

From Interests to Identities: Towards a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution*

JAY ROTHMAN

The ARIA Group

MARIE L. OLSON

Program on Mediating Theory and Democratic Systems, and Department of Political Science, Wayne State University

This article explores the methods by which practitioners have traditionally approached international conflicts. Approaches focusing on the resources or the interests of the parties can be appropriate methods of resolution in conflicts where resources and interests are the only issues at stake. However, conflicts raging today often contain issues of identity. These identity-based, ethnopolitical conflicts are often resistant to traditional resource- and interest-based resolution methods. This article suggests a different approach, one that emphasizes needs, and in particular identities, of conflicting parties. We suggest that such a focus is essential in working towards resolution in many of the deeply rooted conflicts in today's world. We explore the ARIA model of conflict engagement as a mechanism for a systematic approach to interactive conflict resolution that specifically deals with the complex issues of identity. We also offer a preliminary evaluation of interactive conflict resolution as a general approach in varied international conflict situations. The question of interactive conflict resolution effectiveness is explored using Licklider's data for civil war termination and Bercovitch's data for international conflict mediation.

In recent decades, the role of identity in international conflict and conflict management has received a great deal of attention. Although the analysis of identity groups, or 'collectivities based on ethnicity or nationality, religion or ascriptive traits' (Heisler, 2000: 242), has not replaced the nation-state as the dominant conceptual and organizing vehicle for international relations scholars, it is clear that identity as an analytic tool and focus of global peacemaking continues to grow (Rothman, 1997). As scholars and researchers of international relations explore

the different facets of international conflict in the 1990s, it is apparent that what exists today is a new landscape. Intrastate conflicts are not only the predominant type of conflict (Wallensteen & Sollenberg, 2000), it is tragically evident that these conflicts are devastating and brutal (Miall, 1992). Civilians are increasingly becoming the target of violence (Sivard, 1991) as conflicts continue to become entangled in webs of identity, politics, and resources.

These realities have created challenging obstacles for international conflict resolution practitioners. For decades, researchers in the field of international relations focused so much of their attention on the causes and

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resolutions of *interstate* war, and as a result the exploration of civil war was, for the most part, neglected by comparison. Further, what has often been referred to as 'ethnic conflict' gained little attention, if any, in conflict theory and conflict resolution research up through the 1970s and into the 1980s.

The end of the Cold War left a vast number of researchers and practitioners struggling to understand why the world was not a more peaceful place. The 'New World Order' had not emerged as planned. In addition, conflict studies began to analyze and code a new class of conflicts; those referred to as 'ethnic conflict' (Barber, 1995; Horowitz, 1985). When it became clear that this new class of conflict often incorporated identities not associated strictly with ethnicity, other classifications emerged, among them 'ethnopolitical conflict', 'communal conflict', 'protracted social conflict', and finally the now-common appellation 'identity-based conflict' (Azar, 1986; Gurr, 1993; Rothman, 1997).

An analysis of civil wars illustrates the difficulty of applying traditional methods of negotiation and even the more cutting-edge forms of 'interest-based bargaining' (where the focus of discussion centers around parties' interests) to identity-based conflict. Miall (1992) studied 81 international and civil conflicts, both peaceful and violent, in the period 1945–85 in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. He found that civil wars were much more likely than interstate wars to contain major violence, thereby making resolution more difficult. Furthermore, Miall focused specifically on 'ethnic conflicts', arguing that most involved the rights of ethnic groups to maintain their identity, to gain equal recognition, and to have equal status with other groups. These are issues not typically addressed by interest-based bargaining and negotiation, nor are they typically seen in international warfare.

Licklider (1995) explored the issue of negotiated settlements of civil wars. He found 91 cases of civil war during the period 1945–93 and analyzed those which he identifies as conflicts over identity versus those over political or economic issues. It appears that negotiated settlements have only rarely been able to end identity civil wars effectively. Of the 63 identity civil wars during this period, only 9 were ended through a negotiated settlement. Licklider also showed that those that did end in negotiated settlement (67%) often found their way back to violence. We hypothesize that this poor record is due in significant measure to the fact that traditional or interest-based approaches to intrastate conflict do not effectively address the underlying issues in the conflict. A tragic example is the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, where the Bosnian conflict was 'settled' only to persist and re-emerge with renewed virulence in Kosovo a couple of years later. While further study is needed, it is also possible to deduce that in at least some of these cases negotiation itself contributed to further or renewed conflict.

Azar & Farah (1981) and Azar (1983, 1986) explored what they refer to as protracted social conflicts. They argue that the role of both the state and the international environment is crucial to understanding the development of these types of conflict. The international system can be characterized as stratified owing to the inequitable distribution of resources in both the international and domestic settings. This stratification is exacerbated by the role of identity. Certain groups or segments of society in both the international and domestic arenas will get more of the resources than others. It is argued that this creates the conditions conducive to protracted social conflict. Traditional methods of conflict resolution tend to be ineffective in dealing with protracted social conflicts, because they do not deal with the structural inequalities of the system or the

deprivation of human needs through their focus basically on the symptoms.

It is even argued that the use of traditional approaches, which focus on resources and power politics, to resolve identity conflicts often has the effect of exacerbating or prolonging the struggle (Burton, 1987; Rothman, 1997). It is clear that conflicts involving identity do, in fact, contain issues of resources or other tangible interests; however, as conflict theorist Kelman (1979, 1995) has written extensively with reference most specifically to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, bargaining over those issues without prior and adequate attention first to identity issues has the effect of further polarizing the parties. Ross (1993a) further describes the need to sequence interventions in intractable conflicts by first beginning with methods that address the ‘psychocultural’ dynamics of the situation prior to efforts to settle the more material and tangible interests at stake.

