

Kelman, H.C. (2008). Bridging individual and social change in international conflict: Contextual social psychology in action. In U. Wagner, L.R. Tropp, G. Finchilescu, & C. Tredoux (Eds.), *Improving intergroup relations: Building on the legacy of Thomas F. Pettigrew* (pp. 244–261). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

16

Bridging Individual and Social Change in International Conflict

Contextual Social Psychology in Action

Herbert C. Kelman

I first met Thomas Pettigrew nearly 50 years ago. We were introduced to each other by Gordon Allport at a conference on race relations in Washington. As I recall, Allport said words to the effect: “You fellows should get to know each other.” He referred in part to the fact that Tom and I were soon to become colleagues in the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University. But I am sure he also sensed that, despite the differences in our personal backgrounds, we shared fundamental interests and values. He was of course right. Before the conference was over, we had bonded and we have been close professional colleagues and personal friends ever since. I can safely say that we have always been on the same side of the issue—whether it involved academic, national, or international politics.

Pettigrew and I—partly through our many conversations during those early years at Harvard—have evolved a common view (indeed, a common vision) of social psychology. He has called this approach to the discipline *contextual social psychology* (Pettigrew, 1991), and I have readily signed on to this designation. Contextual social psychology analyzes the actions and interactions of individuals in their societal and organizational context. This perspective on social psychology, at least in Pettigrew’s and my own practice, has several corollaries: It views social psychology as an interdisciplinary endeavor and, indeed, anchors the field in its two parent disciplines, psychology and sociology, and bridges their respective levels of analysis; it relies

on a multiplicity of methods; it engages in social psychology as a cross-cultural, international enterprise; it places applied research and practice based on social-psychological principles at the center of the agenda, along with basic and theory-driven research; it gives special emphasis to applications of research to social issues and to its relevance to social policy and social movements; and it is sensitive to the social and ethical consequences of the processes and products of our research.

Pettigrew and I co-authored one early article (Kelman & Pettigrew, 1959)—a polemical piece criticizing the false dichotomy between psychological and sociological approaches to the study of prejudice. Otherwise, each of us went in his own direction, with Pettigrew's work focusing on race relations and mine increasingly on international relations, though we shared an abiding interest in ethnic conflict. We stayed in touch with each other's work throughout. Pettigrew's research and advocacy in race relations were of great interest to me, in view of my active involvement in the early decades of the American civil rights movement, and I closely followed his theoretical writings on such issues as relative deprivation and the contact hypothesis. He, in turn, closely followed my early work on processes of social influence and my later work on conflict resolution in the Middle East. He gave a special vote of confidence to my efforts in that field when he encouraged his son, Mark, who was an undergraduate at Harvard University at the time, to take my graduate seminar on "International Conflict: Social-Psychological Approaches." This course included a problem-solving workshop on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which the students participated as apprentice members of the third party. Mark has since gone on, by the way, to complete his doctoral work in Middle Eastern Studies and to teach in that field.

The problem-solving workshops in conflict resolution, which are very much in the spirit of contextual social psychology, are the topic of this chapter in honor of Tom Pettigrew. The chapter is based on a talk I presented at the 2003 meeting of the Society of Experimental Social Psychology—a talk for which Tom Pettigrew, along with Marilyn Brewer, served as discussants.

Interactive Problem Solving

Since the early 1970s, my colleagues and I have been developing and applying an unofficial, academically based, third-party approach to the resolution of international and intercommunal conflicts. The

work derives from the pioneering efforts of John Burton (1969, 1979; see also Kelman, 1972), but our practice—and our theory of practice—are explicitly anchored in social-psychological principles. I have used the term *interactive problem solving* (Kelman, 1986, 1998a, 2002) to describe the approach, which finds its fullest (though not its sole) expression in problem-solving workshops. My students and associates have applied the approach, or variants of it, to a number of protracted conflicts between identity groups around the world. My own primary focus over the years has been on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Kelman, 1979, 1995, 1997, 1998b, 2005a).

