

Virtual School of “Dialogue, Democracy and Peaceful Conflict Resolution”

CONFLICT ANALYSIS – Elton Skendaj Lesson V



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Teaching Experience • Adjunct Faculty lecturer at the University of New York in Tirana at the International Relations Department. (September 2004-June 2005) • Junior Faculty Lecturer at the University of Tirana, Faculty of History, Department of Journalism Teaching the course on “Introduction to Political Science” (September 2004-June 2005) • Lead Lecturer / Trainer for the Open Society Institute course on “Academic Writing” organized in all the six public universities in Albania (August 2004-December 2005) • Junior Faculty Lecturer at the University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences. Taught courses of “Conflict Resolution”, and “Political Philosophy”. Member of the steering group on the Bologna reform at the Faculty level. (January 2002-June 2004) • Teaching Assistant to professor George Lopez at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. **Publications** • Together in Peace: Peace education Youth Manual—book in Albanian. Co-author and producer, Centre for Peace and Disarmament Education, Tirana, Albania, (January 2005) • “Disarmament through TV: Peace Education in Albania” article published at the UN Chronicle, Volume XL1, issue no 3 September–November 4, New York, 2004. <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/issue3/0304p59.asp> • “Youth Democracy in Action”. Published in the Democratic Education Bulletin, (in Albanian) Institute for Pedagogical Studies, Tirana, Albania. (June 2004) • “Peace and Disarmament Education in Albania” Kakanien Revisited online resource <http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/materialien/ESkendaj1.pdf> (November 2004)

Awards • Honour of town award from Gramsh municipality for working on peace and disarmament education in schools and community. (March 2005) • Awarded a certificate of appreciation and recognition by the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Hague Appeal for Peace for the leadership role in Albanian peace education project. (February 2005) • Academic Fellowship Program, Open Society Institute for assisting the department of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tirana (August 2004-June 2005) • Civic Education Project Fellowship for teaching and promoting civic education values at the University of Tirana, (August 2003-June 2004) • Awarded full merit-based scholarships to pursue undergraduate degree from the American University in Bulgaria and graduate degree from the University of Notre Dame. (1996-2001) • Champion of National Math Olympiads: (Tirana 1995; 1996). • Representative of Albania in International Math Olympiads: (Bulgaria 1995; Romania 1996; India 1996). • Winner of National Youth Literature Contest. (Tirana, Albania, 1996).

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

An ancient Chinese proverb says: “The one that hits first, has run out of ideas”. Violence is one of the ways that people can respond to resolving a conflict. Yet, violence is the first thing that comes to our minds when we think about conflicts. Generally people agree now that conflict is a natural, ordinary and inevitable companion to human life. At the same time, we know that conflict does not necessarily lead to violence. Many practitioners, who work in peace-building and conflict prevention, try to understand the causes of conflict and prevent violent repercussions.

In this short lecture we will explore ways how to analyze a conflict, whether it is interpersonal, inter-group or international. I will use the Hague Agenda for Peace¹ definition of conflict analysis as the process of analyzing causes, issues, interests, and concerns of parties on the brink of moving into a [violent] conflict. After an explanation of the key terms, I will examine the two main approaches to behavior in conflict, win-win and win-lose.

When we see two or more **parties** that are in conflict with each-other, we have to see what they are stating, and also what is the real issue that is fostering the disagreement. In conflict studies we call such key concepts position, interest/ needs.

- A **position** is a way that a party’s needs can be met. It is usually stated as a demand or a preference. For example, the Palestinian demand in our case-study below is “independent Palestinian state.” Often positions are very rigid and therefore can hamper conflict resolution, since they frame the conflict in oppositional terms. It may be like “I want you to leave this office immediately.”
- **Interest/needs** are the physical, psychological, economic and/or social wellbeing of the party in conflict that lie beneath a party’s position. Distinguishing between positions and needs is fundamental in conflict analysis. Often, when people hear a position like “independence now” or “leave my space,” they often assume that this is the real need. Yet, the needs are often implied and not stated. The famous psychologist Abraham Maslow has described a hierarchy of needs for individuals or groups. One might one to satisfy a physical (survival) need, such as food, water, shelter; a security need such as a job, a belonging need, such as being included in a group; or a recognition need such as affirmation or receiving a promotion.

The concepts of climate and worldview are important in order to better understand the context of a conflict.

- **Climate** is the element that best describes the atmosphere of the conflict, often in competitive or collaborative terms. It includes all verbal and nonverbal communication that occurs between the parties in the conflict. In a hostile and competitive climate, parties assert strongly their positions by providing various

¹ For more information, check www.haguepeace.org

types of justifications, while often not revealing their underlying needs. Parties in a court often behave in a hostile manner. If on the other hand, parties behave in a collaborative manner, then needs become known and the potential for resolution is higher.

