Haus International and the castle of Schlaining Burg. Students come for either a three-month certificate program or for a six-month master program, which will be expanded, to nine months from fall 2006. Hereinafter I will refer to them as certificate and master students. All students have the opportunity to choose between a morning course or an afternoon course, or both, during each week of their stay.

Students indeed spend a considerable amount of time with one another. Students' exchange takes place in many forms: in the classroom, by doing group work, in integrative seminars, cultural nights, cooking in groups, talking in

between curricular activities, etc. Yet, as a *group* (a large group indeed), students seldom have the opportunity to spend time together and learn how to talk to the group and as a group. So far, options include house meetings, where students and members of the administration meet to discuss matters related to daily living; and during lectures and workshops where large group dialogue depends on whether the teacher/instructor implements it or not. This last option is not consistent to enable a follow up of the group as a whole; nor necessarily involves the whole group, since students can join different courses at different times. Therefore, up to date no large group meetings are purposively set to build a microculture that can practice dialogue and 'think together', that which eventually share a sense of impersonal fellowship. If the groups at EPU could be experience a 'Koinonic' bonding, and the individuals were to reproduce their experience in their societies by starting a dialogue group, millions would be in dialogue very soon. Everywhere institutions and cultures could begin to be transformed into more democratic and coherent structures.

#### A space and time for dialogue

Apart from what I have said above, I think students need a different arrangement and procedure for dialogue, microculture and fellowship to develop as a part of the education at EPU. On the one hand, students are brought together into the classroom with a predetermined program or content. Such content is normally 'taught' in the form of a lecture. The dyadic structure of teacher and taught, by its very nature leads to what Paulo Freyre called "banking education", the antinomy of dialogue. In this model the teacher comes to the classroom with information and students expect to be the depository of such information. Certainly, this model cannot be excluded from the repertoire of learning processes, but structures that encourage participation, democracy and creativity such as the large circle have been overlooked. Causes may include lack of time to cover content, or too much content, students' expectations to be taught about new topics, official mandates by the University board or Austrian policy of education, etc.

Nevertheless one of the main arguments here has been that different structures promote to a large extent different systems of thinking (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 6). As examples:

The dyad professor/student structure tends to promote at best syllogistic logic and dualism and at worst a simple monologue by the professor, or a synchronic combination of the two.<sup>12</sup> In this case context or culture is virtually excluded, especially among individuals of similar cultural background. However in the EPU classroom, context or cultural factors are always an issue, even in the dyadic structure.

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<sup>12</sup> In this regard Pericles observed that rhetoric destroys democracy, whereas dialogue promotes a Koinonic culture or impersonal fellowship (De Mare et al, 1991, p. 5)

A three person setting promotes dialectics. For example when a group is divided in two or three sub-groups, to support an argument 'x', criticize it and advocate an eclectic view; whereas

The larger group circle promotes the open, lateralized tangential, multipersonal thinking of dialogue. "The larger the group the predominant this type of thinking becomes. After a certain point it results in the precipitation of microcultures involving the meaning of both the structure [the large group] and the metastructure [the microculture]" (De Mare et al, idem, p. 7).

As I have said, the structures promote but do not determine the system. At the same time it is not evident that we know how to dialogue, thus the need for an experienced facilitator. The orientation week could perfectly serve the purpose of a dialogue-training week on duologue, triologue, large group dialogue and other dialogical structures of meaning. After the first week, a small group of interested students could share facilitation; visits by the facilitator could be planned every semester to ensure follow-up. At the same time, such training could provide the students with tools to communicate more empathically and efficiently during group-work and other lectures.

Numbers in EPU resemble those suggested as ideal by renowned theoretical and practical large group approaches: 20 to 40 persons meeting weekly in a circle from one and a half to two hours (Bohm, De Mare et al, etc).

De Mare argues that the main reason for large group dialogue malfunction is the unwillingness by unconvinced organizers to arrange things in such a way that showing up is realistic. Obstacles include appropriate time (not too early not to late for participants), an easily accessible and comfortable venue, etc. Certainly the combination of time, availability and commitment/obligation at EPU makes such obstacles easy to overcome, because students live in the same premise and share a similar schedule.

With regards to time, for certificate students, three months guarantee a minimum of 12 meetings, and for master students, 6 to 9 months guarantee a minimum of 24 to 36 meetings.. However, the participants live within the same premises and spend long periods of the day interacting as individuals and sub-groups, exchanging a great deal of experiences and information. At the same line, during orientation week, certain classes and integrative seminars, the students do to act as a group. Thus I am inclined to assert that in such a setting a safe space and time for dialogue, a microculture with a sense of impersonal fellowship may develop faster than in other settings.

Furthermore, in order to encourage participation in the large group, EPU could offer credits for assisting, for example, to at least 10 out of the 12 meetings to be hosted every program or semester. What is more, the large group offers such a wealth of experiences and information that it could be object of research

proposals related to intercultural communication, dialogue, culture of peace, group psychology, conflict transformation, etc.

Dialogue within a large group at EPU can bring into the forum not only differences between individuals but also *how differing social phenomena is carried over and operates inside the group*, via gender, generation, race, religious, class issues, etc. (Stefano, 2005). "The topic of gender cannot be so easily reduced to intellectual terms and evaded in the larger group as in the small, since it is a major [socio-] cultural issue." (de Mare et al. 1991. p.100). Connected to this, currently there is a group of about 10 to 20 participants meeting weekly at EPU in which women have constantly brought up socio-cultural issues like gender.

## Conclusion

Notions such as large group, dialogue, microculture, Koinonia and totalization are highly relevant to peace and conflict studies, they allows to approach *operationally*, group dynamics. The large group dialogue is a phenomenon with great potential for learning experientially and *collectively* on conflict, violence and peace. It can contribute significantly to the profile of the conflict/peace worker's understanding and management of groups dynamics, group mind (culture) and therapeutically.

The large group as a structure contains the seeds for both negative and positive peace, on the one hand, allowing a transition from debate to dialogue, and on the other hand by conquering a democratic, polylogic, and unknown cultural space between individual and society: the Median group.

Peace and conflict studies have overlooked the notion of collective or group dialogue. Only conflict resolution and transformation approaches, like Herbert Kelman's Interactive Problem Solving Workshops, and Johan Galtung's TRANSCEND dialogues, have adapted both notion with critical limitations in numbers inherent to the high-level of the participants and the violence surrounding the issues discussed. They face the challenge of expanding naturally resisting oligarchic structures. Consequently a long-term alternative is to learn dialogue and group dynamics at, for example, innovative higher education institutions like EPU, in order to sow seeds in individuals across the world about the potential of such phenomenon for handling socio-cultural issues and conflicts.

I suggest that in EPU, the group is not being humanized; only its individuals are being socialized towards 'peace'. The large group experience and its potentials have been unnoticed, reducing the experience to the individual level or at best to the small group level. In order to become democratic, polylogical and creative, peace work needs to conquer a wider social unexplored space of the large group. A space that, as suggested by de Mare, can develop the individual mind

to at least a higher level of socio-cultural awareness and interaction, and even to the level of totalization or the appreciation of wholes.

EPU thus, is a structure with high potential, a seed for dialogue that if watered can bloom. This is rather relevant if we also consider the potential of the participants in organizing large groups in their respective countries and expanding dialogue manifold. If each year 40 individuals would start 40 groups of 20 across the world, and each dialogue group lasts 1 to 2 years, in 10 years *billions* will be in dialogue!

Such new cultural space and time can be conquered and developed. A truly democratic time and space: polygarchic, socio-cultural, polylogical, transformational; a total re-structuration; something our current structures (institutions) fail to do, due to the lack of an appropriate combination of system/structure dialogue/large group. In turn, if such combination can be implemented within rigid structures like bureaucracies, military and educational institutions, by turning socio-cultural assumptions conscious, deep unforeseen individual and socio-cultural transformation can take place.

