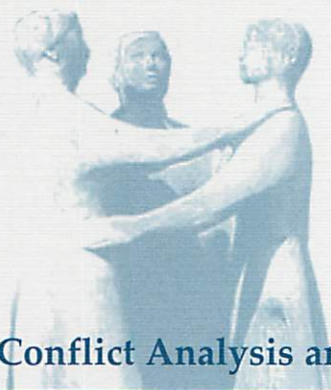# Puzzles in Search of Researchers

by
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Chair of Conflict Resolution

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Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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About the Author

Daniel Druckman is the Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Chair of Conflict Resolution at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR). Druckman began teaching at George Mason in 1984 and served as coordinator of ICAR's doctoral program from 1997 to 2002. In 1998 he received a teaching excellence award from George Mason. In 1995 he received the Otto Klineberg award for Intercultural and International Relations from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues for his work on nationalism. The International Association for Conflict Management (IACM) gave him its outstanding article award for 2001 for his *Journal of Conflict Resolution* paper on turning points. He was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from IACM in 2003.

Before he became a full-time professor at ICAR, Druckman directed several studies on human performance and international conflict resolution at the National Research Council and held senior positions at several research consulting firms. Druckman received his Ph.D. in social psychology from Northwestern University and was awarded a best-in-field prize from the American Institutes for Research for his doctoral dissertation. Since that dissertation he has published more than 140 articles, chapters, and books. He sits on the boards of eight journals, including the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and the *American Behavioral Scientist*. He is an associate editor of *Negotiation Journal, Simulation and Gaming,* and *Group Decision and Negotiation,* and a founding board member of *International Negotiations*.

Druckman has written, co-written, or edited 11 books, including *Conflict: From Analysis to Intervention,* a textbook with contributions from ICAR faculty that he co-edited with Sandra Cheldelin and Larissa Fast. He is now completing a methodology textbook, *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*.

About the Institute

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, has as its principal mission to advance the understanding and resolution of significant and persistent conflicts among individuals, communities, identity groups, and nations.

In the fulfillment of its mission, the Institute conducts a wide range of programs and outreach. Among these are its graduate programs offering doctoral and master's degrees in conflict analysis and resolution, clinical consultancy services offered by individual members of the faculty, and public programs and education that include the annual Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Lecture Series.

The Institute's major research interests cluster into four overall themes: globalization and conflict, religion and conflict, reflective practice, and change and conflict. The Institute's Applied Practice and Theory Program (APT) develops teams of faculty, students, and allied practitioners to analyze and address topics such as conflict in schools and other community institutions, crime and violence, jurisdictional conflicts between local agencies of government, and international conflicts.

For more information, please call (703) 993-1300 or check the Institute's web page at **www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR/**.

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present this lecture by Daniel Druckman, the Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Professor of Conflict Resolution at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University. The Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Chair, endowed in 1987 by Edwin and Helen Lynch in honor of Mr. Lynch's parents, is recognized as one of the most prestigious positions in the field of conflict resolution. The Lynch chair was previously held by James H. Laue and Kevin Clements.

This inaugural presentation, given on January 25, 2002, represents Druckman's reflections on core research questions that remain to be answered. His lecture demonstrated not only his keen insights into the evolution of the field of conflict analysis and resolution but also his continued commitment to rigorous application of clear methodologies to advance the field.

Druckman's lecture begins by noting that many of us are attracted to careers in research because we have questions that arouse our curiosity. This initial spark of curiosity, however, is enriched when it is combined with careful attention to methodologies. Among the major puzzles worth further investigation, in Druckman's view, are a set about process, identity, and situations in conflict resolution. In the conclusion of this lecture, Druckman ties these puzzles together into a larger framework that may be used to encourage integrative research on conflict analysis and resolution.

Druckman's productive professional career has spanned a wide range of questions that are at the heart of negotiation theory and the broader field of conflict analysis and resolution. His previous publications in the ICAR Occasional Papers series are *Negotiating Base Rights Agreements* (ICAR Occasional Paper #2, 1990) and *A Journey from the Laboratory to the Field: Insights on Resolving Disputes through Negotiations* (ICAR Occasional Paper #15, 2001).