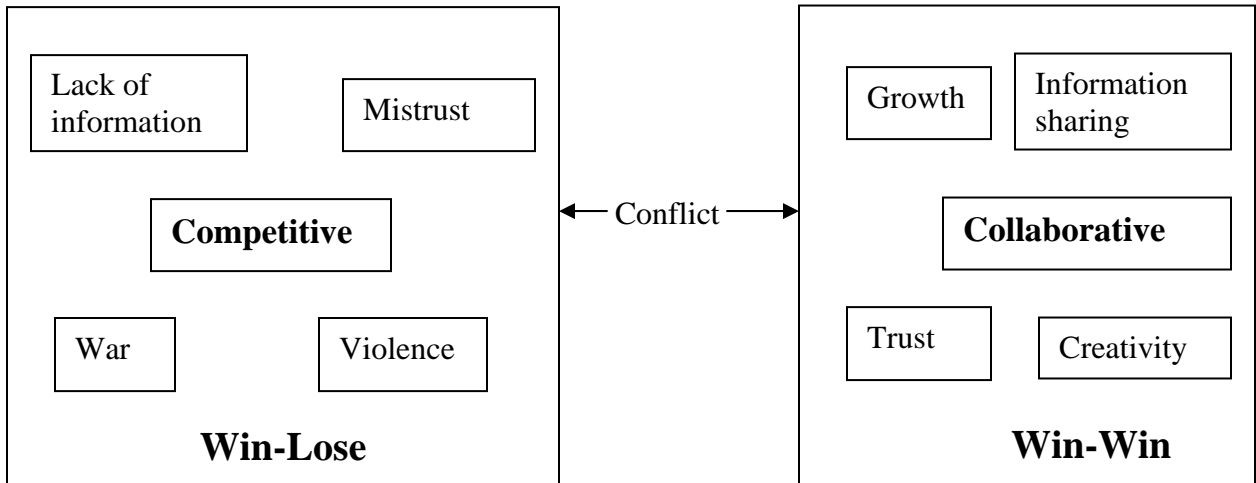
- **Worldview** describes a set of deeply held beliefs, attitudes, or values that come from our life experiences, personality, culture and tradition. The worldview of the parties is very important to understand, since often, deeply held beliefs means that they are not negotiable in a conflict. For example, a devout Catholic might believe that abortion is murder, and hold the view that under no circumstances should a person consider abortion. The other party might have seen women die from illegal abortions and therefore, support women's right to choose to abort.

Let us consider a simple example that illustrates the above-mentioned points. Two sisters are fighting over an orange. Their positions are clear: "I want this orange" versus "I want this orange." Their father comes in to help them settle the issue. He may decide that the daughters are screaming and fighting too much (a reference to the climate of fierce competition,) and since he knows it is best if father decides for his daughters (a reference to his worldview) then he decides to split the orange in half, and give one half to each daughter. Now, if the father would have asked the daughters about why they wanted the oranges, they would have given him different answers that indicated their underlying needs. One daughter wants to eat the orange, and the other wants the skin to make candy. Both of them get what they need. Hence, in the first scenario when the father decides to give each daughter half an orange, the daughters get 50 % of what they desire. This scenario illustrates the win-lose approach, in which the outcome comes at a loss for at least one participant. In the second scenario, when the father discovers the real needs of his daughters, they both get 100% of their needs met. The approach in this scenario is termed win-win, since the outcome satisfies the underlying needs of the all the parties in a conflict.

The two main approaches therefore in conflict resolution are win-lose and win-win. The **win-lose** approach is the traditions way to frame conflict. It normally occurs in a hostile and competitive climate, where both parties distrust each-other and prefer to stick to their positions. The general perception in win-lose is that if for one party to win, the other should lose. Hence, parties often do not share information with each-other regarding their needs. The outcomes of the win-lose approach often entail violence and war. The win-win approach on the other hand, frames the conflict in a collaborative climate, where parties try to build trust and share information in a problem-solving way in order to come up with the best understanding of each-other's needs. Through uncovering the real needs beneath the stated positions, the parties search for creative solutions so that both can achieve what they want, while not hurting the other party. The win-win solution might take longer to achieve, but is a more stable and rewarding outcome than win-lose outcomes.

Below, you have a diagram of these approaches:

Approaches to conflict and negotiation²



In order to better understand such a conflict analysis model, I am suggesting as homework a journal entry on conflict analysis. You may take a conflict from your personal experience, or a conflict that you hear from the media. The homework is due at the end of our weekly session. Even though it is not required but recommended, this homework would sharpen your theoretical understanding of various conflicts. I am providing an example of such a journal entry below:

As you write the journal, think about answering the following questions:

- 1) The *win-win* approach is sometimes criticized because it assumes that the parties in conflict will share similar cultural assumptions about finding reasonable solutions through dialogue. What do you think: Does *win-win* approach apply everywhere? If not, where might it not apply? Why?
- 2) If *win-win* fails, does violence necessarily follow? Can violence be justified in any condition? If yes, under what conditions? If no, why?

