

## THIRD PARTY INTERVENTIONS INTO VIOLENCE AND ITS REPRODUCTIONS

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Third party intervention practices have developed rapidly over the past thirty years, often in innovative and boundary pushing ways; not least through diverse theoretical inputs that foster frameworks for expanding practices like mediation. The values, institutional cultures, and social contexts that guide third party roles and orientation are, however, not uniform, varying from Track II Interventions (Kelman, 1992) to informal support in community spaces (Botes, 2003). The surge of organized conflict resolution practices made "accessible" to marginalized social spaces in response to increasing conflict and violence trends often invites more widespread adaptations across boundaries. In post-conflict within Central America for example, this is significantly evident in judicial reform efforts seeking to strengthen the Rule of Law (Murdock, et. al). The resulting consulting industry of conflict "specialists" to pursue structural reforms draws our attention to the pattern that third party intervention models built with specific institutional objectives and employing practices, and based on assumptions, may be incoherent with the fragile realities of life in those spaces. This becomes ethically questionable when accessible conflict resolution processes like mediation are claimed and seemingly celebrated as an innovative exercise in citizenship, while lacking integrated analysis of non-violent formal or community-initiated informal third party interventions, once these applied practices move outside their originally intended institutional "containers" and into spaces that experience high levels

of insecurity. The inherent power ascribed to intervention practices that deal directly with, or function in a system of violence also poses risks and shapes how such practices are carried out, depending on their engagements with social or political actors in the community (see Wheeler, 2009; Wilding, 2009; Baird, 2009). Taken together, how and where practitioners remain blinded to the complexities of power and violence, may paradoxically work against ideals, or worse, render their work futile when it comes to supporting the social change claims they make. This interface (Pearce & McGee, 2011) becomes particularly urgent against the backdrop of peace studies research that calls for attention to the nuanced ways by which responses to insecurity and violence in its multiple reproductions shapes the quality of life in individual and collective ways (Abello Colak & Pearce, 2009). Discerning the linkages between direct intervention practices and violence's reproduction can illuminate constructive and/or destructive potential, while providing a more substantive contribution to our understanding of how "non-dominating forms of power" (Pearce, 2013) might be consolidated. Researchers and practitioners have much to learn about how context and violence shapes, but may also be shaped by, innovations and adaptations of formal or informal third party interveners. The works herein suggest practice development must invite broader inputs in which the interactive and intervention dimensions (Alexander, 2011) of

interventions like community mediation are developed as coordinated, as opposed to fragmented pursuits. At the very least, recognizing that "getting in the middle" of violence, adds unique contours to our practices in contexts of insecurity, invites a more strategic approximation between these bodies of knowledge. To that end, Vilson Groh and Katia Madeira focus our attention on how their conceptualization of mediation is shaped by contextual contours of territories-in-dispute. Dr. Jenny Pearce's reflections considers forms of power and how and ordering based on assumptions about complex environments may stifle understanding. Beth Roy speaks to her practice that accounts for forms of violence and contrasts starkly to still dominant mediation conventions. Dr. Sara Malatone Henkeman looks at gaps in mediator's development based on findings from research in the unequal and transitioning South African context. Andrew Thomas' work in the aftermath of the Trayvon Martin shooting death shares how, where, and why conflict management practices can respond to the complexities of violence that also provokes historic community divisions.

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## P@X Theory

### TERRITORIES: TO WHOM DO OUR SPACES OF STRUGGLE BELONG?

In 2002, I [Vilson] performed 80 funerals of young people resulting from violent deaths in a territory of 32,000 inhabitants whose population comprises the area known as the Maciço do Morro da Cruz. This territory is comprised of 17 impoverished sub-communities. Despite the geographic aspect and location of this territory, which is situated in the center of the capital city of Florianópolis (Santa Catarina), economically speaking, it is an area that lies at the city's periphery. This not an atypical example of how Brazilian cities are constructed and conformed, which today hold nearly 87% of the country's population.

Here, social inequality has become a cultural norm, while injustice has become a mechanism of anesthesia through which we begin to accustom ourselves to urban violence as a normal part of everyday life. By way of example, organized crime in the state of Santa Catarina dominated by a regionalized movement of the PGC (or First Capital Group), boasts 2,000 militants who are connected to the organization; 1,000 of them are currently in the state's prisons, while 1,000 live throughout our communities. This demonstrates just how great the distance is between these territories in their relationship between the center and periphery; this, in a country in which between the years 2006 and 2012, 33,000 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 years old were murdered (IDHA, 2009).

Reflecting upon the reality of these territories means seeing mediation processes as spaces of articulation, acts in which rights are constructed, and struggles that forward political movements around these urban spaces are taken into consideration around how we conceive of more just and equal cities; it is to hold as central the processes in which reproduction of social life unfolds, and the understanding that this reproduction occurs as a profoundly unequal one, transforming cities into places of financial speculation and the mercantilization of social life.