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## **Kathleen Godfrey: The U.S. Prison System as a Structural Cage for the Perpetuation of Direct Violence: Psychological and Moral Underpinnings**

A double-edged sword of perpetuation, the U.S. judicial and its consequential prison system are systems of temporary reinforcement for both the “innocent” and the “guilty” in a cynical cycle of so-called “progress.” Because it does not address the consistent and coherent roots of criminality, it is a structure that supports the continuation of a routine and superficial comfort for some, and for others, a dismal misery disregarded by those in power. It is a scheme for a retrograde security familiar from centuries ago of elitism for some by way of enslaving others. It is not, in its most basic progression, a rehabilitating or preventative process for criminals or society in general. And this, its characteristic failure, is its feigned source of legitimacy.

The U.S. justice system expects obedience to its laws based on presumed similarities in the morality and the rationality of its citizens and on their presumed inclination to avoid committing crimes in order to avoiding the system’s respective prescriptions for punishment. These presumptions, however, are patently mistaken regarding a great many American citizens, to the point of making obedience to the system illogical in all practical terms for a great many people. In order to understand why this is, both the nature of the system’s power and the psychology and morality of the criminal and the enforcer must be analyzed.

At it’s core, the U.S. system of justice, as a system of retribution, relies on the power of threat, aiming to influence the actions of the populace by posing unattractive consequences for behavior the system finds undesirable. Compliance is created out of fear. Threat power will, however, lose its effectiveness if it is not combined with *integrative power*, Kenneth Boulding’s term for power that people are persuaded is right and thus see as legitimate. Living as a victim of structural violence, as we shall see, makes the persuasion, loyalty, and sense of community necessary for one to regard a power as legitimate practically impossible due to the psychosocial effects of such violence. If obedience to law is achieved through alternative and sometimes complimentary methods including habit, fear of sanctions (punishments), moral obligation, concepts of a theocracy or fate, self-interest, and psychological identification with the ruler, it becomes obvious why some would disobey it. (Sharp 19-23) For instance, when one considers habit to be a basis for compliance and recognizes the natural discrepancies of habit between economic, cultural and other groups, some varied conduct, and hence “disobedience,” seems to be an inevitable outcome.

Growing up in poverty and being encouraged to gain respect through the use of violence would surely promote habits clashing with someone growing up devoid of the constant stresses such an environment provides. Secondly, an underprivileged person undoubtedly weighs their options very differently when it comes to avoiding sanctions, for their very options are different. In dire need for food or psychological release, the pressing essentials for a ghetto-dwelling mother or a destitute, isolated man in the countryside demand a prioritization

very different than that demanded of those who make the policies of punishment for theft or drug use. Additionally, sensing moral obligation will not come before survival needs are met, nor will they exist when one's experience has cultivated so little respect for or even understanding of common principles and ethics.

Obedience is voluntary and must operate through the "will or the opinion of the subject to be effective." (Sharp 26) That is to say, it can be in one's self-interest to disobey, should the sanction be less feared than the consequences of compliance. In the United States, the poor, particularly those in the racial minority, struggle to survive in a rigged game of capitalism where lawful advancement from the bottom is only a theoretical dream, rather than a practicable reality. Undeniably, David Dellinger better names criminal violence as the "counterviolence of the victimized," implying that there is a comprehensible rationale for crime that is based on needs. (Lynd 410) Considering the weighing that goes on in each potential criminal's mind, these motivating needs must no doubt be very intense to accept such a gamble of fate.

Obedience through an idea of fate would, for some, entail succumbing to an intolerable situation, and in the same vein, may result in obedience toward a more pervading rule of the streets, rather than that of a foreign authority. Finally, self-interest in obeying the law, probably the primary motive behind most obedience, is often a minimal incentive for the lower class, many of whom, besides often having a dire and conflicting "self-interest" in obtaining provisions, commit petty crimes *in order* to be incarcerated in a jail which supplies shelter and sustenance.

Obedience, we must recognize, is not inevitable among rational citizens. "People are generally law-abiding, except when unmoored by catastrophic events or by social convulsions... To the degree that the law and the ruler's general policies agree with the needs of society and the general sense of what is desirable and tolerable, obedience will be widespread." (Sharp 25) American law is far too remote from the conditions in which many of its subjects find themselves to allow for any of agreements of the social contract sort necessary for legal obedience.

The justice system exacerbates problems of crime not only by perpetuating societal arrangements of elitism based on race and economic power, literally forcing citizens to into counterviolence for survival, but by the psychological effects which citizens living under chronic structural violence endure, known as "psychosocial trauma." Fatalism, a lack of trust, emotional numbing, substance abuse, obsession with material goods (due to material deprivation), and aggressive attitudes and behavior all constitute common psychological responses of humans enduring the day-to-day experiences of inequality and destitution that American democracy and capitalism have erected. (McNair, 39) Needless to say, these effects in turn cause crime.

The response of aggression can be particularly attributed to an acceptance of violence as a way of solving problems, due not only to a defensive need to feel safer with and model oneself after those powerful enough to provide protection (such as gangs), but also to a legitimization of violence as a tactic at the largest of scales: as exercised by one's own government.

The apparent failure of the death penalty to deter murder is an excellent example of how this moral psychology works for the potential criminal. Death penalty deterrence is based on an assumption that potential murderers, upon seeing an execution, will identify with the person being executed and refrain from murder to avoid such a fate. But, as we have seen in a number of studies, crime and murder have decreased in countries and U.S. states after the death penalty was abolished, while they have increased after war and have spiked after executions have been carried out. (Death Penalty Information Center)

The most plausible hypothesis as to why this imitation of violence occurs is based on the *legitimation of violence model*, which considers the human propensity to avoid identification with evil, and instead to identify with the good. The potential murderer perceives the executed as the villain, just as others do. "Wishing to perceive themselves as the purveyor of justice, they have just been given instructions on how to deal with individuals they see as villains in their own lives." (McNair 170) Further study on this phenomenon is necessary to confirm its generalizability, but finding the funding for such inquiry at present is at the same time both politically essential and politically unfeasible. As Dane Archer put it, "Even though social scientists have in the past amassed impressive experimental evidence that violence can be produced through imitation or modeling, they have in general neglected the possibility that the government—with its vast authority and resources—might turn out to be the most potent model of all." (McNair, 51) Finding such a model true in light of the higher death rates produced by murder than war in the United States, would help invalidate the worth of many of the government's most well-established projects, most importantly that of its paradoxical program for global domination: the U.S. military. (Best, 2005)

Thus, while identification based on economic, racial, cultural, or experiential characteristics and interests with a rich, white, secure and well-educated legislator for many in America is a far-flung possibility, robbing the law of any meaningful authority over their lives, a propensity to model oneself after those one is made to understand as just systematically legitimates criminal violence in American society.

The two modes of morality by which the law attempts to achieve compliance are also far too limited in scope to allow for the full spectrum of human moral development. Morality is most commonly understood as developing in stages, in a progression that is invariant, requiring one to progress through the stages in a determined order.

Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of individual moral development is a good and broadly-accepted model of these understandings. In the very first stage of morality, Kohlberg claimed, moral value resides in a person's own needs and wants, and obedience and punishment orient or motivate a person in precisely the way U.S. retributive justice aims to influence its citizens. Later on however, judgment is motivated by a need to satisfy one's own desires and then in pleasing others immediately involved in one's life. At a middle stage in development, moral understanding again coincides with American techniques of

control, but only partially, as moral judgment is motivated by the need to not be criticized by a true authority figure. Here, we return to the issue of American Law lacking authoritative legitimacy among those whom its structure oppresses. And the development of morality does not, and should not, in Kohlberg's opinion, stop here. Moral values will come to reside in principles, separate from any outside enforcement measures, and later may evolve towards a universal, ethical orientation in which moral judgment is motivated by one's own conscience, independent of the external influences of power or culture.