The field of international relations and dispute resolution takes insufficient note of these newer approaches to dealing with identity-based conflicts. Perhaps traditional methods of resolution, which worked well in interstate conflict where identity issues were not central, are not the best, or at least not the initial, tools to use in the types of challenging wars seen today, wars which are so centrally rooted in relatively non-negotiable issues of identity.

Since the early 1960s, various scholars-practitioners around the world have been experimenting with and developing new approaches to international conflict resolution. These are very specifically designed, in their method, to address identity issues that seem unresponsive to traditional or even interest-based bargaining methods. Fisher (1996) has described these models as *interactive conflict resolution* (ICR). These are

facilitated face-to-face activities in communication, training, education, or consultation that promote collaborative conflict analysis

and problem solving among parties engaged in protracted conflict in a manner that addresses basic human needs and promotes the building of peace, justice, and equality. (Fisher, 1996: 8)

The ICR approach is designed to address protracted social conflicts involving identity groups. Similarly, Rothman has identified ICR methods as those used in efforts to create a conflict-resolving environment in the Middle East through problem-solving workshops

in which influential Israelis and Palestinians [met] with each other . . . guided by a panel of third party facilitators, [and engaged] in carefully structured dialogue to gain insight about their specific conflict and conflict processes in general and to discover new means of creatively resolving their conflict. (1992: 28)

Approaches to Resolution

Thus far we have argued that traditional methods of negotiation and even newer methods of interest-based bargaining are unlikely to be appropriate for handling identity-based conflicts. We will now be more detailed in our argument. First, we present a finer distinction between traditional negotiation and interest-based methods. We argue that while the second is a reframing of the first, these methods are still rooted in the power-politics paradigm and thus severely limited in resolving the identity-based issues so typical of ethnopolitical conflict. Then we further develop the ARIA model as a specifically identity-focused framework within the interactive conflict resolution family. While ICR generally focuses on conflicts in which human needs are at stake, and identity is regularly defined as a core such need, the ARIA model keeps its focus more narrowly attuned to identity issues in particular.

However, we do not suggest that ARIA in particular or ICR generally can or should ultimately replace traditional and newer methods of bargaining. These methods will

still be necessary for final resolution once identity issues have been effectively dealt with. However, until and unless underlying identity needs are surfaced and at least addressed in principle ('yes, you too have a right to self-determination' and 'yes, you have the right to security'), progress in finding new means for lasting peace in identity conflicts will remain elusive.

Resource-Based Negotiation

In resource conflicts, if negotiation and settlement are to be effective, parties must learn, despite the subterfuge that commonly accompanies such negotiation, their opponents' true goals and 'bottom line', discovering where there is common ground between them. When this is determined, reaching agreement may not be as difficult as supposed. For instance, the bargaining between nations over disputed territorial resources often contains clear guidelines for structuring the negotiation and agenda, since the end goal is clear – for example, territorial accommodation in exchange for financial compensation, or a resource distribution offer that is satisfactory to both. There might indeed be common ground, since both parties want to find an acceptable exchange so national interests can be protected. There is, prior to the negotiation, a tacit agreement that it is in the best interests of each party to find a satisfactory solution. Parties in such situations recognize their interdependence, accept that there are preferable alternatives to the conflict, are confident they can reach agreement with the other side, and view negotiation as the means to that end.

Because this framing focuses on maximizing predefined outcomes, however, it is unlikely to foster information processing, questioning of mental models, dialogue, etc. From the perspective of this framing, raising doubts or questioning one's own position represents a weakness that should be avoided. Thus, parties to conflict may have a lot to

'teach' the other side, but neither side will be particularly open to learning, except in studying the others' set of demands. Resource-based conflict resolution may enable conflicting parties to 'coexist' but it is unlikely to lead to real cooperation (i.e. through the linking of goals, opportunities, and even identities).

The danger of the resource-based framing is that it leads to short-term, material 'fixes' that leave underlying conflict causes untouched. This is what occurred following the Dayton Peace Accords, as a negotiated power-sharing arrangement provided Milosevic with the prestige and power to move into Kosovo. As in the former Yugoslavia, conflicts can result that tend to recur with added intensity, and each time a conflict recurs it becomes more difficult and threatening, and the cost of resolution rises for both sides.

Coser (1967: 8), one of the fathers of modern conflict theory, suggests that conflict is 'a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals'. This definition has its roots in the Cold War period between the USA and USSR and has since (and previously) dominated Western cultural approaches to conflict (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995: 20). It was operationalized in a power politics approach to international relations in which the 'national interest' (consisting primarily of economic, territorial, and military power and resources, although also laden with ideological meaning such as capitalism or communism) was to be preserved and promoted. The important point to emphasize about this definition is that means and ends are joined. Power is a goal; it is also a vehicle in this view.

This conflict paradigm, summarized as 'political realism' (Morgenthau, 1956), has provided the dominant frame for handling conflict in the West and beyond. Resource conflict is viewed as endemic to the natural state of affairs and at best can be ameliorated

or managed. Life, viewed in Hobbesian terms – ‘nasty, brutish and short’ – is by definition a competitive process, and conflict may be contained but is nevertheless a continual process of survival of the fittest. In the domestic arena, this view suggested that a coercive or legal framework would be necessary for curbing destructive forces. Given such natural aggression, a ‘social contract’ is necessary by which a functionally integrated society would be forged based on an alignment or reconciliation of self- (or collective) interests. Such interests are similar to national interests, except on a reduced or smaller scale, and consist of such things as economic well-being, material resources, and power.