In our experience, the consequences of this unequal process occur throughout everyday life in this territory, translated into structural

unemployment, underemployment, poverty, urban violence that feeds fear and insecurity, destruction of the environment, and the State's shirking of responsibility. It is thus that these territories become territories-in-dispute amongst the presence of the State during electoral periods, narcotrafficking in their militancy campaigns through activities of organized crime, and the locally based organizations that strive to re-weave an extremely fragile social fabric.

In our understanding, one cannot engage in interventions in these territories without deepening their understanding of them, including: the profile of the population; knowledge of the territory itself, which extends from the spatial dimensions to the dimensions of existing relationships in this spaces; its history of struggle or lack thereof; the relationships of internal and external power, interests, organizing methods, lifestyle and patterns of workers and labor; how alliances are formed (if they are alliances that reproduce the current capitalistic state model); the way in which the state uses the territory; how the state organizes; and how the population organizes in the face of the state's interventions. In this way, [intervention] requires one to understand the relationships and the power dynamics that not only exist, but many times, are established vis-à-vis internal and external disputes.

Another factor that parallels these in importance is that of gaining an understanding of information through a mapping of public projects or interventions within the territory, while performing a critical reading of these processes. This is what we have done in the territories in which we work through the organization and articulation of the Network of our Institute [1] - an NGO that was born from the demands from the base communities to coordinate our efforts. Which public policies actually exist? Do public policies attend to the demands of the territory in the areas of health, social assistance/services, education, housing, culture & leisure, and transportation? Similarly, interventions from the private sphere vis-à-vis services, programs, and projects, must also be explored.

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It was upon such understandings that a network of organizations [2] was born which, today, attempt to mediate within these spaces by constructing new non-State public spaces while exercising social control.

To operate in certain territories, it is urgent to develop an understanding that these territories are used by the government as a political strategy. Along those lines, it is necessary to develop a sensitivity in order to identify and manage the political and social issues inherent to them. It is necessary to be clear that these territories are not neutral spaces in which concerted action strategies spontaneously arise amongst social segments; they are political spaces which are contested, and for which we continue our work and struggle.

In this sense, the implication of understanding them as territories in dispute and collective construction, wherein the positions and the structures of interaction are constantly carved out by the positions of the social actors who are involved, constitute key elements for the understanding of a territorial dynamics.

We believe that the territorial dynamic requires a constant articulation of struggle for human rights, one in which the conception of human rights has at its base the notion of going beyond the "legalistic" vision of rights, founded rather on the necessity to articulate around movements that defend and materialize human rights, connecting the "social question" with public policies and the possibility for struggle for a free and emancipated society based on values that are radically democratic.

Finally, articulating such movement within the territory requires the following, from both professionals and the subjects involved:

- Become knowledgeable and defend strategies that make it possible to attend to the needs and interests of those populations through participatory processes which involve them;
- Recognize, value, strengthen, and build alliances through forums that are internal and external to the territory through a pathway of connectivity, respecting autonomy

- Articulate and support the efforts of movements by the population for their rights (dignified housing, education, professionalization, health, transportation, accessibility, environmental and cultural issues, observing the differentiation in the ways and methods that work for each ethnic group, including: Afro-descendent population, mixed race, and impoverished white populations);
- Participate and articulate, together with the local councils and public policy forums, in the struggle for access by the population around social policies;
- Respect and defend human diversity, combatting social inequalities, recognizing issues of gender, ethnicity, and class;
- Build spaces for listening for processes in conflict and mediation efforts within the organization of community in the micro-macro relationship.



Children involved in Institute Vilson Groh's Projects.

As a point of departure, these elements form part of our experience [3], which we have consolidated and made it possible to build networks of connection amongst organized civil society, the State, and private initiatives. These are spaces in which the sharing and listening can occur amongst opposing groups, in the internal and external areas, in the search for pathways of reciprocity and intersubjective interaction. These points facilitate the action and articulation of networks, as much in the macro as in the micro. In the micro spatial realm, the identification of collective subjects of a territory, such as schools, associations, health clinics, cultural centers, among others, has a central role in the fight and articulation of rights for a more just and equitable city. As

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David Harvey affirms, the right to the city is a right in which people have access to that which exists in the metropolis (such as transportation services, health and education, etc.) but also to the right of participating in the construction and transformation of the urban fabric, which ranges from creating mechanisms at the base, to the management of the city. Within this process and context we can explore mediation, which becomes clearer through the concept of connectivity, interacting with groups and realities, and acting together, rather than in opposition. Such it is that [the practices of mediation] weaves its way into the construction and deconstruction of new spaces, that is, within a non-state public sphere of social control.

The following poem by João Cabral de Melo Neto hangs at the exit of my (Wilson's) home. As my eyes fall upon it each day, it provides nourishment.