If one accepts Kohlberg's premise that a person is only cognitively attracted to a higher stage of development when that stage's reasoning resolves more difficulties for the person, the moral stage of any person can be related quite directly to the person's experiences, and thus, the moral comprehension of the criminal is a rather direct result of the structurally harmful circumstances they have matured under. The inability of a person to understand or apply reasoning at a higher moral stage than one's own also signifies the impossibility of expecting that person to substitute their own moral understanding with one made obligatory by supervising powers.

It is also mistaken to assume that development beyond those stages that produce tendencies for legal compliance will continue to yield such compliance. Beyond those stages, morality becomes increasingly independent of social institutions, and higher moral stages in Kohlberg's model have not even been found to correlate with higher levels of nonviolence. (McNair 65) By not even considering the inability for various citizens to work at preferred and prescribed stages of morality, and by literally proscribing other understandings of morality, the law is once again found unreasonable and illegitimate in the eyes of many whom it incarcerates.

The structural and cultural violence that brings about the poverty future criminals are arbitrarily born into, their "underdog" attempts of using direct violence to get out of this structural iron cage, and the consequential state violence of imprisonment which robs them further of any equal status with the well-to-do, bind them and their system into a cycle of violence. In the present system the delinquent is "an institutional product," and citizens are categorized as either docile or abnormal. For many, life is experienced as a "whole series of carceral mechanisms," (Lind 43, 71 & 76) and those who are tagged early as a delinquent of some sort, tend to be continually channeled through these institutions for the remainder of their lives. None of these institutions then, can be said to be rehabilitating in their nature.

With years to ponder their situation as well as their crime, the incarcerated person, like a child sent to his or her room, is likely to spend more time smoldering with anger towards their superiors than regretting a transgression they felt compelled to commit. The "oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor" is the typical result of this process, and hence, violence breeds violence. (Sharp 166)

Incarceration invades every facet of life, and the attitude that provides for and permeates the existence of a jail is one of violence, upholding it as a method of

both lawful and unlawful means, but upholding it nonetheless, as the ultimate force behind the grandest of structures criminals come to know—the government. Hope for a better way is crushed and becomes “such a frail thing when hopelessness constantly bombards the senses.”(Giarratano 104) “You’ll be back,” is the common farewell to the prisoner and the “evil is there, all right, frank and unabashed. It is inside and also outside the jail.” (Day 30)

The experience of the 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment bears out the problematic nature of incarceration and the prison. In the experiment, college students, despite being screened to preclude pathologies, filled the roles of guards and prisoners, eventually all too well, experiencing personality transformations towards cruelty and depression. The experiment clearly revealed the dehumanizing nature of the prison, as well as the difficulty in changing it – even as an experiment. It took an outsider, entering the situation six days into the experiment to identify what the situation had devolved into and to make those running the experiment acknowledge what to them had been a gradual and therefore unrecognizable change. Yet real-world prisons attract certain types of personalities (generally of more Machiavellian and authoritarian dispositions) to be guards and prisoners, do not screen for pathologies, are not time-limited situations, and have no system for identifying or bringing an end to a situation that gets out-of-hand.

Moreover, socialization with other criminals can bolster criminal attitudes and skills, while few are released with many non-criminal skills, making crime once more appear to be the only survival option for the ex-prisoner. “If people with psychological knowledge wished to set up the most effective system for increasing crime, they would be hard pressed to do better than the current prison system.” (McNair 181)

It is widely accepted that enduring structural violence will eventually lead to direct violence of some form or another. Further, a pattern in the forms such direct violence takes emerges when one examines the governmental configurations which institutionalize the provocative structural violence. Under occupation or dictatorships, direct violence comes about through the government’s own attempts at suppression, while in a democracy, direct violence is typically experienced through the crimes committed by poor people and is thus punishable. (McNair 40) The generational, racial, and community cyclicity and selectivity of this consequence is an unconcealable manifestation of just how well-established structural violence is in America.

Just as the potential criminal weighs the fruits of their behavior against its potential consequences, the justice system itself weighs its options, with the intention of perpetuating its influence by maintaining legitimacy through retaining the support of its constituency. To do this, it must appear purposeful and successful to a degree, and it does this by temporarily redressing crime through short-lived punitive measures. “The justice of every particular case... is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side and the expense of redressing it on the other.” (Lynd 25) And yet relying on destructive violence to control crime is “just as irrational as attempting to use a lid to control steam from a caldron, while allowing the fire under it to blaze

uncontrolled.” (Sharp 10) Rather than fixing the societal and economic bases of its society, self-interested and transitory politicians pass up methods designed for enduring improvement in favor of a superficial kind of solution based on hiding away the results of its flawed system through incarceration. But, as Fanon put it, “we are forever pursued by our actions.” (Lynd 406) By reducing society’s ills to singular instances of transgressions rather than treating them as symptoms of an ailing culture, that entire culture and everyone in it continues to ail as the injustice of the structure reproduces the need to break the law.

Violence is assumed the only effective form of combat against those who harm the system’s performance, dooming all to, in the eye-for-an-eye tradition, go blind. (Sharp 72) In as varied circumstances as Americans are, to assume that all its citizens are identical in moral outlook and principled action is absurd. At the same time, the idea of pure righteousness and justice through democracy is a mythical lie. This lie of legitimacy lets us invest “the judge, the policeman, (and) the official with an exclusive right to the exercise of certain kinds of force.” (Lind 18) This reputed legitimacy of state violence frees it from the disgust unauthorized forms of violence are met with, removing the undertone of injustice which otherwise delegitimizes any application of violence. And yet in reality, Prejean is plainly right when she comments that the government “can’t be trusted to control its own bureaucrats or collect taxes equitably or fill a pothole, much less decide which citizens to kill.” (Lynd 349) In violence there can be no equality, and when violence is used to guarantee the law, there can be no equality in the law. It is not however, our destiny to be excessively unequal, for various improvements have been made, through suffrage and desegregation; however in the justice system a veritable slavery continues to exist.

The American constituency remains in favor of this punitive system because it is mollified by a “just world” view, desiring to understand the world as just and therefore safe. Thus it callously presupposes that any person suffering must deserve it. (McNair 119) With astronomical costs for the execution of the death penalty, with vast numbers of prisoners being former inmates, with undeniable racism, both covert and overt, against the mentally challenged and minority races, and with the social costs of an increasingly fatherless race, the system desperately needs major revision. It is an absolute necessity within America’s individualistic society that this revision be based upon positive law in order to legitimately “claim to acknowledge and promote the interest of mankind in the person of the individual.” (Lind 61)

Because “law... knows itself to be infinitely remote from conditions in which fate might have imperiously shown itself in such a sentence,” it must instead be related to the roots of the problems it reacts to in order to be preventative. (Lind 62) It must address the undeniable origins of crime as unusually predictable and therefore manifestly institutional and changeable. It would be absurd to dismiss common criminality among minorities as genetic or as the essence of a culture in sight of such an onerous history of deliberate oppression and discrimination through slavery, segregation, and psychological indignity.

How then, can we remodel this destructive and discouraging model? First of all, we must redefine the prisoner and the task of imprisonment, insisting “on treating

them (criminals) not as parts of a machine but as men, capable of thought and change...(by doing so) we gain a much greater control in the situation.” (Lynd 422) That is, we must improve the remedy which as it stands now is worse than the evil.

Specifically, the time of imprisonment must be used constructively rather than destructively, recognizing the formation of morality as comprehensible and impressionable. Rehabilitation efforts can include psychodynamic therapy, in which subconscious causes for behavior are made conscious; behavioral therapy; and Socratic dialogue techniques which are known to develop moral reasoning capabilities. (McNair 181) Violence prevention education, by focusing on anger management, the causes and costs of violence, self-control, and personal responsibility, can counter street crime and domestic violence and foster personal responsibility, and has found success when applied by the court system. Conflict resolution education also teaches students how to cope with interpersonal conflicts and fosters skills in peaceful personal problem-solving by focusing on mediation and communication skills, promoting empathy, and increasing problem-solving abilities.