Sara Cobb
Director, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Puzzles in Search of Researchers

Daniel Druckman
Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch
Chair of Conflict Resolution

I am honored to have been chosen by my colleagues to serve as this term's Lynch chair. The honor is enhanced by the impressive accomplishments of the colleagues who were also considered for the chair. Each of them would have no doubt given a very inspiring talk at this occasion on themes that, although probably different from the ones I will discuss, are equally important in the development of our field. And ICAR's contribution to that development has been helped considerably by the generosity of Ed and Helen Lynch.

Introduction

Many of us are attracted to careers in research because we have questions that arouse our curiosity. For example, Why do wars occur? Why do many negotiated settlements not resolve conflicts? How do citizens develop and sustain national or ethnic identities? Why are most organizations hierarchical? But the evidence gathered from research studies often suggests puzzles about the conditions under which war occurs or revolutions develop. Digging deeper into the contingencies (of the form "it all depends"), we discover contradictions, inconsistencies, and new questions for research. From this quest, we begin to get a glimpse of a larger picture that may provide a good route to theory development. I argue that the scholarly enterprise is enriched by puzzles and the search for solutions to them.

In preparing for this talk, I was inspired by a presidential address given by Dina Zinnes to the International Studies Association and published in a 1980 issue of the *International Studies Quarterly*. Her title was "Three Puzzles in Search of a Researcher." (I must admit, however, that I have experienced the opposite behavior among some colleagues, which would lead to a talk titled "Three Researchers in Search of a Puzzle.") Her three puzzles were: Do nations interact? (The answer in 1980 was sometimes, but less often than many would have suspected.) Why do some nations go to war? (The answer is sometimes because of this attribute and other times because of that condition.) Does a bi- (or multi-) polar international system prevent war? (The answer is that in some periods peace was sustained in bipolar systems, in other periods wars occurred and the same for multipolar systems; of course now we might ask about the war-preventing prospects of unipolar systems.)

My puzzles bear some resemblance to Dina's but are stimulated more from research in conflict resolution than from research in international relations. They are challenges to the research community stemming largely from my own research, and they can launch a platform for ICAR research, which I consider to be part of my activities as the Institute's Lynch chair for the next few years. They address matters of *process, identity, and situations in conflict resolution*. Let's begin with the puzzles about process.

Process Puzzles

I address two process puzzles. One is the not-so-obvious implications of certain actions or strategies. The other is the connection between small, short-term changes and larger, pivotal changes through the course of a negotiation or related interaction.

Some counterintuitive findings on strategies

One theme for my puzzles is "on the other hand." This refers to the counterintuitive implications of processes often taken for granted theorists and practitioners alike. Each illustrates the complexity of strategic behavior and the need to hold two or three contradictory ideas at the same time. Here are some examples.

Analysts—following Fisher and Ury—typically assume that the more (and better) alternatives to negotiated outcomes that parties generate, the better are their chances of getting a good agreement. But sometimes developing negotiating alternatives can have negative effects that outweigh the "good" agreement. It may actually produce a less-empathic negotiator and lead to agreements that are ultimately suboptimal. But then, what is meant by suboptimal? As far as I can tell, optimality is most clearly defined in tasks where players compete (or coordinate) for monetary incentives and where a distinction is made among asymmetrical, equilibrium, and optimal (or Pareto optimal) outcomes or where integrative outcomes are those with the highest joint payoffs, as in Pruitt's iron, sulfur, and coal commodities games. This kind of task-specific (or short-term) optimality may not endure, and we have not developed clear definitions of long-term optimality.

In a similar reversal of accepted wisdom, exchanging too much information can have the unforeseen effect of revealing new incompatibilities that escalate the dispute further.

Too much flexibility may have implications for identity if the desire for agreement overrides getting an agreement that is consistent with one's values and interests. Quick concessions, even if mutual, often lead to suboptimal agreements

In spite of our usual emphasis on rational dialogue with only moderate affect, displays of anger can be helpful by revealing strongly felt values or interests if directed at the task rather than at the other person. The strong expressions can serve to define or anchor a bargaining range.