### *Weaving the Morning*

*One rooster cannot weave a morning.  
He will always need other roosters:  
one to catch the cry that he  
and toss it to another, another rooster  
to catch the cry that a rooster before him  
and toss it to another, and other roosters  
that with many other roosters criss-cross  
the sun threads of their rooster cries,  
so that the morning, form a tenuous tissue,  
will grow by his weaving of all the roosters.*

*And enlarging into a fabric involving all,  
erecting itself into a tent where all may enter,  
extending itself for all, in the canopy  
(the morning) that floats without any frame:  
the morning, a canopy made of a weave so airy  
that, one woven, it rises by itself: balloon light.*

Vilson Groh

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Kátia R. Madeira has a degree and na MA degree in Social Service from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (1988) e mestre em Serviço Social pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (2009). She is currently the Director of the União Catarinense de Educação. She has mostly worked in the following areas: human rights, social policies, social work and planning.

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### Notes:

[1] The Institute Pe. Vilson Groh was created on the 21st of January 2010 after an intense reflection about the importance of Institutionalizing a network of organizations that were acting in concert, reinforcing their connections and guaranteeing greater synergy of efforts.

[2] There are seven organizations that comprise the IVG network: Centro Cultural Escrava Anastácia, Centro de Evangelização e Educação Popular, Casa da Criança do Morro do Mocotó, Marista School Lúcia Mayvorne, Marista School São José, Associação João Paulo II and Centro Social Elizabeth Sarkamp. Together, these organizations in 2012 provided indirect services for a total of 17,308 people, 4,327 of whom participated in direct service provision; the majority were children.

[3] Experiences and research of the Institute (IVG) undertaken within both their projects and the territories where it develops its work.

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### GROWING NON DOMINATING POWER AND REDUCING VIOLENCE ON THE 'DISORDERED' MARGINS

People often think of 'power' as belonging at the centre and 'violence' to the edges or the social margins. Such thinking reflects our yearning for order and ordering and the assumptions we make about the nature of order and disorder. Our urge to order can, however, become dangerous when we work in situations of complex disorder. It can blind our understanding. Our social peripheries are also expressions, of the ordering processes at the centre. On these edges, life is experienced intensely and in great insecurity as people struggle for the material and emotional sources of survival. For practitioners who work in such areas, there are multiple challenges, but perhaps the first one is to deal with the ordering which has constructed their own worldviews. Such an ordering is itself an outcome of the way power constructs our subjectivity. The practitioner must first see her or himself as subject to and sometimes participant in, the ordering processes, which lead some to feel lesser than others. Behind the ordering processes is power.

Much has been written on power, but not enough, in my view. We have now some rich deconstruction of power. We know it has many faces, as Stephen Lukes (2005) has informed us. It can involve the power to make someone do something against their wishes, or the power to ensure that an issue never emerges onto the agenda; it can include covert and invisible power as well as the dominating power so common in our societies. Foucault (2002) helps us understand how power constructs our sense of who we are and what we are capable of. The practitioner is as much caught up in this as the wealthy businessmen and the poorest of urban residents. Our structuring and ordering constructs our sense of self and we play out the scripts which appear to be written for us about what we can and cannot do in life and in the world.

We also know that in many communities on the margins, where power has often not completed its ordering and subjectification, there are many who reject what they see as

the power of the powerful. I have found in working with very poor, multiethnic communities in the North of England, that people have a healthy skepticism about such power. When asked what power meant to them, they told me: 'enabling, sharing, listening, cooperating' (Pearce, 2012). This I call 'non dominating power', and I find one of the most interesting questions of our times, is how does such power 'grow'? It can, I argue (following the work of a pioneer of power thinking of the early twentieth century, Mary Parker Follett) 1925/40) grow through collective endeavour in which people are valued and recognised as of equal worth, subverting orders of worthiness and worthlessness and enabling people to rewrite 'their scripts'.

What has this got to do with violence? Well, in these marginal contexts, one way out of worthlessness is violence, particularly where men are seen as more male the more they show that they can hurt the body of the Other. Violence is reproduced in contexts of powerlessness, where the search for dominating power is often the only way to gain status, recognition and material goods.

So by growing 'non dominating power' might we reduce violence? Well, that's for empirical investigation. But it is also something that practitioners can be alert to. A 'discursive consciousness of power' (Haugaard, 2003), means that we become aware of the way we tacitly reconfirm power structures, but also of how 'other' forms of power might be possible. Thus those involved in mediation practice and other approaches to reducing violence, might factor in 'power' to their practice, if they don't already, and test out its relationship to the use of violence.

My proposition would be that the power that recognises the worth of the Other, which fosters cooperative human interaction over time, which releases people from their default 'scripts', not only challenges the normalization of dominating power but also willingness to use violence to pursue it. Non-dominating power grows through the way conflict, disagreement and difference are

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addressed, turning these into non-violent and productive instruments for change agreed amongst actors who respect each other's equal worth (Pearce, 2013). Growing such power must also generate effective action for change. Power's other meaning is capacity to act or 'potency'. My final question, therefore, is how can non-dominating power be effective without reproducing dominating power?