To reverse the famous Clausewitz observation ‘war is politics by other means’, in this power-politics model, diplomacy can often be construed essentially as war by other means. The means is persuasion, gentle or otherwise; power is defined as the ability to get another party to do what it otherwise would not do on its own (Keohane & Nye, 1989). The bargaining game is one of distribution (sometimes, but not always, zero-sum) with all sides jockeying at the starting-line to set the agenda, give up the least, and gain the most. Compromise is viewed as an acceptable outcome when war or domination is viewed as unnecessary or impossible to win or sustain.

Interest-Based Bargaining

Growing out of more recent emphases on reconciling interests, a new approach to domestic, and to a lesser extent international, conflicts articulates a distinction between what is sought and what motivates what is sought. Whereas in a power politics frame power is ends and means simultaneously, in interest-based bargaining a distinction is drawn between them. Thus power is viewed as a goal or end, but an effort to determine why power, for example, is sought, not power

itself, is the focus of attention. Essentially, this is a reframe of the existing frame. It is rooted in several shared assumptions. These include the assumption that people will naturally pose their conflicts in competitive and zero-sum ways over scarce resources and incompatible positions. Moreover, like its predecessor, interest-based bargaining assumes that conflicts will naturally escalate and legal, financial, and military resources will become the default means of waging the struggle. Power politics is reframed, however, with the belief that this default response to scarcity can be avoided and new means of negotiating apparent and real differences can be forged.

To redirect natural conflict frames and interventions, the main focus of this approach is to distinguish between exclusive positions – opposing definitions and outcomes, and potentially compatible interests – and reasons for the positions. Interests, redefined as motives, now provide the focus for ‘interest-based bargaining’ (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Instead of competition over resources, parties are encouraged to explore ways in which their core concerns, perhaps stemming from fundamental ‘needs’ such as security, welfare, or self-actualization, can be functionally linked through ‘integrative’ bargaining rather than domination or compromise (Follett, 1942). Instead of compromise, in which parties give up aspects of their original agendas, integrative bargaining seeks innovative ways in which both parties can be satisfied or can focus on common goals.

Like resource negotiation, interest-based negotiation may lead parties in a conflict to clarify their goals and interests. In doing so they may discover areas of common ground or even that no real conflict exists at all. The essence of interest-based conflict resolution is finding creative solutions that satisfy each side enough to defuse the conflict. Moreover, unlike resource conflict, in which a good settlement among neighbors is often

accompanied by a good fence, interest-based bargaining may lead conflicting parties to seek common or superordinate goals as a basis for bridgebuilding, ongoing cooperation, and positive interdependence, thus breaking down some fences.

One serious deficit of interest-based bargaining in addressing identity-based conflicts, however, is that interests are treated as paramount. Parties are not led to question the goals, values, and motivations upon which their interests are based. This uncritical attitude towards interests may be inadequate for situations in which the interests of parties to a conflict are perceived as being deeply at odds. Interest-based conflict looks at outcomes and stable states. It is likely to be inadequate for redefining processes and relationships.

Even when it appears to be successful, the interest framing may lead to blindness and an illusion of cooperation. This is evident in Northern Ireland, where power-sharing arrangements continue to fall apart. It appears, however, that recent efforts led by US Senator George Mitchell have made progress in unmasking the illusion of cooperation.¹

Interest-based bargaining portrays conflict and conflict intervention as the process of moving from battle over mutually exclusive positions (consisting of opposing conflict definitions and preferred outcomes) to collaborative focus on shared and underlying interests (each side's needs, concerns, hopes, and fears that lay beneath their positions). We present a third view that pays particular attention to issues of identity and suggests that in such conflicts a wholly different approach is required, at least initially.

Identity-Based Conflict Resolution

Conflict, in the third view, when it is deep and abiding, is often about the articulation

and confrontation of individual and, especially, collective identities. It might be expressed in resource terms or negotiated through determining and aligning shared interests, but it is fundamentally about reassuring each other of recognition and survival. This approach begins using a wholly alternative or parallel lens. The first two frames described above are linked in that interests are seen as the prime motive as people struggle over resources (or positions). This third approach suggests that there is something more existential and fundamental about many conflicts that requires a whole new framework – at least as a starting-point.

Around the same time that the interest-based view was gaining currency, primarily in domestic arenas, a reconsideration of the power politics approach was occurring in the international arena. Violence and aggression had taken their fearful toll throughout the 20th century, and the search was on for new ways by which to conduct international and domestic relations. Instead of viewing international conflicts as struggles over resources or as the hard shells of nation-states bouncing off each other, a new view suggested that they were just as often struggles within and between nations over contending ideologies, values, needs, and, most fundamentally, identities. While in World War II (and subsequently during the Cold War) many of the best minds were preoccupied with waging and winning the war, there was also tremendous intellectual ferment devoted to research on overcoming human aggression and promoting cooperation. How could the social sciences be used to analyze the causes of such aggression and avoid catastrophe from recurring?