The Alternatives to Violence Program is an excellent example of this, and was employed at Laurel Prison in Maryland, which I visited with classmates in high school. The program consists of intensive training in non-violent problem-solving skills. At Laurel, due to a lack of volunteer teachers, prisoners faced competition in admission and had to behave well in order to be admitted into the course, which they enthusiastically tried to do. In the end, they graduated with diploma in hand, verifying them as knowledgeable in the skill of peacemaking and peacekeeping. Behavior since this program’s advent has shown marked improvement, indicating that a change in activity from competitive sports and manual labor to education on pertinent topics, which had lacked for many prisoners from the beginning, could be an initial step in the remedy.

Restorative Justice Programs, typically employed with youth, but potentially expandable to adult criminals, has also shown promise, particularly in reducing recidivism. These programs, which place a high value on restitution, reconciliation, and reintegration for all concerned in the crime, require that victims, offenders, and community members take an active role in healing relationships broken by crime—replacing the state as the primary participant in the search for justice. The forgiveness component of such programs is particularly powerful, in light of studies that have found correlations between Elizabeth Kubler Ross’ proposed stages for dying and the stages of forgiveness. By creating a route for forgiveness, restorative justice procedures create time for stages of “bargaining” (allowing all to conceive of possible resolutions), of depression (where one, by admitting one’s own guilt, can be led to see shared humanity among the group), and of acceptance (when peace with the perpetrator can be reached).

With executions abounding of the mentally challenged and minority races, and the greater likelihood of arrest based on color than crime, all the macro-products of this system point to an undeniable, statewide racism, which also needs to be

addressed. There are several psychological theories as to why this punitive stereotyping occurs.

The first is known as the “Out-Group Homogeneity Effect,” in which the human capacity to understand the individual differences of those within one’s own group ceases to function when considering an “out-group,” where differences are blurred. Thus, those in power, generally white and disengaged from and ignorant of the realities of minority existence, see minorities as a de-individuated populace.

The more power a person has, the more likely they are to stereotype as well, as multiple experiments have shown. (McNair 120) This tendency is believed to stem from a motivation on the part of the powerful to oversimplify their perceptions of people and situations in order to justify persistent differences in power—a motivation that leads them to seek information that confirms their previous categorizations, thus strengthening those stereotypes.

Attribution Theory (the idea that there is tendency for people to attribute what they consider normal behavior to the specifics of a situation but to attribute abnormal or delinquent behavior to a person’s internal disposition) explains why the majority of Americans, relying on slanted information from a racist, violence-obsessed media, conclude that criminal violence stems from inexcusable temperaments rather than indefensible systems of power.

Thus, the psychological inclinations of de-individuation through stereotyping become inclinations to dehumanize the out-group and, when this phenomenon is combined with presumptions of innate character flaws among the criminal population, negative stereotyping of minorities is an inevitable result.

This detrimental trend which unconsciously programs people’s assumptions provides the foundation for the racist inclinations of America’s police and can and must be counteracted by efforts at humanizing inter-group interaction and making the “out-group” seem less outside. (McNair 89) Efforts at community integration, rather than divisive gentrification, would be one step in this direction. Highlighting the interdependency of these different groups can also offset stereotyping. By stressing superordinate goals among the haves and have-nots (such as genuine, reliable and holistic security) and having them cooperate to achieve this shared need (by reorganizing unjust societal structures), these groups will recognize that they are dependent on each other and therefore that it is important to make accurate judgments of one another as individuals in a mutually-desirable partnership.

Grand programs are particularly needed to target the economic roots of these self-perpetuating problems. Because the judicial and economic systems are mutually reinforcing, they both must be altered. One suggestion might be to channel an equal amount of money and resources as has been spent for a criminal’s trial and imprisonment into the neighborhoods that generated that criminal. Programs of midnight basketball, or better yet, realistic nonviolent training programs with incentives for graduation, would pull jeopardized persons off the streets and encourage them to find an intrinsic motivation for change, because self-interest, as mentioned earlier, is a primary motivator for abiding by the law. While these seem topical solutions, they would be a step towards more

potent policies such as wealth redistribution. (It is interesting to note that among those who show resilience under adverse circumstances tied to structural violence certain coping mechanisms are consistently found, including social support, religious activities, music, and humor—all elements already well-established and widely-celebrated among the regularly incarcerated black population of America—a very strong and again psychological indictment of how entrenched structural violence has become in the United States.)

The subject matter I have attempted to explicate here is complex and highly vulnerable to personal opinion, and in recognizing this I re-examined a movie I had once seen, shot within and about southeast DC. The quintessence of my argument, about the subjectivity of morality and the tactlessness of the system moderating it, is said far more artfully and genuinely by one particular character's slam poetry monologue, given in the local prison's courtyard, which I will leave you with:

I stand on the corner of the block, slinging amethyst rocks.  
Drinking forties of mother earth's private nectars stock. Dodging cops.  
Because five-0 be the 666, and I need a fix of that purple rain.  
The type of shit that drives membranes insane. Oh yeah  
I'm in the fast lane. Snorting candy yams that free my body and my soul  
And send me like shazaam. Never question who I am. God knows  
And I know God personally. In fact he lets me call him me. Yeah, I'm  
serious B.  
Dope-going niggas plotting shit lovely. But the Feds is also plotting me.  
They're trying to imprison my astrology. Put our stars behind bars.  
Our stars and stripes. Using blood-spattered banners as nationalist kites.  
But I control the wind, that's why they call it the hawk. I am Horns,  
Son of Isis, son of Osiris. Worshipped as Jesus. Resurrected like Lazarus.  
But you can call me lazzie, lazy, yeah I'm lazy 'cause I'd rather sit and  
build than  
Work or plow a field worshipping the daily earth of cash green crops.  
STEALING US WAS THE SMARTEST THING THEY EVER DID.  
Too bad they don't teach the truth to their kids.  
Our influence on them is the reflection they see when they look into their  
minstrel mirror and talk about their culture.  
Their existence is that of a schizophrenic vulture. Yeah, there's no  
repentance.  
They are bound to live an infinite, consecutive, executive life sentence.  
So what are you bound to do nigga? So while you're out there serving the  
time I'll be in sync with the sun while you run from the moon. Life of the  
womb reflected by guns. Worshipper of moons. I am the sun. And we are  
public enemies number one.  
One. One. One. -Slam

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## **Aron Pecnik: From Society to Civil Society**

History of making Society

*“When I faced myself I was scared, I knew that  
I can’t overcome myself alone.  
So I called you to help me overcome my greatest fear”*

*-Raymond Carver-*

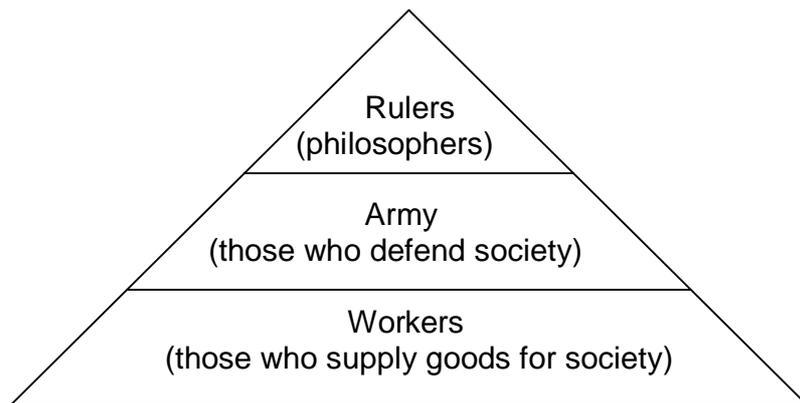
In today communication people often use words or terms which they assume they know or understand, or they assume that the others will understand them as well and in the same meaning. With such uncaredful use of terms and words, we usually make miscommunication errors which can lead to all kinds of ignorance, conflicts or misunderstandings. So, before I start to elaborate on my topic in the title, I think it’s important to explain what society itself means and try to define it. From my point of view, society is group of people joined together around territory they live, language they speak and certain common interest they share. When I say interest it means something that mentioned group of people recognize as mutual benefit, which is an also base for keeping their society alive and evolving. Through history societies have evolved from primal interest groups such as group hunt for food, to societies which we today call modern nations. This history path from primitive groups towards today’s societies shows us two things:

people come together because they have natural need of being socialized (homo socialis), and in that sense society is natural thing.

once people formed certain society, their natural need urge for more self - improvement, which leads to what we call today society development.