The practice of interactive problem solving is informed by a set of social-psychological assumptions about the nature of international conflict and conflict resolution, which enter into our formulation of the structure, the process, and the content of problem-solving workshops. What makes interactive problem solving quintessentially social-psychological in its orientation is its goal of promoting change in individuals—through face-to-face interaction in small groups—as a vehicle for change in larger social systems: in the national policies and the political cultures that maintain the conflict system. In other words, the *microprocess*, best exemplified by problem-solving workshops, is intended to produce changes in the *macroprocess* of conflict resolution, including the official negotiations and the peace process as a whole.

The microprocess relates to the macroprocess in two ways. First and foremost, it provides inputs into the larger process. The challenge here is to identify the appropriate points of entry: those points in the larger process where contributions from problem-solving workshops, and from a social-psychological analysis, can be particularly useful. Second, the microprocess can serve as a metaphor for what happens—or, at least in my view, ought to happen—at the macrolevel. Let me comment briefly on interactive problem solving as a metaphor for the macroprocess, before turning to a description of the microprocess of problem-solving workshops and a discussion of their potential impact on the macroprocess—which is the central theme of this chapter.

The three components of the term interactive problem solving suggest what, I propose, happens or ought to happen in the larger process. First, the conflict needs to be treated as a *problem* shared by the parties—a problem in their relationship, which has become completely competitive, to the point that each, in pursuit of its own needs and interests, threatens and undermines the other's needs and interests and seeks to destroy the other. Second, the conflict resolution process needs to search for a *solution* to the problem: one that addresses the underlying causes of the conflict, i.e., the unfulfilled or

threatened needs of both parties, particularly their needs for security, identity, autonomy, justice, and recognition, and that ultimately leads to a transformation of their relationship. Finally, the term *interactive* refers to the proposition that the task of solving the problem presented by the conflict is best achieved through direct interaction, in which the parties are able to share their differing perspectives and learn how to influence each other by way of responsiveness to the other's needs and concerns.

This view of the macroprocess of conflict resolution suggests some of the key components of the process, which must take place somewhere in the larger system. The parties must undertake efforts: (1) *to identify and analyze the problem*, with a focus on each side's fundamental needs and fears as seen within its own perspective, and on the escalatory dynamics of conflict interactions; (2) *to engage in joint shaping of ideas for a mutually acceptable solution*, i.e., a process of "prenegotiation" that includes exploration of options, reframing of issues to make them more conducive to negotiation, and generation of creative ideas for a constructive and durable resolution of the conflict; (3) *to influence each other by being responsive to the other's needs and fears*, relying on the use of positive incentives, including mutual reassurance that it is safe to enter into negotiations and mutual enticement through the promise of attractive gains; and (4) *to help create a supportive political environment for negotiations*, marked by a sense of mutual reassurance, which depends on each side's conviction that the other is sincere in its commitment to negotiating a peaceful solution, and by a sense of possibility—the sense that, even though negotiations may be difficult and risky, it is possible to find a mutually satisfactory solution.

Problem-solving workshops and related activities seek to provide special opportunities for these kinds of processes to occur. They represent a microprocess that is specifically designed to insert into the macroprocess—in a modest but systematic way—the components of conflict resolution that I have outlined. One can think of problem-solving workshops as workshops in the literal sense of the term, like a carpenter's or an artisan's workshop: a specially constructed space, in which the parties can engage in a process of exploration, observation, and analysis, and in which they can create new products for export, as it were. The products in this case take the form of new ideas and insights that can then be fed into the political debate and the decision-making process within the two societies.

My conception of the problem-solving workshop, incidentally, also reflects my experience as an experimental social psychologist. Like a

social-psychological experiment, the workshop creates a microcosm and a working model of the real world in a relatively isolated, self-contained, and controlled laboratory setting, in which some of the forces that operate in the larger system (or the real world) can be activated, observed, and analyzed. Workshops—unlike experiments—are not simulations of the real world: They involve real members of the conflicting parties engaged in a very real and often consequential interaction around the issues in conflict—but in a setting that makes joint exploration and analysis possible. Good conflict resolution practitioners, like good experimenters, know that the microcosm they have constructed is not the real world and that the contribution of their work to understanding and changing the real world ultimately depends on systematic attention to how the products of the laboratory interaction are generalized and transferred to the larger system.