Compliments can be overdone. While creating a friendly atmosphere, flattering comments can be viewed as ingratiating or inauthentic, leading to reduced flexibility and unfavorable outcomes.

Third parties may be more effective if they are seen as being fair. They can do this by showing what a compromise (equal concessions from both or all sides) would look like, but then moving the parties away from agreeing on that solution in favor of an information search toward a better (more integrative) agreement. Their challenge is to balance fairness against optimality, to persuade the parties that compromise is not the best outcome. The puzzle is how to do this without jeopardizing an agreement and escalating the dispute.

From the conference that I just attended in Hawaii, I learned that negotiation over the Internet, referred to as e-negotiation, is often more effective than when parties interact over the same issues face-to-face. However, it was also the case that these negotiations were task-specific, dealing largely with project requirements rather than with relationships. The efficiencies gained by electronic exchanges would seem to be offset by losses in empathy incurred by eliminating face-to-face interactions.

These examples, which are based on laboratory and case study findings, illustrate the value of looking at the other side of a question. That side is often counterintuitive (like these examples) but quite plausible. The research puzzle is to discover when (or the conditions under which) one or another impact results. For example, when the display of anger (or flattery) leads to an escalation of tensions and when it provides important information (or improves the relationship) that contributes to getting better agreements. We need to explore further the implications of these double-edged actions and strategies. They can be construed as competing hypotheses ripe for arbitration by experimental procedures.

Interaction process dynamics

Another theme for my puzzles concerns the paths from early to later stages of a conflict resolution process. Known also in the qualitative research literature as process tracing, these paths can be regarded both as the ongoing give-and-take of conversations, proposals, and moves and as the key events or transitions that punctuate a process, shifting it into another phase. I have examined both kinds of process dynamics. I will briefly describe each in turn, and then introduce a puzzle that arises from considering them together.

Following my dissertation research at Northwestern, where I addressed a problem of interpretation in Blake and Mouton's human relations training studies, I became interested in charting round-by-round moves made during bargaining interactions. In addition to providing measures of concession rates (speed of concession making), I studied how impasses develop from particular process dynamics. The first clue came from an experiment with Tom Bonoma on children's bargaining behavior. We discovered that when one party makes more concessions than the other, and when the discrepancy is noticed, the bargainers make an attempt to reduce it. The way this is typically done, according to the data, consists of an adjustment by the "softer" bargainer (the one making the larger concessions) in the direction of the other (the one making the smaller concessions). This mutual tough behavior then leads to an impasse.

In an effort to evaluate the generality of this process, I examined the discussions held during a case of intergovernmental negotiations over base rights. Focusing on verbal behavior rather than concessions, I discovered a similar pattern. When a gap in rhetoric was noticed (one side was "hard," the other "soft"), the "softer" negotiating team adjusted its rhetoric in the direction of the "harder" team, leading to joint toughness and an impasse. In the context of the test ban talks, Hopmann discovered the opposite pattern: The gap was closed by the harder team moving toward the softer negotiators, leading to an agreement. We actually know little about the conditions for movement in either direction, making this another puzzle for researchers.

This process, which I referred to as threshold-adjustment and Stoll and McAndrew called comparative reciprocity, was explored further in a study of seven international negotiation cases. This was an ambitious analysis of verbal exchanges and offers, building on earlier work by Lloyd Jensen. We compared the goodness-of-fit of 10 models of responsiveness or reciprocity. The models were versions of simple (or tit-for-tat), trend, and comparative reciprocity. The strongest support was obtained for the comparative (or threshold-adjustment) model: Nine of the fourteen negotiating teams, across the seven cases, adjusted their moves in response to a gap noticed in the previous round of the talks. This was strong evidence with adults for a process discovered initially in an experiment with children. The gap was interpreted as "out of synch" dyadic behavior with accompanying percep-tions of fairness. The negotiators seemed to view the adjustment as a return to synchrony or to an equilibrium. Further, Patchen's research showed similar strong support for this model in interactions between Soviets and Americans outside of formal negotiations. The model has been used most recently by Cameron and Tomlin to depict the way the negotiations on the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, unfolded (*The Making of NAFTA*, Cornell University Press, 2000).