From this two items we can conclude that joining people together in group doesn’t mean that we created society, but only made first step towards something that at the “end” of certain develop period will become society. But there is no really an end of society develop, because human nature urges always for more in all aspects of human being, so it makes an endless process which can be always improved. Society will always be a group of people, but group of people that change and improve, which automatically change and improve “future” society. This change doesn’t have to be always good or positive. People are social animals, but people also feel their individuality inside of group/society that forces them to get higher than the others in the society, and than we have creation of certain hierarchy inside of group. Having hierarchy in group/society is necessary thing, but it must be made carefully. Only way that group/society can

work with this society hierarchy is if people use their free will to make such system inside their community. Hierarchy in sense that I'm trying to use is a system with well shared roles between all members. Not all can be leaders, and all can be workers. It takes a whole spectral of roles in order to make society work. Great Greek philosopher Plato use model of triangle (pyramid) to express how society and hierarchy inside it should look like in his so called perfect state:



This model of society is inserted in all societies in the world. It's based on primitive sharing of roles, where all parts of society have their task, which must be done so that society could work. If any of these three parts fail in managing their task the whole structure of society will crush down. I have used this example to emphasize importance of role sharing. Problems that can appear in this kind of model is sense of un- satisfaction with given role and attempt to take on another role which leads to blocking operations which makes society operating and results with conflict which can also crush society.

#### Role of institutions in society

Who is in charge of sharing roles? This is question that has still stayed unanswered, but my view of answer lies in effort that each member of society give and provides skills that he is best in, and in that way makes his own role. So in that case, where everybody should work what their best thing is, and doing that with sense of being the best in their field, supplies them with all necessary goods and benefits societies in order of improvement. In today societies we are all witnessing conflicts inside of society which art inputted by small groups of people who are taking as their naturally given right to share roles in a way that they consider to be the best one. In today society this aspect is called law. Law is important in every state because he regulates people behavior and is supposed to make difference between doing right or wrong. This kind of behavior leads to large scale of conflicts where some people are not satisfied with a law so they break it and once again endanger the whole society with their behavior, which can be avoided only in one way, and that is creating institutions whose task is to

control all un-justice aspects of society or better said any kind of breaking a law. Important thing to say is that these institutions must make sure that law is not misused in a way that it can hurt any member of the society. These institutions we call justice departments. Like today this institution must be free of any influence from outside or inside, or in another words they must be independent. So in this step we got society, which has turned to some kind of semi-state. Things that society requires to become a something like state are: leadership, law, justice institutions and sense of acceptance and recognition inside of certain society, which creates nation.

#### Nation as aspect and necessity of modern society

When we speak about society in today terms, we often use it in aspect of state. States are aspect and necessity of modern societies and in that way it's unavoidable not to elaborate on them. Every state has four elements that are crucial for having this title and that also make modern definition of state. These elements are: government, legitimacy, territory and population. Element that I would like to extract from this list is population. From my point of view population is most important thing that makes state. Why? Because, any of other three elements doesn't make sense without population. I'll try to prove this point with next examples. Without people living on certain territory, territory is not a property of no one and it that sense it doesn't belong to any one. It's only landscape with no identity, a dot on map of earth. So it needs people (population) to possess it and live on it to be part of state. If there is no population to be ruled or guided government is impossible for two reasons. First one is, if there is no people, there can be no government, because government is consisted from people and two if there is no population to be guided or led government is unnecessary and also absurd. Legitimacy is pretty absurd also, because with missing population, we are missing all other parts so it makes impossible to speak of any kind of legitimacy. In hope that I have proved that state is meaningless without population, I would like to explain, what population in aspect of nation really mean. Nations are group of people who share same language, culture, territory and sense of national identity. Since nation is a group of people, it must have hierarchy, laws, justice departments and of course government. Problems are appearing when these elements are wrongly implemented into society and when they start to fail their work. Their work is inter- affective, which means that none of them can obtain his job, without effecting another. In that case society is facing great possibility of collapse, which puts everybody in danger. Main point is that inside of state all of these elements must be balanced in order to state work and act in way it supposed to act. Balance is only solution and way to make state work properly. Unfortunately today we are witnessing whole spectrum of conflicts inside of certain states, where most of them are caused with non- balance of state elements. One of the most common problem is government and it's authorities as a head element of state and way that this organ inter act with others. Through history we all witnessed all kinds of society models like: communism, nazism, socialism, totalitarianism and all other "isms",

which have brought great suffer and eventually failed. Some of these models were pretty excellent, like communism for example, but communism was utopia, and as such it was impossible to make it real, although it was possible to implement some elements that could improve society. Governments were falling, revolution were rising and suddenly the world got stuck in this magical circle of rise and fall, that was bringing only pain and misery “justified” by cause for better life. In urge to live peaceful life, people came up with one model, that had all preferences to be the one, suitable for everybody, one that everybody will accept and admire. That great model was democracy. People realized that being involved in all decisions that their government makes is the only way to control their life and to take part in making better tomorrow for themselves and upcoming generations.

### Democracy as starting point

Democracy was and somehow still is considered as the ultimate achievement of people when we speak in terms what state should look like. I agree that democracy is important point in every state but somehow I don't think is enough. Democracy in it is definition means will of people, it also means that everybody have equal rights and it also means freedom of speech, possessing basic human rights etc. But is it really like that? Democracy is differently possessed in different countries. Some are more democratic and some are less. Thing is that those who are more democratic, are in fact more liberal and those who aren't don't have urge to become more democratic, but also more liberal. Democracy today, as it is presented in the democratic states is actually theory covered by more or less liberal approach, tolerance and richness. These are only few aspects of democracy, which people find to be enough to call themselves and their country democratic. This illusion is actually excellent entrance or better said path for government and ruling classes to manipulate with people. Hiding behind nations fantasy of democracy government is able to do all kinds of bad things towards it's own people or towards other nation, justifying it with protection or expansion of their so called “democracy”. From my point of view this is the most important issue when we speak about state conflicts. In every state we have examples of demonstrations, false elections, stealth of public goods, poverty, wars etc. How come this “perfect” societies and their perfect “democracy” allows such kind of things. Answer is simple: Because they are not what they think they are. How can we repair this thing? Well answer to this question is not so easy to give. There are several ways (solutions) to overcome this problem, but I will try focusing and explaining one of them and that is civil society.

### Civil society as a tool of nation

In order for nations to become more democratic or at least to have some influence on power that democracy is supposedly providing to them, it is necessary to have a specific tool, or better said form of society that will be connection and regulator between government (and it is decisions) and people.

In today post-conflict countries such as Ex- Yugoslavia or former Soviet Union, this sort of societies are more than necessary. These societies are known today as civil societies. What civil society really means? Under term civil society we understand complex of public institutions, which also include non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and all spectrum of citizen movements and initiatives. This complexes primal duty is to represent community of non-violence, tolerance but also open and critical dialog about all problems that are putting burden on certain group of people. Integrative element of civil society is consisted in transparency of civil, political, cultural, social and any other kind of vital action taken by the people. Putted in other words, as much as people are taking civil actions inside of community, power of ruling elite and government itself is reducing on all levels of state, from global to local level. Only in highly developed civil society is possible to articulate and resolve rudiment citizen interests in appropriate way, which also in some way speeds up the democratization process of state and people both in all their parts. So in that sense it's some sort of middle space, like Habermas called it, in which the true face of subsisting, ruling government and system is shown. From this point is obvious that ruling class is more depriving than giving in it is communication with people, which at the end results with lack of right to achieve basic rights and basic freedoms. Jacques Mourgeon says: Liberalism was right in making authorities overpowered and presenting it as the main effective condition of individual; but it was wrong when it when we speak about ways and solutions to achieve this condition in societies that are based on un-equality. So, in order to disable authorities of any benefit gained on manipulation and lies, it absolutely necessary to develop civil society; middle space, to stop authorities to intervene for their own benefit on expense of ruled majority, whose interests should be protected and not violated.