Workshops are not negotiating sessions. They are not intended to substitute for negotiations or to bypass negotiations in any way. Negotiations can be carried out only by officials who are authorized to conclude binding agreements, and workshops, by definition, are unofficial and non-binding. But it is precisely their non-binding character that represents their unique strength. They provide an opportunity for the kind of exploratory interaction that is very difficult to achieve in the context of official negotiations. While workshops are not negotiations, they are an integral part of the larger negotiation process, relevant at all stages of the process: the pre-negotiation stage, where they contribute to helping the parties move toward the negotiation table; alongside of negotiations, where they can help to frame issues that are not yet on the table in ways that are conducive to successful negotiation; in the inevitable periods of setback, stalemate, or breakdown of negotiation, where they can contribute to creating momentum and reviving the sense of possibility; and, finally, at the postnegotiation stage, where they can contribute to resolving problems of implementation of the negotiated agreements, as well as to the postconflict process of peace building and reconciliation and to transforming the relationship between the former enemies.

Israeli–Palestinian Workshops

Our Israeli–Palestinian workshops until 1991 were all obviously in the prenegotiation phase. Moreover, until 1990, all of our workshops were one-time, self-contained events, usually consisting of separate pre-workshop sessions (of 4–5 hours) for each party and two-and-a-half

days (often over a weekend) of joint meetings. Some of the individual participants in these workshops took part in more than one such event, but each group as a whole met only for this one occasion. It was not until 1990 that Nadim Rouhana and I organized our first continuing workshop: a group of influential Israelis and Palestinians who participated in a series of meetings over a three-year-period (Rouhana & Kelman, 1994).

To give some indication of what happens at workshops and of the principles that govern them, I briefly describe a typical one-time workshop between Israelis and Palestinians. There are, understandably, important differences between one-time and continuing workshops. There is also considerable variation among one-time workshops, depending on the nature of the participants, the occasion for convening them, the specific purposes, the setting, and other considerations. But, despite such variations, there is a set of key principles that apply throughout and that can be gleaned from the description of an ideal-type one-time workshop.

The typical workshop participants are politically involved and, in many cases, politically influential members of their communities. However, with occasional exceptions, they have not been current officials. Participants have included parliamentarians, leading figures in political parties or movements, former military officers or government officials, and journalists or editors specializing in the Middle East. Many of the participants have been academics who are important analysts of the conflict for their societies and some of whom have served in advisory, official, or diplomatic positions and are likely to do so again in the future. We look for participants who are part of the mainstream of their societies and close to the center of the political spectrum. But they have to be interested in exploring the possibilities of a negotiated solution and willing to sit with members of the other society as equals.

The number of participants has varied; our workshops generally include three to six members of each party, as well as a third party of two to four members. On several occasions, we have arranged one-on-one meetings between high-level participants—one Israeli and one Palestinian—who preferred to meet in complete privacy. We have also organized a series of 15 workshops over the years in conjunction with my graduate seminar on international conflict, in which the size of the third party was much larger than usual, because the seminar participants were integrated into the third party in a way that both preserved the integrity of the process and gave the students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience with the model.

The academic setting is an important feature of our approach. It has the advantage of providing an unofficial, private, non-binding context, with its own set of norms to support a type of interaction that departs from the norms that generally govern interactions between conflicting parties. The countervailing norms of our setting both free and require participants to interact in a way that deviates from the conflict norms: The fact that the discussions are noncommittal—"just academic"—makes it relatively safe to do so; the fact that the third party "owns" the setting gives us some authority to prescribe the nature of the interaction.

The third party in our model plays a strictly facilitative role. We do not propose solutions, nor do we participate in the substantive discussions. We do not give advice, take sides, evaluate the ideas presented, or arbitrate between different interpretations of historical facts and international law. Our task is to create the conditions that allow ideas for resolving the conflict to emerge out of the interaction between the parties themselves. Nevertheless, the role of the third party is important. We select and brief the participants, set and enforce the ground rules, and propose the main lines of the agenda. We serve as a repository of trust for the parties who, by definition, do not trust each other: They feel safe to come to the workshop because they trust the third party and rely on it to make sure that confidentiality is maintained and their interests are protected. Finally, the third party moderates the discussion and makes a variety of interventions: content observations, which often take the form of summarizing, highlighting, asking for clarification, or pointing to similarities and differences between the parties; process observations, which suggest how interactions within the group may reflect the dynamics of the conflict between the two societies; and occasional theoretical observations, which offer concepts that might be useful in clarifying the issues under discussion.