One approach that emerged in the late 1950s, and has been replicated hundreds of times since, was the analytical problem-solving workshop in which high level representatives of conflicting nations would meet off-the-record in a quasi-academic seminar,

¹ Senator Mitchell's comments are described earlier in Pearson (2001).

facilitated by various social scientists with various disciplinary perspectives (e.g. political science, sociology, history, psychology, and so forth). They would gather for up to two weeks at a time in remote 'islands' away from the site of the conflict itself to help disputants redefine their conflicts from resource- to identity-driven, discovering needs-based issues and generating alternative solutions based on these new definitions (Burton, 1969; Fisher, 1996).

In the organizational arena, a parallel process was also occurring (Rothman & Friedman, 2001). In England, the United States, and various places in Europe, a new concern with small-group dynamics was emerging. Kurt Lewin was the father of this trend in his articulation of a new role for academics as change agents. Coining the notion of 'action research', Lewin (1948) bucked the positivist division between theory and practice and suggested that the most powerful theory could be gained through intervention, real-world refinement, or, in other words, applied research – not from detached analysis and research. Examining questions related to self-organizing, participatory democracy, and the like, Eric Trist studied British coal mines and began discovering similar patterns of small work-teams bound together to accomplish specific tasks (in this case coal-mining) but doing so based on a keen sense of solidarity and shared purpose (Kleiner, 1996). Out of this ferment grew new management trends, such as industrial democracy, sociotechnical systems, open systems, and eventually organizational learning.

All of these efforts, at both international and organizational levels, shared certain new assumptions about the power of human agency, the importance of participation, recognition, meaning, and self-esteem. In short, the 'economic' or 'political' man striving to produce or control resources was superseded by a full-blooded sentient being

with hopes, fears, goals, values, needs, and identities. The new conflict frame, paralleling or at times preceding the reframe based on interests, suggests that identities are where the focus should often lie, and that when it comes to organizational learning this will be particularly useful.

Like much of the pioneering work at the National Training Laboratory, or Tavistock, this identity-based conflict frame focused on surfacing conflicts as opportunities for people to inquire into their own and one another's concerns. Conflict presents an opportunity for articulation and reinvention. When parties come to understand themselves and each other more fully as they analyze the causes and nature of their disputes, they may begin to discover new ways of defining themselves, each other, and their relationships. Like the original conflict frame, identity-based conflict resolution of this sort reunites ends with means, with identity now serving as both goal and obstacle.

The small-group dynamics movement has led to a conception of conflict as opportunity, not just opportunity for change, but more essentially for learning. Deep conflict (distinguished from disputes and arguments) is viewed as emerging from perceived or actual incompatibilities between the identities of disputants (as individuals or groups). If the concrete and often resource-based or interest-based issues that emerge around identity conflicts (e.g. over land or political control) are to be resolved – by negotiation or by some type of interest-based bargaining at later stages – there is a precondition that the fundamental identity issues be articulated and mutually engaged first.

Framing conflicts, or at least their source, in terms of identity can provide a foundation for successful negotiation by fostering the will that a settlement is worthwhile. As long as parties locked in an identity-based conflict fear that their identity needs will be neglected or negated by a conflict settlement, they will

not be motivated to engage in negotiations to settle it. Thus, we hypothesize that many conflicts that have appeared 'settled' but have later re-emerged with greater virulence are, in many cases, conflicts whose true source (identity issues) has not been adequately articulated and engaged first. Identity-conflict framing does not create the illusion of an 'end' to conflict. Rather it sees conflict as an integral part of life and enables disputants to design solutions that will enable them to live with and learn from it. 'Good dialectic' (Argyris & Schön, 1978), or ongoing dialogue, is fostered. Unlike the first two frames, parties are not so much out to solve problems as to, at least initially, deeply understand them. Such an understanding is often based upon reflexive dialogue.

This dialogue is a form of guided 'interactive introspection' by which disputants speak about themselves in the presence of their adversaries and about their needs and values as viewed interactively through the constructivist prism of the conflict situation (Rothman, 1997). Conflicts emerge due to threats to or frustrations over existing identities, but they also serve to forge identities. Usually the identities forged in the crucible of conflict are exclusive and adversarial. They can also be a source for identity formation which is inclusive. Reflexive dialogue can be positively transforming. Not only can it nurture an expression of disputants' underlying motivations for conflict, e.g. 'this is who we are and what we hope and fear', it can also help disputants articulate to themselves, as they struggle to communicate to the other side, what they care about most deeply and why. In its richest form it can be an interaction by which disputants come to know and express themselves in ways that may not have occurred had the conflict not provided an opportunity, or necessity, for such articulation.

Whereas, in conventional adversarial conflict-framing, parties typically identify the

locus and source of the conflict in their opponents, in reflexive reframing parties begin, or start over, with themselves. They inquire first and foremost into what the conflict 'out there' means to them 'inside', and how their own internal processes and priorities have negatively shaped and can be positively channeled to positively reshape the course of the exogenous conflict. Instead of blaming the other side for their aggression, for example, sides may articulate their threatened or frustrated needs as a positive need to feel safe and in control of their destiny (Rothman, 1992).

Reflexive dialogue, therefore, like identity conflict itself, can be a source for enabling disputants to articulate what they care about and why, who they are, and, given their self-definitions, why the conflict matters to them so much. Having *first* expressed themselves and heard each other in this way, disputants may *then* become allies in determining an agenda for future resolution approaches – further meetings, interest-based problem-solving, functional cooperation, even traditional negotiation, and so forth (Rothman, 1996).