This research suggests several analytical questions. One is the determina-tion of the threshold for response (does it have to reach a certain level to be noticed?). Another concerns the impact of such variables as type of issue and length of negotiations: For example, does this pattern occur also in short, single-issue negotiations? A third line of work would examine impli-cations for theories of information processing. Particularly interesting is the role of attributing intentions to the other based on an interpretation of his or her moves. Many offers or proposals can be viewed as being either tem-porary and tactical or as reflecting a genuine desire to cooperate (note here the earlier discussion on authenticity with regard to anger and flattery). How to respond may well depend on assumptions about the other's reasons for making the offer or demand. This remains a puzzle for researchers. But there may also be key events within the ongoing stream of moves and conversations that produce transitions with consequences for outcomes and longer-term relations. Referred to as turning points (or critical moments, tipping points), these events are both elusive (known often only in retrospect) and compelling (in the sense of impacts). In my first

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case study on turning points involving the Spanish and U.S. delegations on issues of base-rights in 1975–76, I discovered that they usually followed impasses or crises. The impasse was accompanied by inflexible behavior (mutual toughness) on both sides. The turning point is then seen as a kind of impasse resolution or as a solution to a security dilemma in which both sides ratchet up their toughness as a sign of strength. My recent 34-case comparative study of turning points further confirms this pattern. This study also showed that turning points could be precipitated by either internal (procedural or substantive strategies) or external events or decisions, and that these precipitants were related to issue area (security, trade, environmental), a contextual variable.

We know less about how these kinds of precipitants combine with the momentary changes in posturing (from soft to tough, from flexible to inflexible) to produce the transitions that move the talks to another phase. More generally, the puzzle is to understand the connection between the time series of small changes through the course of an interaction and the pivotal moments or departures in process that signal a transition. Do these processes occur in different ways in different kinds of groups—for example, negotiating and problem-solving groups? What are the roles of contexts and more immediate conditions on the way these shifts occur? We need a model as well as the empirical research to evaluate it. My earlier work on the monitoring function in negotiation is relevant but needs to be expanded to take the various precipitants into account. Chris Mitchell's recent work on conciliatory gestures is also a useful conceptualization of infrequent high-impact actions where timing and attention are critical. Further, the distinction between transitions and transformations suggests another question: When are turning points merely transitions to another stage in an historical process, as opposed to shifts that alter the history or create a new historical development?

Identity Puzzles

My work on nationalism has revealed a few more puzzles for researchers to ponder. One of these puzzles revolves around the notion of negotiating identity. Another refers to the coupling and decoupling of ingroup amity and outgroup enmity. A third concerns the connection between sentiments expressed by individuals or small groups and collective action.

Negotiating identity

Negotiating identities has become a popular phrase in several literatures. A recent special issue of the journal *International Negotiation*, edited by Bill Zartman, is devoted to this theme. My concluding paper in this issue describes a way of conceptualizing the dynamic. I argue that although identities are rarely discussed directly in negotiation, the negotiation process has important implications for identities (and vice versa). Drawing on earlier experimental work done with Kathy Zechmeister on the sociology of conflict, I show that values (or identities) and interests are intertwined, the one influencing the other in observable ways. In a nutshell, failed or successful attempts to reach negotiated agreements influence the extent to which parties are polarized on values (and identities). A negotiation failure often increases the perceived polarization of parties' values and identities. Similarly, the extent of difference on the values affects the chances of set-tling or resolving the issues. Changes in the intensity of conflicts of inter-est and in the polarization of values move along related trajectories, as we discovered in an analysis of the negotiations between the Philippines' Aquino regime and the National Democratic Front (see our chapter in Bill Zartman's 1995 book *Elusive Peace*).