CONFLICT ANALYSIS JOURNAL ENTRY EXAMPLE

15/04/2005

As I watched BBC News (source of information) I heard that (conflict) Israeli government had decreed the continuation of West Bank settlement that would connect with Jerusalem. Israeli authorities claimed that continuing building the wall and the settlement would help prevent Palestinian terrorists from attacking Israel. (**Israeli position**). Palestinian authority stated that further settlements are illegal under the Oslo agreement, and would make it hard for the creation of a stable and continuous Palestinian

² Raider and Coleman. Overview of Conflict and Negotiation. **Collaborative Negotiation**. Chapter 2.

state (**Palestinian position**). Both parties have mutually exclusive positions. There have been tentative trust-building measures between the new Palestinian leader Abbas and the Israeli leader Sharon, but both parties are distrustful of each other. International community is trying to broker a peace with two viable states in the land. The current consequences of the conflict are violent and bloody: Palestinian territories are occupied and its people are not free; while Israeli security is perpetually in danger of Palestinian suicide attacks.

Analysis model:

If we look beyond the stated positions, we will notice that the Israeli party is interested in ensuring the security needs for its people. The Palestinian party is interested in ensuring the freedom and citizenship in a Palestinian state. Respect for individual and human right is an essential need for both parties. Also both parties need the end of violence from the other party. Etc...

Suggestions for further exploration in your journal beyond conflict analysis:

Conflict resolution alternatives: How can we break the cycle of violence? What steps should be taken in order to increase trust and communication? What is the role of the third (international) party? Etc...

Consequences of proposed alternatives: Would violence end? Would a viable Palestinian state be created? Would Israeli security be insured? Etc...

FURTHER RESEARCH RESOURCES

Books

Bouta, Tsjeard, Georg Frerks, and Ian Bannon. 2004. *Gender, conflict, and development*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, http://encompass.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/checkIP.cgi?access=gateway_standard%26url=http://elibrary.worldbank.org/rpsv/journal/publication0821359681_home.htm?nv_portal=all.

Cheldelin, Sandra, Daniel Druckman, and Larissa Fast. 2003. *Conflict : From analysis to intervention*. London ; New York: Continuum.

Choi, Seung-Whan, and Patrick James. 2005. *Civil-military dynamics, democracy, and international conflict : A new quest for international peace*. Advances in foreign policy analysis. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/bios/hol051/2004057312.html>;
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- Nagel, Stuart S. 2003. *Policymaking and peace : A multinational anthology*. Studies in public policy. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
- Petroska-Beska, Violeta, Mirjana Najčevska, and United States Institute of Peace. 2004. *Macedonia*. Special report. Vol. 115. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS47588>.
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Sriram, Chandra Lekha, Zoe Nielsen, and International Peace Academy. 2004. *Exploring subregional conflict : Opportunities for conflict prevention*. A project of the international peace academy. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0415/2004003787.html>.

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Journals

The Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict. Annual journal of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies; published by the Institute. The website is <http://www.jspc.library.wisc.edu/index2.html>.

Journal of Conflict Resolution. Published by SAGE Publishing. The website is <http://www.yale.edu/unsy/jcrhome1.htm>.

The Journal of Peacebuilding and Development. Publication of the School of International Service, American University. Address: 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC, 20016-8071 (USA).

The Journal of Peace Research. Official publication of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA); published by SAGE Publishing. The website is < <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/frame.html?http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/j0168.html>>.

The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution. Published by the Tabula Rasa Institute. Available at <http://www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr>.

Peace and Change. Official publication of the Peace History Society and the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development (COPRED); published by Blackwell Publishing. The website is <http://www.webs.cmich.edu/peaceandchange/>.

Peacebuilding. Newsletter of the Peace Education Commission of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). The website is <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Peace/pec.html>.

On line resources

A conflict resolution homepage

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8945/>

Balkans

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1239&l=1>

Africa:

International Crisis Group

<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/program.cfm?typeid=1>

Afghanistan

<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/project.cfm?subtypeid=30>

Arab-Israeli

<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/project.cfm?subtypeid=34>

<http://www.time.com/time/europe/timetrails/israel/>

Iraq, Iran

<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/project.cfm?subtypeid=33>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indepth/iraq/>

<http://www.pitt.edu/~ttwiss/irtf/iraq.html#anchor1405262>

Columbia

<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/project.cfm?subtypeid=17>

Cyprus

<http://www.cyprus-conflict.net/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1761585.stm>