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## Peace Builders

### **Development Research Centre – Citizenship in Violent Settings**

<http://www.drc-citizenship.org/pages/citizenship-in-violent-settings>

The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (Citizenship DRC) investigates how “citizens hold institutions to account and claim their rights”. Drawing from research initiatives and researchers located in the global north and global south, the focus is on “long-term research with the objectives of generating new knowledge, disseminating this widely to decision-makers and practitioners, and building the capacity of partner institutions to carry out high-quality research, communication and policy engagement”.

### **International Centre for Participation Studies**

<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/ssis/icps/>

The aim of the ICPS at the University of Bradford (UK) is to conduct research around the “meaning and practice of participation in relationship to the building of conditions for humanity to live without violence and capable of addressing the complex human and natural crises which are converging in the 21st century”.

### **PRASI – Practitioners Research and Scholarship Institute**

<http://www.prasi.org/>

PRASI’s work forwards the unity of research and practice in conflict resolution that holds a practice-oriented focus which seeks to identify and meet the needs of people of color and others who are conventionally overlooked both as practitioners and users of conflict resolution.

### **Instituto Vilson Groh**

[www.ivg.net.br](http://www.ivg.net.br)

The IVG focuses on social inclusion and opportunities for thousands of children, adolescents, young people and adults in the city of Florinaopolis, in Santa Catarina, Brazil. The work of the institute also focuses on conflict resolution involving legal issues and rights protections, as well as projects focused on children in situations of violence and alternatives for youth involved in the world of narcotrafficking and organized crime

### **Underground Sociabilities**

<http://www.psych.lse.ac.uk/undergroundsociabilities/index.php>

“An international inter-institutional collaboration researching how Rio de Janeiro’s favelas are using cultural activities, identity and the imagination to regenerate public spheres and construct positive futures for young people at risk of drugs, violence and drug trafficking wars.”

**Urban Resilience in Situations of Chronic Violence (URCV)**

<http://www.urbanresilience.org/index.html>

The aim of the URCV project is to present a “greater knowledge base on the dynamics of urban resilience in situations of violence and insecurity with a view of assisting policy makers, urban planners and practitioners think about how best to assist.”

**A Toolkit for Resilience in Situations of Chronic Violence**

[http://web.mit.edu/cis/urban\\_resilience\\_toolkit.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/cis/urban_resilience_toolkit.pdf)

The toolkit was created by USAID and MIT and explores key issues, lessons learned, and recommendations that revolve around promising practices to promote urban resilience. These include the development of ideas to enhance community capacity in the face of armed actors, and discuss both horizontal (e.g., intra-community, or neighborhood-to-neighborhood) and vertical (e.g., state-community) relationships that have been used to sustain this relative autonomy.

## DO WE REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE GETTING IN THE MIDDLE OF?

A macro-micro case study of what happens in the 'black box' of community level peacebuilding practice in South Africa's unequal, transitional context was recently conducted. The study found four interlinked gaps related to mediators' (i) training, (ii) practice, (iii) conceptual understanding and (iv) ability to place presenting conflict in historical context where this is justified to advance social justice and longterm peacebuilding. Mediators exhibited the following manifestation of denial - procedural blindness, substantive deafness and a complicit silence about the interaction of past and present forms of violence. It was found that practitioners are not trained to recognise and record patterns of interaction of individual and structural factors in the cases they mediate. Nor are they trained to make victims and offenders aware, conscious, informed and educated about the social forces that create the environments they live in.

The research was born out of the growing dissonance I started to experience as a black practitioner in South Africa's unequal, transitional context. Many of the processes were derailed as a result of attitudes, behaviours and situations rooted in ascribed and growing inequality, internalised inferiority and internalised superiority that flow directly from South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid (Henkeman, 2010: 731-733). My own unresolved intergenerational and lifespan trauma were constantly triggered by the 'matrix of domination' (Hill Collins, 2000) between race groups. At the time I did not have the 'conceptual tools' to name and frame these 'invisible' factors. I recused myself and embarked on a long process of thinking, reading, observing and formal peace research (on which this reflection is based). After this journey, my resolve is strengthened to raise awareness and consciousness about our blindspots as peacebuilders, with the hope that we will 'do no harm'.

Many peacebuilders do not ordinarily bring the interaction of transhistoric cultural, structural and particularly the effects of psychological violence into the frame of analysis when direct violence is mediated. They focus mainly on

intra- and interpersonal levels which are necessary, but not sufficient to deal with cultural, structural and psychological violence that invisibly sustain conflicts and bedevil attempts at transformation. Mediators do this by using communication, analytical and problemsolving skills (i) to get parties to 'take responsibility' for their roles in the conflict; (ii) to build trust, relationships and understanding between conflicting parties; and (iii) to help parties effect 'resolution' of the presenting conflict by coming to an agreement (usually signed). If there is follow up, it is confined to the terms of the agreement. This is in line with the dominant mediation model which does not equip practitioners to take cultural, structural and psychological drivers of physical violence into account.