It is very possible for a conflict to involve resources, interests, and identity; they are not mutually exclusive. Thus, a conflict engagement process can cycle through each framing (Rothman, 1996, 1997). For example, when protracted and identity issues are at stake, the identity-conflict frame must be applied first. Having designed an intervention based on this frame enables parties to reflexively voice their concerns, hopes, fears, and so forth, and hear those of the other side. Such a process is reflexive as each articulation from one side can lead to positive and deeper re-articulation from the other. At some point in such a process, working on functional cooperation, or interest-based bargaining, becomes possible, and it is even useful to address issues of resource scarcity and competition and reach negotiated outcomes and compromises over them.

It should also be made clear that identity

conflicts are not solely about issues of identity. They often contain, or are expressed through, elements of tangible resources or interests. However, they diverge from traditional interest-based disputes in that those interests are projected on the *basis* of identity. A useful distinction here is between 'within-frame' and 'between-frame' conflicts. In within-frame, or interest-based, conflicts, parties essentially share a single context or the proverbial pie and are in conflict over how it is to be shared or divided. In between-frame, or identity-based, conflicts, parties fight across an existential divide (which can happen within single-identity groups as well as across them); they frame their own sense of self and priorities in mutually exclusive terms or in terms of distrust, and only when they come to recognize and accept the other's legitimacy, no matter how begrudgingly, can there be a basis for narrowing their gap and building common ground.

Identity conflicts revolve around the identity of the groups involved. Tangible interests play a secondary or derivative role in the conflict. Table I below compares and contrasts identity-based conflicts with those that are interest-based. What is apparent is that interest-based disputes are by definition amenable to traditional forms of negotiation. Identity-based conflicts, on the other hand, contain primary elements that are non-negotiable. Many intrastate and some interstate conflicts are about competing identities based on

mutual rejections of the legitimacy of the other side out of fear that such recognition will undermine one's own legitimacy, values, and claims. For example, in the not distant past, Israelis feared that if Palestinian claims were legitimate or taken seriously, they would undermine Israeli claims. Palestinians had the same fears about the Israelis. Thus, the situation and concession over resources and territory were viewed as zero-sum, primarily because of fears and mutual suspicion regarding identity recognition.

The ARIA Model

Although interactive conflict resolution was originally designed to address protracted social conflict between identity groups, various practitioners and techniques are used. The use of ICR as a method for dealing with specific issues is not clearly stated. Small group discussions are designed to facilitate resolution of identity issues, yet how those issues are dealt with can vary over application. This article therefore puts forth a specific method and approach of ICR that addresses this deficiency.

The ARIA framework aims at breaking down the barrier of identity through a four-phased process of surfacing *Antagonism*, digging out underlying values, needs, and their *Resonance* within and between sides, leading to *Invention* of creative solutions, and *Action* to implement them, including,

Table I. Interest-Based Versus Identity-Based Conflicts

<i>Interest-based conflicts</i>	<i>Identity-based conflicts</i>
Issues are concrete and clearly defined.	Issues are abstract, complex, and difficult to define.
Desired outcomes are defined in terms of tangible interests and resources.	Desired outcomes are intangible and difficult to identify.
Involve relatively agreed upon interpretations of the sources of the conflict and conditions for settlement.	Involve interpretive dynamics of history, psychology, culture, values, and beliefs of groups that are often, at least initially, framed in ways that are mutually exclusive.

possibly, negotiation planning or functional problem-solving.

Typically, in interest-based bargaining, or problem-solving, following the expression of conflict (the 'antagonism'), the next step is to get disputants to move from positional bargaining to interest-based approaches. Instead, what is so often needed (especially in identity-based, intractable, or deeply rooted conflict) is a whole new focus and point of departure. It begins with the *Resonance* phase, when after parties articulate their animosity they move on to a deep dialogue giving voice to and recognizing the underlying needs and values of each side as the root of their conflict.

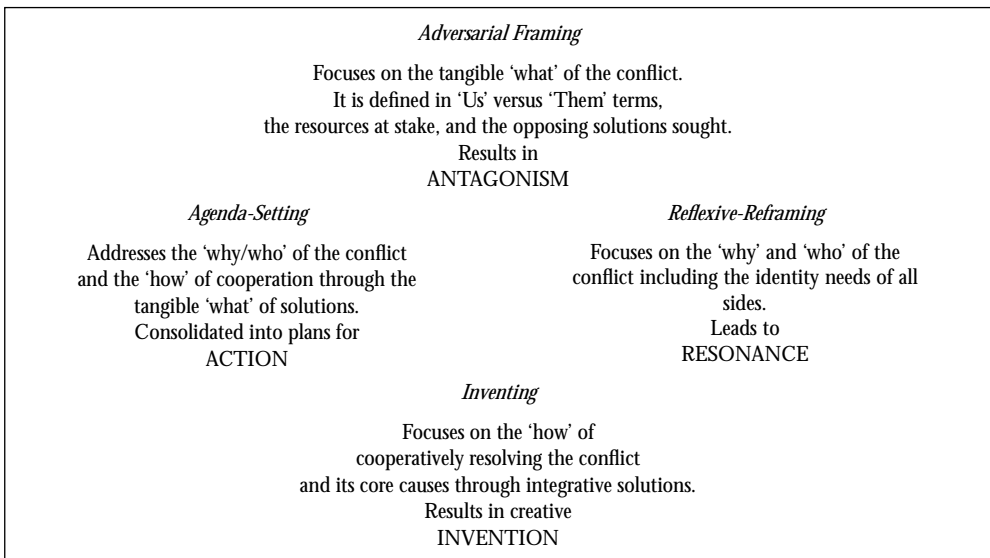
In this *Resonance* phase, disputants reflexively articulate their core concerns sought, threatened, or frustrated within the conflict (as both source and focus), first to themselves and then interactively. This takes a huge effort. Only then can the parties start to ask what they can do about the conflict – not what they can do about limited resources, but what they can do about their identities,

which are in confrontation with each other and which are construed in ways that are mutually exclusive. Through this process, the parties can see that there are places where their identities in fact mesh and merge. Having truly reframed the conflict in this way allows parties then to turn their attention to a functional focus.