#### Importance of non-governmental Organizations

Specific choice of organizing and connecting citizen initiatives and movements are non-governmental organizations (NGO's). They appear inside of local community as some sort of "party" in motion. They are mediators on litigious and complicated relations between state and society. Trying to help to those who are, for example like refugees, exposed to post- conflict aggression by persons and institutions, who also do not believe in possibility of mutual life between people of different religion, nationality or way of thinking, so for that reason they think it's necessary to remove that other on, or at least disable him/her in order to force them not to come back into community he/she wanted to return. This kind of aggression is also in favor of official public ignorance, which makes public equally repressive not only towards refugees but to any kind of spiritual or progressive creativity, because every step outside allowed domain of fundament belief is considered as death sin or at least social autism. Non- governmental organizations should be vital part of civil society, but they should also be legitimated side of warning and presentation of system disfunction as a unit, based on any kind of un-rational rationalization, in which totalitarian, ideological and nationalistic mixture rules. Hungarian philosopher, Isztvan Bibo calls this:

hysterical mixture of felling superior and complex inferiority. So it's basically about societies that have democratic cover, but in fact they are really combined with nationalism, like it happened, with no excuses in all former Yugoslavia countries after war and separation. I am pointing this because most of the problems that non-governmental organizations are facing today, come from violent attack on basic human rights and citizen rights of one whole nation, which was directly and un-directly affected by war and all its consequences.

## Conclusion

What I was trying to present with my term paper, was basically that societies are submitted to evolution, and that this evolution will never stop. From first or so called primal societies until today, societies were confronted with all kinds of conflicts in hope and wish to improve themselves and make better life for themselves. It took years and numberless revolution and changes to come to the point where societies are right now. Although we call our age modern age and we consider ourselves modern people, we must admit that we have not move much from starting point and problems that we had as a society in a past are still very much around us. It is true that some things we have improved like science and knowledge skills, but lot's of things got only temporary solutions, whose date of maturity is about to end. In that manner our job as searchers for new and more productive solutions is still very big and hard. I pointed out civil societies as something that I find good and very useful, but that doesn't mean that it is something perfect and as such that should not be changed or improved. Conflicts, non-violent and violent are going on and they will unfortunately always go on. Our job is to find a way to reduce them or at least to reduce them to the level of having only non-violent conflicts, which can be useful and in some way are necessary to have. It's wrong to assume that all conflicts are bad. Some of them (non-violent one) are necessary for our every day struggle, and as such they force us to go forward, so we can look at them as a certain push up mechanisms in improving and developing our lives. We are unique persons in time and history, and world that we are living in is place we call home, but this home of ours will keep on passing from generation to generation and so we should be aware of our role and responsibility towards the world. We must not forget that world will continue living and spinning after we are gone, and in that case we are obligated to involve ourselves in quest of looking for tools for better world that we are living behind us. It is not only moral obligation it is our natural obligation as human beings. The biggest sin we can make is to stay passive towards all things that are happening, and simply say I don't care. That kind of "I don't care" attitude may not harm us personally, but it can be extremely dangerous for upcoming generations. So to conclude this paper with a positive thought, I would like to use quote from famous Jewish philosopher Baruch de Spinoza: This is the only possible world, but we must struggle to make it the best possible world.

In addition: On a way to Civil Society (NGOs and Croatian Reality)

In Croatia, after the war especially on sub Danube region, lots of organizations were established whose primary goal was protection of human rights, and in the later phase they focused on numberless activities pointed towards integration of returnees and refugees to their homes. Escalation of violence, rhetoric of hate "legalization" of alienation and possession of somebody else`s property are even today present in Croatian society, even though they were not so obvious before, they still exist in large number. Problem is that Croatian public is accepting this things as natural and justified and somehow they find it trivial to discuss. In such circumstances, only thing that can help to people that were exposed to hardest forms of violation against private property and right to live are non-governmental organizations. In that matter it is no surprise that civil society was and still is considered by Croatian public as ulcer on healthy national body and members of NGO's as conspirers who were implemented by hostile European Union to carry out ideas of creating the world, in which human rights are just cover for hiding interests of great rulers, and it is supposed to serve to discipline small nations in process of globalization. Today it is obvious how much this kind of approach was wrong, especially after ten years of nationalistic madness that was in charge on territory of former Yugoslavia. Today we are becoming aware how lethal was this approach to civil society for Croatian European integration process and for authentic national interests. For part of population in Croatia, non-governmental organizations will always stay suspicious and questionable, because for such people, which our government is mostly formed of, democracy will always be mystery and something to doubt. It is still better to accept "voluntary slavery" under protection of nation or any other ideological authority, then to accept democratization which assume large number of civil initiatives and organizations, which will make the way out of endless paths of transition. Healthy disbelief between state and society is possible only by mediation of civil organizations, but only if they are accepted as equal partners in solving conflict situation, which will eventually confirm community as politically trustworthy. If structures of government inside of certain state are disabled; or not ready to accept the fact of existence of so called non political side, who wish to be a part in creating better life and mutual interests and in that way is critically oriented toward politics; democracy is understood as decoration in which dominates pragmatic cynics of political elite, who is ready to exchange power, but not ready to take responsibility in front of the people that they were chosen from. After the war in Croatia, there was no improvement in development of economy or every day life. Process of reconditioning homes that were destroyed during the war was stopped and un-obedience assimilated terrible forms. In that way uncertainty of every day life resulted with more ethnic tensions. In sub Danube area no one feels safe, and that kind of condition is suitable for government and local authorities, because that way they can easily turn attention from crucial social issues. Violation and disrespect of basic human rights, became way of behavior for state institutions. Results of such behavior are general irresponsibility, corruption, criminal acts etc. In such situation, to whom

can individual turn in order to protect his violated rights? Answer is clear and simple: only to institutions of civil society, which with active insistence can make that law is respected and that state institutions are protecting rights of all men who are endangered, either for their political, ethnical, religious or any other kind of orientation. Activists of non-governmental organizations are witnesses of numberless personal tragedies, tragedies of people whose reality is more fantastic than any dream you can imagine. Convincing stories, based on true facts, show us in what kind of society are we living. While at the surface everything looks relatively peacefully and good, inside are happening terrible things that we can not even imagine. Big number of evidence indicate existence of organized crime, even inside of police force. In process of privatization workers were not only manipulated, but also transparently tricked and deceived; courts are bringing nefarious decisions, which mostly depend on national determination of the clients: powerful local sheriffs are acting like masters of life and death on their territory etc. In such situation, duty of non governmental organizations is in animation of public in order to present and spot large number of phenomena with which is society burdened. They should also be elements that make pressure on authorities in case that they are refusing and ignoring to resolve such problems. At the same time non governmental organizations should be initiators of wide decentralization of almighty state, because it's only way towards democratization, but also only efficient possible way to discharge local sheriffs and to trustworthily articulate all wealthy, complicated but opposite powers inside community. Civil society, as a conclusion, advocates right on mutual life inside of differences, which is because of that value and not failure inside certain society. One thing that should not be forgotten, is that civil society is just temporary solution for our time, and as such must be developed or even replaced with new models, because we can not say for sure that it will be appropriate method for future. It will take long time until we accomplish to be able to handle our problems and issues together (state and public), without mediation of some third party. But if that happens, maybe we won't have states anymore. Maybe we will replace state model with some other, just maybe. I'll leave this question to time to answer it. Hopefully, one day we will understand that decisions made by one side inside of state always, and that means with no exception, effect other side, and as such can not pass without noticing or appropriate reaction.

## Resources

1. The Origins of Human Society; Peter Bogucki; Blackwell 1999.
2. With Tolerance against Hate; Croatian Helsinki Committee; Zagreb; 1997.
3. Plato: State; Prosveta, Belgrade; 1993.
4. Human Rights; Miroslav Prokopijevic; Institute for European Studies; Belgrade 1996.