Neves suggests that mediators can extend and deepen the effect of their work when they identify 'recurring conflict between similar types of social actors' and thereafter approach these conflicts 'in their structure and not just in their individuality' (2009:492). If mediator training and practice can be complemented with contextual content, and 'structurally responsive' strategies, techniques and tactics, it will deal with the interlocked contextual, conceptual, training and practice gaps. The following reflections on the gaps found in peacebuilding practice in the South African context and possible ways to deal with it, (Henkeman, 2013:246-251) might be helpful in other unequal contexts:

- It is not straightforward to take account of transhistoric cultural, structural, psychological and physical violence in a transitional situation. The political imperative to 'forget the past' cause many in society, including scholars, to conflate political and knowledge boundaries.
- Many practitioners, who do not reflect on their practice, unwittingly uphold the unequal status quo ante and contribute to obscuring the 'deeper and longer' sources of violence.
- Practitioners need to be trained in a way that sharpens their analytical ability to discern patterns and connections in the tacit and explicit knowledge they already have about the society they are embedded in; and to recognise new instances of these patterns.

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- If practitioners are trained to 'see', 'hear' and 'articulate' deeper and broader patterns in the cases they mediate, they can render the interaction of different forms of violence visible. This can raise the awareness and consciousness of parties, add to the body of academic knowledge; and inform appropriate policy recommendations.

- Knowledge produced in practice can inform progressive training and education literature for 'structurally responsive' (Dyck, 2006:530) mediation training that is based on information sharing, awareness raising as well as education and action to build critical consciousness.

- In turn, more aware, conscious and appropriately trained practitioners will facilitate processes that have a better chance of advancing long-term peacebuilding in unequal contexts. The same applies to parties whose collective knowledge will help to increase negative peace and start the process of building long-term positive peace over time.

In sum, the main lesson about getting 'into the middle' of violence – is to understand the interlocked nature of violence, its multiple intersecting aspects, and how some forms of violence are rendered invisible (but lethal) by the emphasis placed on others. For example, few scholars refer to psychological violence, its consequences (e.g. historical trauma, also known as the 'soul wound' of colonised and oppressed people), and its role in manifest violence. Similarly, different forms of cultural violence (e.g. conspiracies of silence) and its consequences can be part of overall 'states of denial' in a post-compromise situation where people are encouraged to 'forget the past'. The consequences of transhistorical inequality (structural violence) are seldom dealt with in mediation situations, as growing inequality, caused by neoliberal economic policies, is poorly understood by non economists. As peacebuilders, we need to be clear about exactly what we are getting 'into the middle' of, as the onus is on us to raise our consciousness about causes and effects generally regarded as 'externalities' (Galtung, 1996: viii).

Dr. Henkeman is an independent scholar/practitioner and a research associate of the Social Law Project at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. During apartheid she worked for Public Interest organisations that intervened non-violently against apartheid excesses. During the first democratic elections she was seconded to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) as co-ordinator of Mediation Services. She works on peacebuilding projects inside and outside of South Africa.

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## MEDIATING JUSTICE

Alas, conflict intervention, in the form of mediation or other face-to-face modalities, will not solve problems of violence in our world. Deeply rooted in systemic injustice, violence may be ameliorated by our practices, but the interventions truly needed are political. Collective action that challenges inequalities and discrimination everywhere they exist, are called for.

Where conflict intervention techniques can play a role is in helping to build solidarity among people ready to take action for profound social change. How often in my practice I hear people say, "I can't stand the world the way it is. But I don't have a clue what to do about it." Herein lies the contradiction: isolated individuals pondering the nature of transformative action experience failures of imagination, but the single most creative act we can take is to come together to think and act with others. In much of the western world, we don't do that because we are socialized to believe we need to demonstrate knowledge in order to have value and therefore entitlement to connect and act. At the same time, we are taught that our most intuitive knowledge is illegitimate; that knowledge from accredited sources supersedes what we know from our life experiences. Internalized oppression keeps us passive and isolated, exactly the conditions that enable state-originated violence and encourage peer-to-peer violence, whether among young men or by men toward women.

I believe the single most important aspects of my practice are those that challenge the distribution of power among clients while legitimizing subjective experience as key knowledge. Conventional wisdom among mediators has it that the simple experience of disputants' collaborating to solve their own conflicts is "empowering". That may be, but it is a weak sort of power. While the structure of mediation may be helpful, third-party interventions still involve a "professional", the keeper of the expertise. However "neutral" that person may be, the very nature of the procedure inevitably communicates values and biases because we are so socialized to privilege expertise as more legitimate than experience.

More significantly, my practice honors subjectivity as the crucial ingredient in analysis and negotiation. By encouraging full and respectful expression of emotion, by guiding the

listening as well as the speaking, and even more importantly by facilitating a process by which people can talk through underlying assumptions and intuitions, clients often have the experience of being understood in a unique way. I intervene actively in that dialogue, as counselor, advocate, and teacher. My advocacy of those whose reality is most often denied is a crucial contribution. I do not see myself as neutral. For me, all intervention is either a reinforcement of hierarchy or a social act of challenge, because the unjust exercise of power is omnipresent. For one's reality to be legitimized is to have an emotional experience of effectiveness that runs counter to the prevailing social messages that those of us lacking privilege internalize throughout life. As the dialogue goes on, people's voices cease wavering, confidence grows, and more and more of the information needed to conduct truly collaborative negotiation is revealed by everyone involved.