When one builds on this work, interesting research puzzles present them-selves. They refer to the distinction between settlements and resolutions. Whereas the settlement approach to negotiation or mediation typically avoids discussions of underlying interests, values, or needs, the resolution or problem-solving approach confronts these issues. Sensitivity to the other's interests and values, and attempts to incorporate them in an agree-ment, are essential elements of integrative bargaining. Empathy and incor-poration are also needed for identity formation and change. Intense prob-lem-solving activities (as described by Kressel and colleagues in a 1994 article) may lead to a sharing of identities as parties progress through

stages of awareness, acceptance, identification of similarities and differences, and shared identity. And just as problem-solving processes may influence identities, aspects of those identities may affect problem solving. For example, more durable and widespread (across a population) identities make it difficult to engage in problem-solving activities and thus conclude negotiation with a resolution.

The challenge for researchers is to try to unravel processes and identities, and then to explore the way the one influences the other through time. A related puzzle refers to the "other side" of problem solving. We need to discover when problem-solving activities lead to shared identities and improved intergroup relations—which is the goal of many interventions— and when they induce rejection of one's own group, leading to negative consequences for intergroup relations and future negotiations—which is the consequence of some interventions as noted in the early problem-solving workshop literature reviewed by Ron Fisher,especially in the work of Leonard Doob and his colleagues.

Perceptions of in-groups and out-groups

This was my first research topic, which grew out of a master's thesis at Northwestern. I reported this research in one of my first publications, a 1968 article in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (a journal that I have maintained a close relationship and identity with through the years).That article explored the claim of a universal ethnocentric bias, namely, that all groups evince a preference for in-groups coupled with antipathy for out-groups. The analyses largely confirmed the hypothesis while also exploring other dimensions of group perceptions. Studies using the minimal group paradigm also gave support for this hypothesis. Those studies showed just how easy it is to establish an ethnocentric group identity (even with ad hoc groups) and how difficult it is to extinguish it. These findings led to a rather pessimistic conclusion. There is reason for optimism, however, coming from another direction. Feshbach and his colleagues distinguished between two orientations, which they referred to as "patriotism" and "nationalism." The former consists of a decoupling of in-group amity and out-group enmity. Unlike nationalists, patriots can favor their own groups without disparaging other groups. This is the analytical challenge of the moment—to understand and create the conditions that reduce the need to

disparage other groups as a way of strengthening an identity with one's own group. Although we know something about these conditions, there is still much to be learned.

The research to date provides some clues for decoupling the amity-enmity connection. The roles played by developmental, situational, and structural sources for sentiments and behavior are highlighted. Each of these sources presents a research puzzle. The developmental puzzle asks about those early childhood experiences and family attachments that may contribute to insecure group identifications and low self-esteem. We know more about these concomitants of ethnocentric perceptions than about the developmental experiences that produce them. Further, we have suggested that nationalism is merely a more complex form of patriotism: If patriotism is commitment—a readiness to sacrifice for the nation—then nationalism is commitment plus exclusion of (or hostility toward) others. Patriotism is a simpler relationship between the individual and the group. This interpretation suggests that patriotism is the orientation acquired earlier in the socialization process, and consequently is the stronger feeling. If this is so, it should be easier to change nationalistic perceptions—another research puzzle.

The situational puzzle asks about the conditions that reduce the need for casting aspersions on other groups. We know that ethnocentric perceptions are heightened in competitive (as opposed to cooperative or interdependent) situations. Earlier research has also shown that these perceptions are heightened when performance on group tasks has direct implications for self-esteem. We know less about the group processes that influence cohesion, group-think, and stereotyping—all of which have been shown to be associated with ethnocentric or nationalistic sentiments.