## **Adeleye Oyeniyie: The Role of Media in Conflict and Security**

### Overview

IN the 20th century the role of the news media changed fundamentally. Today, citizens of the world have access to a 24-hour news cycle providing them with as-it-happens information. Governments use the media to communicate their foreign policies, and UN officials use the media to alert us about humanitarian crises. The media are an essential ingredient in every democratic society. However, free media do not always lead to democracy. How can you work with the media in a post-conflict society to make them part of state building?

How do you ensure that free media become an integral part in a new nation/society?

How do the media contribute to conflict escalation and de-escalation?

This will be an attempt to address some of the cogent issues at hand.

Over the past ten years - and the last five in particular - the international and academic communities have begun to realize the central role that mass media play before, during and after conflict. Several conflicts, such as Kosovo, Rwanda, 9-11 and the more recent war in Iraq, shed light on the many difficulties surrounding conflict and post-conflict reporting, and the interconnected ways in which media are involved.

### Objectives

To attempt a reaction to the growing demand from students and mid-career professionals and various publics on managing the many complex ways in which media interact with conflict, peace and security.

To inspire new thinking about media coverage of conflict on international and local levels.

To appraise critical thinking around issues such as objectivity and ethics in news reporting and news-gathering

To look at how free, responsible media can help prevent conflict and build peaceful societies -- and in so doing provide the international community/employers with informed individuals.

The drive is geared towards a profound knowledge in the many ways media interact with peace, conflict and security issues. It is all about critical thinking about objectivity and ethics in news reporting and newsgathering by media practitioners. People could then have a better understanding of the international news media and their work in the 21st century. Students can go on to work in communication, or post-conflict assistance, or peace-building through international organizations such as the UN. They may also appreciate the skills exerted to do media monitoring and content analysis with a media watchdog. For experienced journalists, professionalism provides them with a focus on media and their role in the areas of peace, conflict and security.

## Introduction

This may be a study of somewhat complex relationship between media, conflict, peace and security; and of the role media played or may play in preventing (or, conversely, escalating) conflict, and in post-conflict situations. My focus attempts to explore the effects of conflict coverage. Please be mindful that this issue seemingly attracts more questions than clear-cut answers.

Hence, the whole exercise aims at provoking us to ask – and look for answers to – the main questions that arise from past and modern media roles in war and conflict, or security and peace situations. This may help to perceive how the media act before conflict explodes, during actual war and in post-conflict situations of peacekeeping and peace building.

## Making The News: Media Influence in Modern Society

### Founding values

In understanding about newsgathering process, the founding values of the free press relate to fairness, accuracy, impartiality and neutrality.

Classical communication theories that stated the overwhelming influence of television over audiences believed to be passive consumers to the modern ideas on audience fragmentation, zapping and the web unending interactive possibilities. Luhman's and Hallin's theories are of significance here. The real dimension of media influence in modern society could be viewed critically as the 'Fourth State'. This signifies Media agenda and other involved players' agenda, particularly in the light of newspaper reading and television audiences.

### What is news?

Media as 'reality builders.' Luhman's theory about how the media work as a system to build reality through 10 'selectors'. Other ideas about the process by which media select what is information from is not information. Facts, events and news remain the concept of 'news.'

### Media agenda

The media and their agenda: what is considered (or not) information.

The theory of agenda setting and its key role on media influence: how media elaborate their agenda and the idea that media can influence what people think *about*, but not *what* people think. Producing, circulating and consuming the news are basic task of the media.

### Other agenda

Everyone who is involved in conflict, as in society, has an agenda.

Power-holders: from total control through censorship or propaganda to spin doctors.

Armed players: manipulation and threats  
NGOs and humanitarian workers: a complex relationship with media  
International organizations and peacekeeping personnel: acting as local administrations and managing the local and foreign media.

The complexity of the so-called 'public opinion.'  
Audience studies and audience fragmentation  
Opinion polls.

Media influence

A long academic debate: from classical ideas on the overwhelming influence of the mass-media to the more balanced modern approach of the fragmentation of audiences and a receiver that is not 'passive' as was widely believed until the seventies. How much do the media influence 'public opinion'?

The role of the media in the society  
Liberal and conservative perceptions about the press: watchdog and mirror, or opposition and 'saboteur'?  
Being official; being independent  
The three spheres within (and between) which the media move: from consensus to legitimate deviation (Hallin). Media as the 'Fourth Estate'?

The importance of editors and 'gatekeepers;' in defining what will finally be on air or in print. Fairness, accuracy, impartiality; neutrality: the debate on objectivity. Is it possible?

Herd journalism

The decline of international news coverage: The cost of maintaining foreign correspondents; the decline in TV audiences and in newspaper readers.  
The main media commodity: credibility. e.g. Scandals at *New York Times* and *USA Today*.  
Questions: Who decides what is news: politicians, journalists or editors? In a war situation, who sets the agenda: government, warlords or media?

Media, Conflict and Security

This has to do with the basic problems that media and other actors face in conflict situation.  
While the traditional role of the media as reporters of the truth can play an important role in international conflicts, media response to conflict is shaped, and some say distorted, by a number of factors.

- Christopher Young, *Conflict Research Consortium*

## Security

There is an ongoing tension between journalists' desires to report on conflicts and military actions, and military concerns about security. Generally journalists accept the need for some secrecy regarding military maneuvers. However many journalists have observed, "secrecy and controls on reporters are often imposed for reasons of political convenience, for example to avoid blame for military or political errors that deserve exposure." In order to maintain military security and prevent a massive influx of reporters into the war zone, reporters were confined to pools during the Gulf War.

Representative journalists were included in the press pool, and their reports were made available to the rest of the media. Many journalists were dissatisfied with this system, since it greatly restricted most reporters' access to events, and since the military limited what even the pool reporters could cover. Retired General Sidle, who continues to work as a consultant to the Defense Department, argues that in dealing with the press, security and troop safety must be the military's first concern. Rather than pools, Sidle favors field press censorship, which he argues provides the maximum freedom for the press, while still maintaining troop safety. Sidle cautions however that if the media won't limit the number of reporters it send into a battle zone, the military will have to intervene and impose limits.

## Escalation

The media can contribute to conflict escalation, either directly or indirectly. Experienced war reporters observe that sometimes the very presence of cameras will prompt the sides to start shooting. Terrorists often rely on the media. Terrorist attacks may be calculated to draw media attention, and so draw attention to their cause. In the absence of media coverage, many types of terrorism would be useless. Video media in particular tend to focus on dramatic and violent events. It was observed, "more than ever in terms of news, war is better than peace, violence is better than non- violence." This tendency to focus on violence and conflict, and to further sensationalize violent events can distort the public's perceptions of the situation.

Many seminar participants felt that the American press, in particular, failed to adequately investigate the Gulf War, or to report on the causes of the war. Instead the media "became the mouthpiece for the government, it gave up its privilege of free criticism, reinforced the us- versus-them syndrome." Many participants expressed grave concern that the public seemed quite willing to accept such a "tame" press. Milton Viorst of the New Yorker argued that, as a result of this "Congress didn't obtain, and the American people didn't obtain the information needed to challenge the president on the subject of a war which I believe could have been avoided."

## De-escalation

The media can also contribute to conflict de-escalation. Many people believe that the media coverage of the conflict played a key role in turning U.S. public opinion against the war in Vietnam. Lack of popular support eventually forced the U.S. to withdraw from that conflict. One seminar participant suggested that the constant live coverage in the early stages of the Yugoslavian conflict helped to contain that conflict by allowing the parties to publicly vent their emotions and positions. Another participant observes that the Gulf War "is the first war in the history of humanity where a representative of the other belligerent appeared almost nightly in the homes of the world. Can you imagine interviews with Ho Chi Min in American living- rooms at the height of the Vietnam war?" The media can offer better communication with and better information regarding the adversary. By allowing each side to see the other relatively directly, by bringing the opponent into our living -rooms, the media can help to prevent the demonization of the other side.