Beth Roy

In all this process, I see myself not as impartial but as "poly-partial", a term I coined half-facetiously many years ago. By that I mean that while I may be advocating for those with less social power, I am also very conscious that those with more power are themselves dehumanized by that very fact. So to guide the one who is at the moment in command to share power equitably is a good thing all around. Rebalancing power is an act that relieves both sides of the equation. Only once that has happened can a negotiation take place that holds promise for genuinely solving the sources of the conflict.

**P@X Studies**

How does this work relate to building a world without violence? Clearly, the one condition that makes an egalitarian dialogue impossible is the threat of violence among the people involved. On the other hand, all that we've learned about power dynamics and their rectification aids effective work within groups of people working toward social change. How often needed activism fails because people compete for the right approach! Solidarity is shaken as people transact race, gender, and class-based power dynamics without awareness and without a way to learn what they don't know. To have available effective ways for people to learn from their conflicts, to form stronger bonds of alliance and find more effective modes of activism by working through differences, and, most importantly, to overcome imbedded systems of domination even among comrades, is a contribution toward the peaceable society.

*Beth Roy*

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Beth Roy, PhD, is a long-time mediator in the San Francisco Bay Area. Trained as a sociologist at University of California, Berkeley, she teaches there in the Peace and Conflict Studies program. Dr. Roy is a founder of the Practitioners Research and Scholarship Institute (PRASI), a network of writers dedicated to supporting academic and other professional authors to regard lived experience as the basis of research and to write their knowledge for publication. Her publications include the co-edited *Re-Centering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution Practice* (Syracuse University Press, 2008).

**P@X Studies**

## THE NATURE OF UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

## P@X Studies

In February of 2012 the City of Sanford, in central Florida was unexpectedly rocked by the tragic death of Trayvon Martin and the grim circumstances surrounding the altercation that lead to his death. The reaction to the Sanford Police Department not making an immediate arrest of George Zimmerman drew national attention from the media, civil rights organizations, social justice agencies, the Department of Justice, Law enforcement agencies, the Governor's Office, Faith-based organizations, Neo-Nazi groups, the New Black Panther Party, the Dream Defenders, etc.

These groups were taking an assertive and vocal stance on one side or the other on the issues of the arrest. The Black Community in particular reached crisis levels in communications and negotiations between the City Officials and the concerned citizens' deteriorated and turned into accusations, demands and threats. Not since the Rodney King case in 1991 have the press, religious organizations, social activist groups, civilian oversight groups and the public in general maintained such a high interest in the role, function and performance of a Police Department. Sadly, as more time lapsed between the incident and an arrest of the defendant, the more the community recounted the history of social injustices, inequalities, prejudices and racism. With the lapse of time, the more divided and polarized the communities within the City of Sanford became. Trayvon Martin's case was seen by many as the tipping point, and symbolized to many a gross injustice, causing them to say: enough is enough, it's time for change.

When a person of color is the victim of a violent crime at the hands of a person of a different race, and if there is a perception of or in fact a delay in the administration of justice, the foundation is laid for long standing unresolved conflict to surface. The incident in Sanford, become the catalyst for the emergence of entrenched disputes amongst the police, elected officials, the city manager, and

the community. If the Police Department and City Officials do not take a proactive approach and engage in a well thought out conflict management strategy, the incident can quickly turn to a heated racial issue and begin to take on a life of its own.

Usually when this occurs the incident causes a downward spiral in police community relations and community-governmental relations. Unfortunately, individuals with little knowledge of the workings of the public policy process, governmental relations, and the criminal justice system or dispute resolution, surface as spokespersons and negatively influence the thinking of others. As relationships deteriorate, conflict management strategies can minimize the possibility of confrontations. These include, but are not limited to, open dialogue, mediation, community conversations, facilitation and negotiation with the community in general and key leadership is critical.

When the lines of communication and the perception of good faith diminishes, the community starts feeling that the police and city administration are stonewalling, causing some in the community to reflect on the historically poor relationship they've with the police. This reflection on the history of Blacks and police fuel a variety of horror stories both locally and nationally, and resentment about the injustices. The resolve to do something about the situation grows, and a national audience begins to support and encourage more aggressive local activism in the pursuit of "justice".

**Escalation of the Conflict:** The following are some of the dynamics that often occurs in these types of conflicts. The stages of the process are adopted from *Managing Public Disputes* by Carpenter & Kennedy (1988). The longer the conflict continues, the more evident the escalation spiral, generating emotions and the potential for violence.

**Sides Form:** Reluctance and caution to talk about the situation by the police and city administration is seen as stonewalling and interpreted as a cover-up, deceitfulness, and the return old police practices.