The structural puzzle asks about the patterns of group attachments and relations that influence perceptions of one's own and other groups. Insights into this puzzle come from earlier writing about reference groups. This work takes into account a more complex web of affiliations in an environment of multiple groups competing for members. Multiple-group memberships serve to disperse loyalties and feelings of attachment, reducing the strength of emotions directed at any particular in-group or out-group. At

issue, however, is the pattern of group memberships. Cross-cutting member-ships place people in groups that differ on some issues or on ideology (such as liberal Catholics on abortion rights, conservative Democrats, or the ever-dwindling numbers of liberal or moderate Republicans); overlapping group memberships consist of belonging to multiple groups that reinforce each other's views and ideologies. The cross-cutting pattern is more likely to reduce ethnocentric perceptions. We know less about how to design and maintain these patterns of group loyalties and relations. But another, less obvious question is how do individuals resolve the contradictions that can arise from being members of groups that espouse different worldviews? How do they scale the various groups in terms of loyalty? Another issue suggest-ed by reference group theory, and emphasized in the literature on depend-ency theories, is the basis for the development of xenocentrism or alter-centrism, where people undervalue their own group and overvalue other (nonmembership or reference) groups.

From group loyalty to collective action

The issue that has interested me most in recent work is the relationship between sentiments about groups expressed by individuals and mobilizing these individuals for collective action. This is one of those issues that asks about links between micro-level (persons and small groups) and macro-level (collectivities) processes. Although I have been working on this puzzle for several years, it has become particularly salient in light of recent events. The widespread expression of patriotism in America is a collective sentiment that would seem to support efforts to mobilize citizens for actions against terrorism and terrorists. But when patriotic sentiments turn into expres-sions of nationalism, the definition of the enemy may expand to include nations for which only weak evidence exists about the operation of terrorist activities. How much do we know about this phenomenon? And what ques-tions remain to be answered?

Because there has been so little empirical research on it, this issue is understood more in terms of frameworks than in terms of findings. It has been treated as a conceptual exercise rather than an empirical one. My work on this issue has also been primarily conceptual. I have thought about it in the contexts of regional politics, arms control, and nationalism. With regard to regional politics, I developed a framework that shows how

individuals' perceptions, values, and perspectives influence (and are influenced by) an intra-regional (cross-border) negotiation process whose outcomes affect longer-term relationships among nations within the region. With regard to arms control, I discussed the way structures and behaviors are intertwined in international politics, each affecting the other in a reciprocal manner. Noting that these relationships can cause rigidity in both behaviors and structures—that is, structures set the tone for patterns of behavior that unfold, while behaviors serve to perpetuate the structures that obtain—I suggested ways of breaking down these rigidities (drawing on the writings of Kenneth Adelman, Morton Deutsch, and Johann Galtung). With regard to nationalism, I played out the way that images and actions at the individual level can help shape what happens at the collective level, namely, through their influence on group or national representatives, through the way policies emerge from public opinion, through the way group norms are defined, and through the decision-making process itself. More recently, I have construed the connections between levels as a path in recursive form, wending its way from group loyalties to collective actions or, in the other direction, from actions to loyalties, through effects on public opinion, political representatives, policy-making groups, policies, and norms.

Having invested several years in developing frameworks on this collective action problem, it is time to bring the researchers in. What are some empirical puzzles suggested by the conceptualizations? One puzzle refers to the relationship between group loyalties and the policies that emerge from national (or other kinds of group) representatives. Do strong loyalties insulate these groups from information, leading to the development of ineffective policies? Focusing on group-think and cohesion, Catherine Thurston is pursuing this issue with small groups in her dissertation project. Another puzzle refers to the relationship between group loyalty and mobilization. It may be easier to mobilize a nationalistic population of citizens, but how can the loyalties be sustained in conflict or other collective activity? Lynn's 1984 study of French military campaigns suggests that national loyalties (useful for recruitment) must be replaced by primary-group loyalties to sustain the willingness of troops to continue to pursue the campaign. Does this process also depict other kinds of collective actions such as participation in peacekeeping or peacebuilding missions?

A third puzzle concerns the role of national sentiments in the relationship between institutionally defined rules or norms and collective action. To what extent do individuals' sentiments reinforce or conflict with the constraints of political and economic structures on collective actions? These constraints refer to accepted patterns of interaction between groups, including both cooperation and competition. How do the spread (through the population), durability, and source of loyalties (as coerced or constructed) influence the impact of the "rules of the game" on the way a collectivity or nation mobilizes for action? Each of these puzzles can be investigated with time-series data collected in the framework of comparative research designs.