The *Resonance* stage of ARIA sets the stage for the *Inventing* of joint solutions, the 'How?' that actually overlaps significantly with 'integrative solutions' prescribed by interest-based bargaining approaches (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Now that parties have come to recognize and accept one another's identity, they can concretely explore collaboratively how the tangible issues – or 'interests' and objectives – of the conflict can be resolved without threatening the identity of the other.

Agenda-setting completes the process by consolidating the 'What? Why? Who? and How?' of the previous steps which will be sustained by joint action. The interest frame can now be used in the final two phases of ARIA

Figure 1. The ARIA Framework



Source: Rothman (1997: 19). Reprinted with permission of Jossey-Bass, Inc., a subsidiary of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

for invention and action. Only now in an identity-based conflict can interest-based bargaining, negotiation, problem-solving, and action-planning or agenda-setting become useful and collaborative acts.

In sum, the ARIA framework fosters the articulation and development of four unfolding stages: Antagonism, Resonance, Invention, and Action (see Figure 1).

Assessment

A major stumbling block in the way to acceptance of the identity frame is the question of success. With negotiation, success can be fairly well determined, at least in the short run, by virtue of agreements. Were they achieved? Did they last? With identity conflict reduction, though, success is nuanced at best; at worst it is immensely complex to define and even more so to determine (Ross & Rothman, 1999).

Although still not widely accepted nor practiced, particularly by diplomats, ICR has had input from many scholars and practitioners who have conducted ICR workshops relating to Cyprus, Northern Ireland, the Middle East, India-Pakistan, Africa, Sri Lanka, the United States, and in the former Soviet Union, to name but a few settings.

One of the many challenges of ICR has to do with effectiveness. Most ICR workshops at the international level have dealt with conflicts that are decades old and very polarized. These are exactly the conflicts that ICR advocates seek to resolve, but resolution cannot happen overnight. It is therefore difficult to assess how much of an effect the ICR workshops have had on the overall conflict, if any. This seems to point to a major problem in studying the effectiveness of such techniques; when used, this has generally been under conditions of limited resources and relatively low support from elite actors who ultimately need to sanction and build upon foundations laid at this level. Additionally, conflict resolution efforts and negotiation typically occur at the

elite level simultaneously. If a breakthrough in relations occurs, how do we know it had to do with 'track two' or 'track three' (lower level elite and mass public) effort rather than the savvy negotiators and diplomats brokering the power-sharing arrangement?

Furthermore, testing ICR techniques is complicated by the methodology typically used. ICR practitioners have applied their approach to particular cases, but this has been limited to cases where the parties agree to the intervention. As a result, case-study methodology and anecdotal story-telling are typically described as the evidence of ICR's effectiveness. For example, Kelman's (1995) analysis of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians identifies the significance of track-two diplomacy in moving the parties towards the signing of the Oslo Accords. ICR-type efforts that occurred between Israelis and Palestinians for many years prior are judged to have played a direct, significant, and successful role in this particular case. Specifically, ICR is credited as having significantly contributed to 'preparing the ground' and legitimizing a new culture of dialogue and problem-solving between these disputants who not long before rejected the legitimacy of each other. Many veterans of those problem-solving workshops reportedly found their way into the final negotiations, facilitating trust-building. Certainly the situation 'on the ground' in the Middle East, including the effects of the traumatic *Intifada* and perceived economic benefits in an agreement, helped set the stage for more reasonable approaches. But the negotiators basically had come to know each other's points of view and political and identity needs very well. The subject of a Palestinian state no longer scared the Israeli authorities in the way it had previously. Sadly, given the vast number of conflicts containing elements of identity throughout the world, ICR seems to have been applied in a small number of them with inadequate support.

Rouhana (2001) has argued that in order to assess the effectiveness of ICR techniques,

scholars in the field need first to recognize that ICR workshops are not designed to achieve the goals of traditional diplomacy. Rather, problem-solving workshops and the like aim to improve the environment of the conflict, thereby making it more amenable to resolution. Presumably, conflicts in which ICR techniques were present would eventually move towards resolution, although, as Rouhana suggests, this might take repeated efforts. There is no way, of course, by which to prove conclusively that they would not have moved to settlement eventually without ICR.

A survey of the field of identity cases and the effectiveness of ICR techniques in resolving those cases has not been completed at this point. The most comprehensive review of the use and success of ICR methods is provided by Fisher (1996), who identifies 24 such attempts in 14 different international and civil conflicts. The outcomes of the ICR attempts vary from 'indeterminate/ended' to 'improved attitudes' to 'framework for settlement'. For example, the conflict in Sri Lanka between the Sinhala and the Tamils was approached by Azar (1990) in 1985 and reportedly resulted in what has been termed 'measures for reducing tension'. Clearly, the conflict in Sri Lanka has not been resolved and continues to involve violence. The Azar resolution attempt, however, was 'successful' at a different level, depending of course upon how success is defined. Those who were involved in the workshop reportedly developed ideas for reducing tension between the parties.

