

Intervention and Implementation

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Acknowledgements

- Many thanks to Linda Tropp for the great idea, book, and conference!
- I'm not Dan Christie
- I'm a social psychologist who studies choices of tactics in political conflict – I'm interested in violence (and non-violent activism) as collective actions related (or not) to social change in conflict
- I'm a longtime peace activist; I work as the national convenor of *Australian Psychologists for Peace* and recently joined the steering committee of *International Psychologists for Social Responsibility*



Negative and Positive Peace

(Galtung, 1969, 1996)

	Positive Peace	Negative Peace
Increases	Social Justice	Episodes of non-violence
Decreases	Structural Violence	Violent episodes

Methods

Social Transformation:
• Liberation Psychology
• Nonviolent
democratization
movements

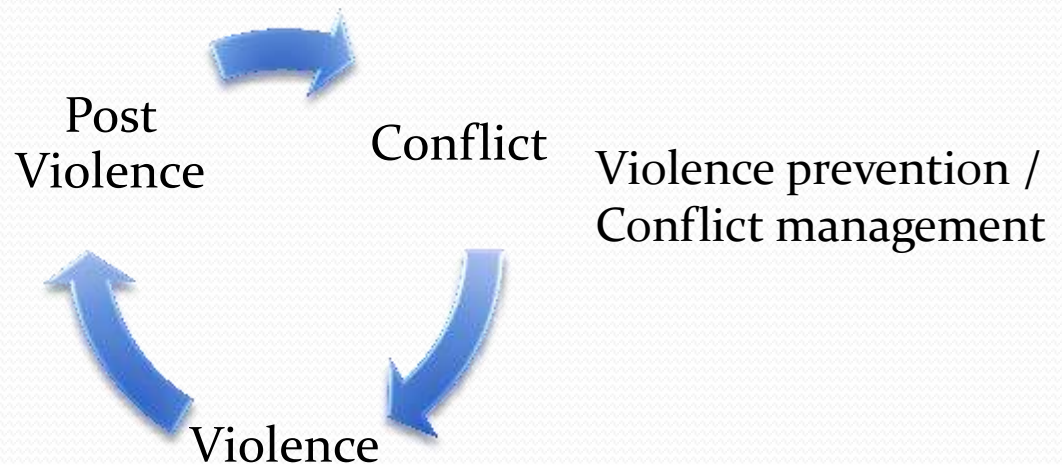
- Deterrence
- Counter-terrorism/
insurgency
- Peace-keeping
- Conflict management

Peace psychology seeks to develop theories and practices aimed at the prevention and mitigation of direct and structural violence ... [and the promotion of] the non-violent management of conflict and the pursuit of social justice.

-- Christie et al., 2001, p. 7

Timing is everything

Reconciliation
Equitable development
Interdependent identities



De-escalation strategies

Christie, D. J., Tint, B., Wagner, R. V., & Winter, D. D. (2008). Peace psychology for a peaceful world. *American Psychologist*, 63, 540-552.

Conflict Management and Resolution



- The gap between conflictual thoughts and violent behaviour
 - Inserting peace-keepers
 - Ok but
- Conflict resolution as outcome
 - Negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, dialogue, arbitration, interactive problem solving, intergroup contact
 - unilateral initiatives to *reduce* oppositional contact and *increase* promotive interactions

Conflict Management and Resolution



- Conflict resolution as process
 - Separate people from problem
 - Encourage joint problem solving
 - Seek mutual gain
 - Seek cognitive flexibility
 - Move away from intransigence and towards understanding others' motivations, needs, desires
- And at the group level
 - The role of norms: group-based rules or standards for behaviour define the range of choices, the unthinkable, and the alternatives
 - Descriptive vs injunctive norms: What people do vs what should be done

Barriers to violence prevention and solutions

- Zero-sum psychological beliefs / environmental structures
CHALLENGE
- Emotions – lack of positivity, presence of anger, fear, hatred
CHANGE
- Absence of intergroup contact and Allport's (1954) criteria: cooperative; common goal; equal status; supported by institutions

INTRODUCE STRUCTURED CONTACT

Violence De-escalation



- Interrupting cycle of thought, emotion and behaviour that escalates and perpetuates violence
 - Challenge threat appraisals; anger and outrage; lack of concern re human suffering; moral disengagement; ideological justifications (“cultural violence”)
- But How?
 - Pruitt (in press): Over-whelming force vs “Ripeness” / “readiness”
 - Anti-war activism
 - Building socially just institutions (through violence?)

Ripeness/Readiness:

- Antecedents:
 - motivation to escape; optimism re mutually beneficial solution; pressure by 3rd parties
- Process:
 - Signal and reciprocation
 - Often *outside* formal political channels; Back-channel diplomacy
 - Interactive conflict resolution (more generally useful, but esp useful here b/c requires less optimism)
 - Influential community leaders' dialogue
 - Facilitated by impartial / unofficial 3rd parties (usually social scientist practitioners – familiar w/ context – skillset of principled negotiation)
 - Intergroup problem solving
- Outcomes
 - Non-binding agreements
 - Mutual trust, understanding
 - Influential group members: catalysts of change

Anti-war activism

(e.g., Boehnke & Shani, in press)

- Process of identification
 - Rejecting authority / descriptive norms
 - Minority influence / injunctive norms
 - Alternative identities (but marginalising)
- Social representations of war and peace contested
- Group-based emotions contested: anger, outrage, guilt
 - at whom? – appraisals as political contests –
 - entrepreneurship of identity

When violence works?

- Does violence sometimes motivate a new, more legitimate, status quo?
- Dissensus theories (e.g., Piven & Cloward, 1991)
 - ‘normative’ political action reinforces status quo
 - Violence/disruption polarizes advantaged group, breaks up ruling coalition, creates minority of allies sensitised to grievances of disadvantaged group & motivated to act
- “Never again” ideologies
 - Experience of trauma personally & vicariously creates psychological commitments to, political will for, alternative conflict management institutions and norms

Post-violence Reconciliation and Development



- Peace-keeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding
 - Addressing proximal causes of “direct” violence
 - Distal road to structural peace: rule of law, just political and economic systems
- Addressing proximal causes
 - Healing post-traumatic stress and inter-generational trauma
 - Rebuilding impaired trust, cohesion, social capital
 - Forgiveness
 - Socio-emotional and instrumental reconciliation

Promoting reconciliation

- Public truth-telling, justice without revenge, redefined social identities, and new relationships (Long & Breck, 2003)
- Mutual understanding of suffering (Vollhardt, 2009)
- Positive intergroup contact and extended contact
- Transformation of social context (Wessells, in press):
 1. Building security – incl. disarmament, demobilisation ,and reintegration of soldiers; ‘purification’
 2. Physical reconstruction – rebuilding; vital importance of procedural and distributive justice
 3. Social reconstruction – addressing psychological and relational healing, capacities for non-violent conflict resolution, social norms
 4. Economic and political reconstruction – create means to satisfy basic needs; channel unemployed

The role of psychology in intervention and implementation

- Incredible promise
 - Centrality (e.g., Christie et al., 2001)
 - Applicability (e.g., Cohrs & Boehnke, 2008)
- Historical / cultural barriers
 - Dominant narrative of decontextualized objectivity, mechanism, and individualism (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996)
 - Aim of helping individuals adapt to envt = ill-suited for social change!
- Our challenge: A psychology of social change