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)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increases</th>
<th>Positive Peace</th>
<th>Negative Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Episodes of non-violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Structural Violence</td>
<td>Violent episodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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

Post Violence
Conflict
Violence

De-escalation strategies

Violence prevention / Conflict management

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 3\textsuperscript{rd} 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 3\textsuperscript{rd} 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
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