Licklider's (1995) list of civil wars between 1945 and 1994 reveals 14 cases that ended through negotiation rather than military victory. Of those 14, 10 contained issues of identity, according to Licklider. Of the 10 identity wars that ended in negotiation, 6 returned to war over the same sets of supposedly resolved issues. Based on our hypothesis that identity-based conflicts will not be

amenable to traditional negotiation until or unless the identity dynamics are first surfaced and engaged, resulting in some degree of mutual recognition, this may indicate that the underlying identity needs reflected in the conflict were never actually met to the parties' satisfaction.

Table II compares Fisher's (1996) account of the major ICR workshops of civil wars with the negotiated settlements of identity civil wars identified by Licklider. A glance reveals some apparent overlap between ICR cases and cases identified by Licklider as ending through negotiated settlement: Cyprus, Lebanon, and India. However, none of the ICR workshops took place during the course of the conflict, so ICR could not have been involved in the settlement of these disputes at that time. One can speculate, therefore, that identity issues were not dealt with in a systematic way during these negotiations, the underlying issues thereby being left unresolved. This may be at least one contributing factor helping to explain why these three conflicts, and three others of the nine conflicts listed as 'settled', returned to war with the same parties involved or over the same issues.

Bercovitch (1997) identifies 295 international and internationalized civil disputes with 100 battle deaths or more occurring after 1965 when ICR was first introduced. His dataset included all conflicts whether or not mediation occurred. In Table III we compare ICR cases identified by Fisher with Bercovitch's list of conflicts. For this comparison, we have included the international conflict ICR attempts deleted from the previous table. The cases of Bercovitch have been crudely matched to the cases of ICR attempts. Twelve of the Fisher cases did not have a corresponding conflict identified in the Bercovitch dataset, presumably because of the failure of the conflict to meet all of the criteria used by Bercovitch to identify a war. Cases such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Table II. Civil War Settlements and ICR Workshops

<i>Identity civil wars ending in negotiated settlement</i>	<i>Major ICR workshops in civil war</i>
<i>India, 1946</i>	Cyprus, 1966
<i>Lebanon, 1958</i>	Israelis/Palestinians, 1971
<i>Cyprus, 1963–64</i>	Northern Ireland, 1971
Sudan, 1963–71	India/Pakistan/Bangladesh, 1972
India, 1965	India/Pakistan, 1976
Zimbabwe, 1972–80	Israelis/Palestinians, 1982–92
Cyprus, 1974	Israelis/Egyptians/Palestinians, 1979–84
Lebanon, 1975–76	Lebanon, 1984
Chad, 1980–87	Sri Lanka, 1985
Zimbabwe, 1983–84	Cyprus, 1985
	Cyprus, 1991
	Russia/Lithuania–Baltic Republics, 1992
	Russia/Baltic Republics, 1993
	Cyprus, 1993
	Tajikistan, 1993–
	Russia/Estonia–Baltic Republics, 1994–
	Israelis/Palestinians, 1991–93
	Israelis/Palestinians, 1994–

Source: Licklider (1995).

The italicized conflicts are those which occurred prior to the introduction of interactive conflict resolution (ICR) techniques. ICR could be considered an available option in the cases not italicized.

Source: Fisher (1996).

would not be included in Bercovitch's data because the dataset excludes strictly civil conflicts. Table IV gives the breakdown of the remaining twelve cases.

We assume 'lapsed' outcomes to be those in which settlement or victory was not achieved, but in which the conflict diminished nonetheless. Outcomes identified by Bercovitch illustrate that even when ICR techniques were used during the course of a conflict the results varied in terms of effect. Still, roughly 40% of the comparable cases showed at least some improvement (abatement, partial or full settlement) in situations of ICR.

Interestingly, ICR techniques have been used in cases which Bercovitch identifies as concerning issues *other than* identity, such as security, ideology, territory, and resources. If one considers Bercovitch's ethnicity and independence criteria as identity-based cases where ICR was used, then 5 of the 12

matching cases in the table were *not* identity-based. Of those five, full or partial settlement was reached three times, indicating the potential success of applying ICR to non-identity-based disputes. However, we would suggest, unlike Bercovitch, that identity can be and often is a central aspect of, or is related to, these other categories (e.g. as when religious groups fight over territorial control).

In the remaining seven identity-based cases where ICR was used, final conflict outcomes are less positive in terms of settlement. Three were ongoing as of 1995; one ended in victory, one in abatement, and three lapsed. Not one of the ICR identity-based disputes ended in full or partial settlement. It can be argued, however, that identity-based conflicts will take longer to settle even when ICR is applied. This is indicated by the ongoing and abated conflicts identified in the table. Additionally, it is possible that the ICR cases identified by

Table III. Interactive Conflict Resolution Workshops and Wars

<i>Major ICR workshops in civil war</i>	<i>Corresponding international and internationalized civil wars, their outcomes, and issues</i>
Malaysia/Indonesia/Singapore, 1965	Indonesia–Malaysia, 1962–65 <i>Full settlement (territory and security issues)</i>
Cyprus, 1966	Cyprus, 1963–67 <i>Lapse (independence and territory issues)</i>
Ethiopia/Somalia/Kenya, 1969	Somalia–Kenya, 1962–67 <i>Partial settlement (security and ideology issues)</i>
Israelis/Palestinians, 1971	Israel–Jordan, 1964–66 <i>Abated (security and territory issues)</i>
India/Pakistan/Bangladesh, 1972	Bangladesh War, 1971–74 <i>Victory (independence, territory and security issues)</i>
India/Pakistan, 1976	India–Pakistan border skirmishes, 1965–70 <i>Full Settlement (territory and security issues)</i>
Britain/Argentina, 1983, 1984, 1985	Falklands War, 1982 <i>Victory (territory issues)</i>
Sri Lanka, 1985	Sri Lanka, 1982–95 <i>Ongoing (territory, independence, and ethnic issues)</i>
Russia/Lithuania–Baltic Republics, 1992	USSR–Lithuania, 1990–91 <i>Lapse (independence, ethnic, and ideology issues)</i>
Russia/Baltic Republics, 1993	USSR–Latvia, 1991 <i>Lapse (independence issues)</i>
Cyprus, 1993	Cyprus, 1993 <i>Abated (ethnic and security issues)</i>
Tajikistan, 1993 (ongoing)	Tajikistan, 1992–95 <i>Ongoing (ideology and independence issues)</i>