## Hostage

Former hostage and journalist Roger Auque argued that the media should cover hostage- takings. The safety of the hostages depends in part on their being remembered by their own governments and by the broader community. Auque also observed, "Americans have a kind of naive belief in not negotiating with terrorists, but they benefit as much as anyone else." The media often serves as a needed channel of communication between the terrorists and the target government. However, another journalist observed that media sensationalism could escalate a hostage situation. When a U.S. television station described the Iranian hostage situation as "America held hostage," their exaggeration simply puffed up the already inflated self-image of the hostage-takers.

## Press as go-between

The media can also serve as a channel of communication between leaders, and between leaders and their constituencies. Ted Turner of CNN recalled that when Philippine President Marcos wanted to appeal to key U.S. legislators he would ask CNN to broadcast his speech. CNN would alert the appropriate legislators and then solicit their comments after the broadcast. Turner said, "when we were doing a follow-up story we would find them quoting each other based on what they had seen on CNN." [p. 45] Many analysts argue that Saddam Hussein's Gulf Crisis speeches and appearances were directed primarily toward developing a stronger Arab constituency.

## Selective Focus

Media response to conflict is shaped, and some say distorted, by a number of factors. Many journalists observed that in the age of video, if there is no picture, there is no story. Situations, which cannot be captured on film, or to which photographer cannot get access, tend to be under-reported. Visually dramatic, acute events (such as battles or bombings) receive more coverage, while longer-term, widespread situations (such as famine or poverty) get less. A number of participants observed that while the Gulf War got extensive coverage, the deaths of over 140,000 Bangladeshis due to spring flooding went virtually unreported.

This emphasis on the visual also leads to "escalation by anchorman." In the age of satellite video the relevant live backdrop comes to represent journalistic authenticity and credibility. "If I am standing here live, and there is a minaret behind me, then I am a journalist and you should believe me." [p. 17] This leads to competition among the various media outlets to get their "man on the scene," even when the "scene" has no real relevance to the story. Referring to the blue domes, which were a favorite backdrop for televised Gulf War reports, one participant noted, "everybody thought it was part of a mosque, but you know the blue domes are over the pool [of the Dhahran Hotel]." [p. 62] Another factor, which shaped coverage of stories, is the cultivated preference of both the media and the public for good-guy, bad-guy stories. The Iran-Iraq War resulted in over a million deaths and was of major political importance but received relatively little media coverage in the West. Both parties were out of favor with the American public, and so there was no clear "good-guy" in that conflict. In contrast the Soviet-backed Afghani civil war received much more coverage at least until the Soviets withdrew from the conflict.

## Search for truth

Finally, the traditional role of the media as reporters of the truth can play an important role in international conflicts. As noted above, a key function of the media is to give the public the information necessary to make good decisions. The media can seek to confirm official accounts, reveal official deceit, and correct errors of omission. When officials claim that there was an oil spill eighteen times as large as the Exxon Valdez spill spreading off the coast of Kuwait, one reporter hired a helicopter to look for the spill. She found no evidence of a spill of that magnitude, and revealed that the official claims were greatly exaggerated.

Veteran journalist Ann Medina stressed the importance of being a first-hand witness. Official sources, even when they agree, may simply be wrong. She recounted a time where Canadian and British embassy officials and the Ugandan government all assured the press that the government still held a key town against rebel forces. However, when she was finally able to get there in person she found rebel forces in complete control.

## Inflammatory Media

Although the media usually claim that their purpose is to inform the public about public events, they often do so in an inflammatory way. Part of this is due to differing interests. In countries with a free press, journalists want to write pieces that get people's attention (so they can get more readers, listeners, and/or viewers). To do this, they often focus on extreme events and negative stories, because those generate more interests than do stories about cooperation or peace. Although this bias does not occur in countries where the government controls the press, in those nations, the press usually gives the government view of issues, which may be highly one-sided and inflammatory as well.

In addition, many reporters simply do not understand enough about conflict dynamics in general or the particular issues or people that they are writing about to avoid making misstatements or statements that make the situation worse, rather than better. Further, they usually work on tight deadlines, interviewing as many people as they can in a few hours or days. Then they have to write their story and move on. This does not give them time to develop the deep understanding of an issue that is necessary to analyze it accurately and clearly for the public. As a result, media coverage of a brewing conflict, which is intended to clarify the problem can actually obscure and escalate it.

This becomes an even greater problem when negotiations are occurring, as people bargain very differently if they know they are being watched than they do if the negotiations are private. In private negotiations people can brainstorm, raising and exploring all sorts of new, creative ways to define the problem and generate solutions. If they are being watched in the public, however, they tend to stick much more closely to their standard positions, for fear of alarming their constituencies. Negotiators will often make speeches that are designed more to appeal to the outside audience than the people at the table. For this reason, mediators usually prefer that negotiations be kept private, although this can at times be difficult, especially in democratic societies where the press and the public expects to be allowed into most decision-making processes.

### Recommended Resources

The Media of Conflict: *War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence*; Tim Allen, Jean Seaton; ISBN: 1856495701

The Rise of the Network Society; Manuel Castells; ISBN: 0631221409

Understanding Media; Marshall McLuhan, Lewis H. Lapman; ISBN: 0262631598

Custodians of Conscience; Theodore Lewis Glasser, James S. Ettema; ISBN: 0231106750

Taken by Storm: *The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (American Politics and Political Economy Series); W. Lance Bennett, David L. Paletz; ISBN: 0226042596

Media Ethics: *Cases and Moral Reasoning*; Clifford G. Christians, Mark Fackler, Kim Rotzoll, Kathy Brittain McKee; ISBN: 0801333385

The Business of Journalism: *Ten Leading Reporters and Editors on the Perils and Pitfalls of the Press*; William Serrin; ISBN: 1565845811

The Elements of Journalism: *What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*; Bill Kovach, Tom Rosenstiel; ISBN: 0609607839

## **About the EPU**

The EPU program represents a challenge to students both inside and outside the classroom. It facilitates conversations and reflections on the many theoretical and practical issues the world is confronted with today.

Inside the class-room a high standard prevails given the high quality of EPU's international faculty. But learning also occurs outside class, facilitated by the fact that EPU students and faculty live together in a small community, in close proximity to each other, with little of the distractions that characterise modern cities. Ideas raised in the academic courses continue to be debated informally afterwards. This stimulates a growth of a community of scholars (around thirty to fifty persons) that is particularly rich not only because of the transnational character of the faculty but also because of the many different cultural backgrounds and practical experiences of EPU students. Students admitted into this program should therefore be prepared to find themselves living together with students from Bosnia, Bhutan, Pakistan, Japan, Nigeria, Columbia, Mexico, the USA, Uganda, Rwanda, Germany or Russia, to name just a few of the countries which EPU students call home. Since EPU began in 1990, over 700 students have come from 85 different countries. The individuals themselves often reflect the cross-pressures and dislocations of the modern world. Thus, one student may be a Muslim from Los Angeles, another a feminist from Indonesia, or a young diplomat from Uganda. Many will have experienced war and lost loved ones.

## **The EPU Experience**

Upon completion of a semester at the EPU, the chances are high that the students' perceptions of their own societies as well as that of others will have been challenged if not changed. A new web of relationships is woven into the fabric of an individual student's life. The EPU staff have seen intimate friendships develop between students of disparate backgrounds. You may find yourself invited to a wedding in India, a rock festival in Denmark, or for a holiday on the beach in Gambia. Or you might be asked to help support peace work in Georgia, rebuild a town in Bosnia, or resettle someone fleeing war. The EPU provides students with an understanding of peace and conflict in the world that reaches beyond purely academic limits.

The EPU's effort has been to create an embryonic experience of what a true transnational culture might be like, respectful of diversity and pluralism, without the constant threat of conflict, but with a permanent need for tolerance, understanding and mutual learning.

## **Editorial**

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