Situation Puzzles

Many of you know about my apparent obsession with the situation as a primary influence on the way we behave. This obsession has a long history, both personal and professional. The more personal part stems from my early experiences with the "testing movement." I was (and continue to be) astonished at the simple and caricatured assessments made by a wide array of so-called psychological tests. These are based on faulty and even dangerous assumptions about people. Among many other things, they describe people out of context, without reference to the situations in which they act, and in generally static rather than dynamic terms. The more professional part stems from my training in social psychology and my knowledge of an almost breathtaking array of studies showing just how strong the impacts of situations are on the way people feel, decide, and act. I have also followed some of the research on neuropsychology showing evidence for plasticity at the cellular level. Indeed, the evidence for plasticity is impressive at all levels of analysis, from the cellular to the cultural-organizational. (My earliest contribution on this topic is a review article published in the Journal of Conflict Resolution in 1971.)

Most notable in this regard are the shifting sands of international relations reflected this past fall in "the photograph of Bush, Putin, and Zemin ..., now allies in silk jackets" (see Ellen Goodman's column in the *Washington Post* on October 27, 2001). There are many other anecdotal examples of the way circumstance and situation often trumps the influence of ideology in politics. (See, for example, E.J. Dionne's column in the *Washington Post* on

October 12, 2001.) More persuasive, however, are the results of experiments showing that when interests (defined by the situation as in contests) conflict with ideology, decisions seem to be based more on the interests than on the ideologies. So too with individual differences thought to reflect personality: In gaming experiments these differences are manifested primarily early in the interaction and wash out through time as the players continue to interact with each other. Self-reported attitudes, assessed before the interaction, are better reflected in early rather than later moves and decisions (an example is the 1987 experiment by Plous reported in the Journal of Conflict Resolution; note also the interesting recent research on "strong" versus "weak" situations).

My empirical contributions on this topic are attempts to discover a variety of situational levers that influence negotiating behavior and can be controlled for impact. Currently, we are exploring the simplest of all levers, whether disputants negotiate or mediate at a table or in chairs without tables: We are impressed with findings from nine replications of a multilateral simulation (the Maun Sea) where all nine table groups reached an impasse and all nine chairs groups resolved the issues. We have recently completed data collection on a field experiment on this issue at the Washington, D.C., small claims court, where we randomly assigned sessions to either a tables or a chairs configuration. But this work suggests a puzzle about the depth of explanations for behavior or process. People's sensitivity to situational cues can be understood in terms of simple stimulus-response models. But how far can we go with these sorts of models before we search for the cognitive or information-processing manifestations of the observed patterns of behavior? How should we conceptualize the cognitive and affective processes that may underpin stimulus effects on behavior? These questions open other issues that puzzle researchers.

Perhaps the most intriguing puzzle is about attribution processes. The evidence suggests the following sequence. People generally attribute others' behavior to their "personality." They do this for at least two reasons. One is that they lack sufficient information about the other's situation. Another is that it is easier to invoke personality explanations because of the large number of trait-like terms in the English language. And personality attributions persist because they are self-confirming. This feature is based on

evidence showing that beliefs (about the causes of behavior) support actions that influence the other's behavior in a direction that supports the beliefs (see Morris et al., Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1999). For example, a competitive game player's attribution of competitiveness to the other player supports the first player's behavior of defecting. The expectation of competitiveness is then confirmed when the defection by the first player induces defection from the second player (see the article by Kelley and Stahelski, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1970). Thus one party's actions shape the other's actions, leading the other to behave in expected ways, as though these behaviors emanate from his or her "personality" rather than from the interaction. A puzzle here is why people seem to make these faulty attributions. How can they learn to develop a more complex explanation for behavior, one that steers them away from stereotyped traits? What kind of lexicon can be substituted for the prevalent trait-like language used in everyday conversations?