Source: Fisher (1996).

Source: Bercovitch (1997).

Fisher did not clearly or systematically deal with the identity issues of the conflicts as the ARIA approach advocates. For comparison, final outcomes of all identity-based conflicts (ethnicity and independence categories) included in Bercovitch's dataset have been

included in Table V. Proportionally, approximately the same number of identity-based disputes are ongoing whether or not ICR was present. More cases experienced partial or full settlement when ICR was not involved. Given the small number of

Table IV. Interactive Conflict Resolution and War Outcomes, 1965–95

Ongoing	2
Full settlement	2
Partial settlement	1
Victory	2
Abated	2
Lapsed	3
All wars	13

Source: Fisher (1996), Bercovitch (1997).

Table V. Outcome of Ethnicity and Independence Wars, 1945–95

Ongoing	21
Lapse	3
Victory	12
Abated	19
Partial settlement	4
Full settlement	15
All wars	74

Source: Bercovitch (1997).

identity-based cases with ICR, however, more research is needed to better assess and understand this finding.

Bercovitch's definition of full or partial settlement is also a complicating factor in this analysis: 'A dispute may be said to be fully settled where mediation resulted in a formal agreement and a settlement of most or all substantive issues in contention.' Disputes are said to be partially settled where mediation produces a 'formal agreement on some of the substantive issues in dispute' (Bercovitch & Lamare, 1993: 295). This definition does not require that a settlement be maintained for a certain period of time after the mediation. It is clear from Licklider's (1995) analysis that an agreement does not guarantee an end to the conflict. It is expected that cases identified by Bercovitch as successfully mediated subsequently moved back into violent conflict.

An additional difficulty in empirically assessing ICR effectiveness is the variability in application. ICR has often been described as a grass-roots effort illustrated by problem-solving workshops where members of warring identity groups can be brought together in a neutral setting to get to know each other better. Other ICR applications have brought high-ranking officials together in a formal, albeit often 'academic', problem-solving situation (the 'academic' nature of these gatherings sometimes provides 'cover' for creative conversations and explorations that could not otherwise occur). When one considers ICR's ability to assist in the resolution of an overall conflict, these two different applications could have very different results.

An empirical assessment of ARIA as a specific ICR model is problematic as well. It has been used sparingly, as have the other models of ICR, by various practitioners. Rothman (1997) describes his success in using the ARIA model in Jerusalem, where participants in the workshops were able to build confidence in their adversaries to the

point they were working jointly on proposed policy papers designed to address the major issues of the conflict in Jerusalem. Gorman (1999) describes what he claims was a largely successful ARIA intervention between adjacent Israeli and Palestinian communities in Jerusalem. In addition, Barri Sanders and Edy Kaufman, co-directors of the 'Partners in Conflict: Building Bridges to Peace in the Transcaucasus' project, have reported successful use of the model as well. Sanders has reported that ARIA is also useful for helping third parties working within conflicts to gain a better understanding of the dynamics embedded in the conflict and thus aided them in facilitating constructive dialogue between disputants (personal communication, July 2000).

Conclusion

In this paper we have emphasized the salience of identity in the understanding and resolution of deeply rooted, protracted social conflict. Conflicts are indeed intractable, we would suggest, so long as we rely on outmoded means of analysis (e.g. state-centric) and methods of management (e.g. power politics). We suggest instead that a new emphasis on identity issues through interactive conflict resolution (with the ARIA model presented in detail as an example) may help us move in the new millennium in ways that decrease the virulence of the 'new class' of conflict the world has witnessed particularly in the last two decades.

It also becomes clear from the analysis that new efforts to assess the effectiveness of such methods need to be explored. Early success indicators are mixed at best. The dismal record of interest-based and resource-based approaches in moving brutal ethnopolitical conflict toward a cooperative settlement is obvious. In addition, elite-level decisionmakers are only recently beginning to accept conflict resolution strategies not rooted in

realpolitik. As a promising alternative, the varying methods of ICR, including the proposed ARIA model with its particular focus on identity issues, must be explored systematically with rigorous, albeit perhaps innovative, evaluation criteria.

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- JAY ROTHMAN, b. 1958, PhD in International Relations (1998); Director, ARIA Group (1998–), a conflict-resolution training and consulting firm focusing on identity-based conflict; Research Director, Action Evaluation Research Institute (1993–), a think-tank devoted to defining, promoting, and assessing success in conflict resolution. Most recent book: *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict in Nations, Organizations and Communities* (Jossey-Bass, 1997).
- MARIE L. OLSON, b. 1970, PhD candidate in Political Science (Wayne State University); Program Coordinator, Mediating Theory and Democratic Systems, Wayne State University (1998–). Current main interest: international conflict and conflict resolution.