**Positions Harden:** People talk more with others of similar views, and less with people that disagree with them (e.g. police, city officials and city administration, etc.).

**Communication Stops:** When communication stops the police department is perceived as not responding quickly enough, untruthful, and insensitive to the injustice.

**Resources are Committed:** Positions are hardened; communication has essentially stopped, and radical voice becomes more influential, and more frequent.

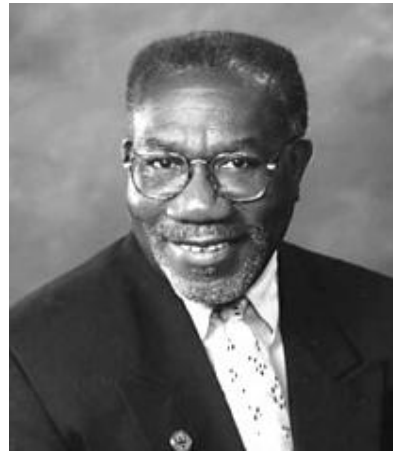
**Conflict Goes Outside the Community:** The longer the conflict lasts, the more likely the community groups begin to look outside the community for support and power.

**Perceptions Become Distorted:** When perceptions become distorted, community leaders lose objectivity in their perception of the police department's character, good faith and motives. The issue becomes black and white and driven by the need to prove "I" am right.

**Sense of Crisis Emerges:** The community divides into factions and working out the situation seems somewhat hopeless. People are willing to bear even higher costs because the goal now is to win at any cost or "by any means necessary".

**Cost of Managing Unresolved Conflict:** The cost of managing long standing unresolved conflict can be costly:

- Financial cost for city public safety, emergency medical and public services provided for the rallies, marches and protests;
- Human Relations cost associated with rebuilding relations with the community;
- Staff turnover;
- Rebuilding the local, national and international image of the City;
- Marketability, the city's ability to attract new businesses to the City;



Andrew Thomas

**Strategies:** It is essential to develop strategies and a plan to guide you through the process. The following are some suggested strategies that maybe useful.

- Establish a team to strategically think through the "what ifs" and identify possible deal breakers.
- Be willing to listen to the community and acknowledge the communities issues of past injustices and inequalities that may have occurred.
- Identify available resources local, state and national, available to the City.
- Identify key partnerships and build bridges to improve communication
- Do not to assume the community leadership understands conflict management processes; explain the process and the probable timeframe to complete the process to the leadership and the community, to avoid the spread of misinformation.
- Be patient and creative in the use of alternative dispute resolution processes. Because of the deeply rooted views of racism and social injustice held by many in the Black

Community, any effort to move the City forward and reunite the community would require a holistic multi-faceted systemic approach. The approach ultimately would have to be broad in scope and address a number of the societal problems that over the years have been identified as contributors to poverty, inequality, racism and social unrest. The City of Sanford recognized the need to take steps to reunite the community, improve police and community relations, address the spike in violent crimes and address the social unrest.

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The City has moved forward with a number of initiatives focused on community relations. These initiatives are predicated on the premise that the City of Sanford is a community that values, nurtures and encourages the diversity of its residents. Sanford is a community where conflicts and differences are seen as opportunities for change, reconciliation and reshaping of relationships. Sanford is striving to be a community where major social issues such as poverty, hunger, housing, employment and discrimination are all viewed and addressed in a holistic city-wide context, and remains consistent with its philosophy of valuing civility, diversity and inclusion.

*Andrew Thomas*

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Andrew has been promoting human rights, social justice and peaceful dispute resolution for 35 years, including 26 as Executive Director of the Center for Dispute Settlement in Rochester, New York. He has participated in the review and drafting of state legislation and served on numerous ADR commissions. Since 2005 Andrew has managed his own business, ALT Associates: Conflict Management Consultants.

## PSG's Attic

## PublicationsPS

**Barrinha, André** (2013), "The Ambitious Insulator: Revisiting Turkey's Position in Regional Security Complex Theory ", *Mediterranean Politics*, DOI: 10.1080/13629395.2013.799353.

**Barrinha, André** (2013), "Olhar o passado para pensar o presente: o Realismo Clássico e os Estudos Críticos de Segurança", *Nação e Defesa*, 135.

**Freire, Maria Raquel; Lopes, Paula Duarte** (2013) "Peacebuilding in Timor-Leste: Finding a Way between External Intervention and Local Dynamics", *International Peacekeeping*, vol.20, n.2, 204-218.

**Freire, Maria Raquel** (2013) "Confluência na Ásia? As Relações Rússia-China", *Relações Internacionais*, n.38, 95-104.

**Freire, Maria Raquel Freire; Simão Licínia** (2013) "'From Words to Deeds': EU Democracy Promotion in Armenia", *East European Politics*, vol.29, n.2, 175-189.