Further, there is a connection here to the mobilization processes discussed earlier: To what extent do such manipulated attributions as the "evil empire" encourage mobilization by infusing hatred toward that group or nation?

More broadly, much of the work on these issues has conflated two conceptions of the actor in social situations. One views the actor as being influenced by various aspects of the situation in which he finds himself. He is a passive actor. This is the conception that underlies the work on situational levers. Another views the actor as an agent of influence who by her actions defines or shapes the situations she is in. She is an active agent for change. This conception is represented in the attribution research. Together, both conceptions probably capture what goes on in social interactions. They suggest an interactive (or at least dyadic) framework in which actions are construed as emerging from dyadic, triadic, or larger group processes. The puzzle, an old one for social psychologists, introduced in the literature a long time ago by Sherif, is to figure out how to analyze these sorts of emergent group properties.

One puzzle remains for situational explanations of behavior. Many social psychologists, myself included, have accepted Lewin's "principle of contemporaneity," which asserts that perceptions of the immediate situation are the primary influences on decisions and actions. This principle largely ignores the role played by past experience, and it is on this issue that Lewin parted company with Freud. Yet it would seem to be naïve to strip away a person's legacy—almost (but not quite) as naïve as the attribution bias! In my empirical work on conflict behavior, I have taken into account history (as influences on a person prior to the experimental situation) in the form of orientations (but not personalities!) to conflict. I have treated the influence of earlier interactions (within the time period being analyzed) in terms of a lagged weighting model where more recent experiences are weighted more strongly than earlier ones. However, I have found that orientations framed by the task have stronger impacts on decisions than orientations or attitudes assessed prior to working on the experimental task. And, as noted earlier, we have found that negotiators react primarily to moves made in the immediately previous interaction rather than to trends in moves made over time.

These findings suggest once again the importance of the situation confronting actors. They do not address the role played by accumulated experience (both before and during focal time periods) in the way a person shapes the very interactions that she is part of, and thus they will not satisfy the developmental psychologists and historians among us. So this is the final puzzle that I offer: How do we identify, assess, or separate the contribution of past experience to the behavior (perceptions, feelings, decisions) that we observe in the variety of contexts in which social conflict occurs?

A Concluding Note

By now, it must be obvious to all of you that I have spent a considerable amount of time puzzling over questions about process, identity, and situational impacts. Each of my three types of puzzles highlights a particular juxtaposition. The process puzzles move between the momentary small changes and the pivotal large changes that occur through time and repeated interactions. Here the bench scientist who focuses on momentary

changes meets the writer who works on a broader conceptual canvas. The identity puzzles seek to link the micro-level behaviors studied in the psychological laboratory with macro-level structures analyzed by many sociologists and political scientists. And while they focus attention primarily on immediate circumstances, the situation puzzles must come to terms with the legacies of past experience that may influence the way those situations are defined. The work of the experimental social psychologist is informed by analyses of development and history.

Just as we juxtapose concepts in our attempt to develop broader, more relevant frameworks for analysis, we can benefit from a variety of analytical tools covering both qualitative and quantitative approaches. These include time series and process tracing to track unfolding interactions and discourses from the interpersonal to international levels, ethnographic and survey methods to learn about the role of identities in collective action, and experiments, simulations, and various observational techniques (including unobtrusive observation) for ascertaining the influence of situations.

Nor are the three types of puzzles independent of one another. Identities are constructed from interaction processes and situations just as processes and situations are influenced by identities. Legacies of past experiences are the trends in process that influence perceptions of situations that have impacts on the interpretation of those very legacies. (In this regard, it is also interesting to consider the difference between transitions, as in stages of development, and transformations, as abrupt departures that signal a kind of "end of history," to coin a phrase.) These "interplays" (and inter-twinings) call attention to dynamics, to a field that emphasizes change in the phenomena we analyze in research and shape through practice. In addition, this is a theme that cuts across the work of our faculty. It also reflects the sort of variety and flexibility that defines a post-positivist (in the sense of using multiple methods and sites, as well as multiple perspectives) generation of conflict analysis and resolution scholarship.

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