**Freire, Maria Raquel** (2013) "On decision-making, capabilities and the local dimension in EU operations". In W. Feichtinger, M.R. Freire and M.G. Galantino (org.) *Achievements / Failures / Perspectives: EU's Role in Multilateral Crisis Management, Findings and Conclusions*. Viena: Áustria, Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, junho, pp.15-21. Disponível em [http://www.grip.org/sites/grip.org/files/BREVES/2013/COST\\_EU%27s%20role%20in%20multilateral%20crisis%20management.pdf](http://www.grip.org/sites/grip.org/files/BREVES/2013/COST_EU%27s%20role%20in%20multilateral%20crisis%20management.pdf).

**Nascimento, Daniela** (2013) "Do 'velho' ao 'novo' humanitarismo: os dilemas da ação humanitária em contextos de conflito e pós-conflito violento", *Nação e Defesa*, 135 (September), 93-113.

**SEPTEMBER**

**Teresa Cravo** has started her Post-doc research project on **"The Instability-Intervention Nexus: Problematising External Responses to Political Unrest in the Periphery"**, Centre for Social Studies and Universidade de Westminster, funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

**André Barrinha** presented the communication **"The European Defence Agency and the discursive construction of European defence and security"**, UACES Annual Conference, Leeds, 2-4 September 2013.

**JULY**

**Teresa Cravo** presented the communication **"Portuguese Foreign Policy. An Overview"**, Summer Study Abroad, Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão de Lisboa (ISEG) and University Massachusetts-Dartmouth, Coimbra, 1

co-organised by Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and Sydney Southeast Asia Centre, University of Sydney, Sydney, 29 July 2013.

**JUNE**

**Teresa Cravo** presented the communication **"Rule of Law Reform in the Periphery"**, Harvard Institute for Global Law and Policy Annual Conference, Panel "Space, stories and self-reflection: reconfigurations of the rule of law in development", Harvard Law School, 3-4 June 2013.

**Teresa Cravo** presented the communication **"Domestic Constraints on Western Donors: Analysing the Identity-Foreign Policy Nexus within Development Aid"**, 1st European Workshop on International Studies, EWIS, Workshop 13 "Theorising Domestic and International Constraints on Foreign Policy Decision Making", University of Tartu, 5-8 June 2013.

**Teresa Cravo** presented the communication **"Emerging Powers: An Appraisal of Brazil, Russia and Turkey's Role in a Changing World. Some Theoretical Notes"**, International Seminar on Emerging Powers, CES, 12 June 2013.

**Teresa Cravo** presented the communication **"Development Aid and the Role of the Researcher"**, British International Studies Association Annual Conference, Birmingham, 20-21 June 2013.

**Daniela Nascimento** presented the communication **"Humanitarian action in question? Challenges and opportunities to international peace and security"**, PSS-ISA Joint Conference, Budapest, 28 June 2013.

**Katia Cardoso** presented the communication **"Diáspora cabo-verdiana, novas mobilidades, novos actores: o caso dos deportados"**, 5th European Conference on African Studies, ISCTE, 27-29 June 2013.

**José Manuel Pureza** presented the communication **"The politics of contestation: multitude against empire?"**, 5th European Conference on African Studies, ISCTE, Lisbon, 27-29 de June 2013.

**Sofia José Santos** presented the communication **"The role of the new online social media and the Arab Spring: what is actually inside the puzzle?"**, 5th European Conference on African Studies, ISCTE, Lisbon, 27-29 June.

**Teresa Cravo** presented the communication “**The ‘Bread Riots’ in Mozambique: Frelimo Government in the face of Contestation?**”, 5th European Conference on African Studies, ISCTE, Lisbon, 27 June 2013.

## MAY

**Maria Raquel Freire** presented the communication “**A questão da vizinhança e a evolução das relações entre a Ucrânia e a União Europeia**”, Debate on *A Ucrânia no Caminho da Integração na União Europeia*, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oporto, 23 May 2013.

**Maria Raquel Freire** presented the communication “**As Nações Unidas em Timor-Leste: (des)construir a paz**”, Conferência *A Construção da Paz em Timor-Leste: Dez Anos Depois, que Balanço?*, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Beira Interior, Covilhã, 31 May 2013.

**Daniela Nascimento** presented the session “**Seremos todos iguais e livres? Os Direitos Humanos no Mundo**”, 6 May, Highschool Dr. Manuel Fernandes, Abrantes; 10 May, Highschool Jaime Cortesão, Coimbra.

**André Barrinha** presented the communication “**Post-modernities: Europe and its defence**”, EUSA Biennial Conference, Baltimore, 9-11 May 2013.

## NEW PROJECT

OGAV/CES, in partnership with the Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária (Mozambique) and the Brazilian NGO Instituto Promundo started the research project “**Whose Cities? Understanding Non-Violent Male Identities for safe and inclusive cities**”, coordinated by Sílvia Roque and Teresa Maneca and funded by the International Development Research Centre (Canada). This 36-month project aims to deepen the theoretical and conceptual approaches to the interactions between masculinities, public security/violence, poverty and inequality through the case studies of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Maputo (Mozambique).