Workshop Ground Rules and Agenda

The central ground rule of problem-solving workshops is the principle of *privacy and confidentiality*, which stipulates that whatever is said in the course of a workshop cannot be cited for attribution outside of the workshop setting by any participant, including the third party. To support this ground rule, the typical workshop has no audience, no publicity, and no formal record. To ensure privacy, we have no observers in our workshops; the only way our students were

able to observe the process was by being integrated into the third party and accepting the discipline of the third party. To ensure confidentiality, we do not tape workshop sessions, which leaves us only the written notes as our source of data for discourse analysis and other types of research.

In the early years of our Israeli–Palestinian work, confidentiality was particularly important for the protection of our participants, because merely meeting with the other side exposed them to political and, at times, legal or physical risks. It is equally important, however, for the protection of the process we are trying to promote. It enables participants to engage in the kind of interaction that workshops require, as spelled out in three ground rules governing the interaction process: Participants are asked to *focus on each other*, rather than on their constituencies, on an audience, on third parties, or on the record—to listen to the other, with the aim of understanding the other’s perspective, and to address the other, with the aim of making their own perspective understood; to *engage in a discourse that is analytical* rather than polemical in nature, enabling them to gain an understanding of each other’s needs, fears, concerns, priorities, and constraints, and to develop insight into the escalatory dynamics of the conflict; and to interact in a way that increasingly takes on a *problem-solving mode*, in contrast to the adversarial mode that usually characterizes conflict interactions—to treat the conflict as a shared problem, requiring joint efforts to find a mutually satisfactory solution, rather than try to determine who is right and who is wrong on the basis of historical or legal argumentation.

Three additional ground rules govern the interaction. First, in a workshop, unlike a negotiating session, there is *no expectation that participants will reach an agreement*. If they come away with a better understanding of the other side’s perspective, of their own priorities, and of the dynamics of the conflict, the workshop will have fulfilled its purpose. It should be noted, however, that in some of our workshops, participants—either by their own choice or by initial design—worked on the production of joint documents. A Joint Working Group on Israeli–Palestinian Relations that I co-chaired with Nadim Rouhana between 1994 and 1999 was specifically designed to produce joint concept papers on issues in the permanent-status negotiations (Kelman, 1998b). Second, despite important asymmetries between the parties, which must be taken into account in the workshop discussions, there is full *equality in the workshop setting* in the sense that each party has the same right to serious consideration of its needs, fears, and concerns in the search for a mutually satisfactory

solution. Finally, the third party performs a *facilitative role*, as described above.

One of the tasks of the third party is to set the agenda for the discussion. In some cases, a workshop may be devoted to a specific substantive theme, as was the case in a 2002 workshop for Israeli and Palestinian journalists, which focused on the role of the media in the escalation and de-escalation of the conflict. However, in the typical one-time workshop, the agenda is relatively open and unstructured, as far as the substantive issues under discussion are concerned. But the way in which these issues are approached and the order of discussion are structured so as to facilitate the kind of discourse that the ground rules seek to encourage. After personal introductions around the table, a review of purposes, procedures, and ground rules, and an opportunity for the participants to ask questions about these, we generally proceed with a five-part agenda.

The first discussion session is devoted to an *exchange of information* between the two sides, which serves primarily to break the ice and to set the tone for the kind of discourse we hope to generate. Each party is asked to talk about the situation on the ground and the current mood in its own community, about the issues in the conflict as seen in that community, about the spectrum of views on the conflict and its resolution, and about members' own positions within that spectrum. This exchange provides a shared base of information and sets a precedent for the two sides to deal with each other as mutual resources, rather than solely as combatants.

The core agenda of the workshop begins with a *needs analysis*, in which each side is asked to talk about its fundamental needs and fears—needs that would have to be satisfied and fears that would have to be allayed if a solution is to be acceptable in its society. Participants are asked to listen attentively and not to debate or argue about what the other side says, although they are invited to ask for elaboration and clarification. The purpose of this second phase of the proceedings is to help each side understand the basic concerns of the other side from the other's perspective. We check the level of understanding by asking each side to summarize the other's needs, as they have heard them. Each side then has the opportunity to correct or amplify the summary that has been presented by the other side.

Once the two sides have come to grasp each other's perspective and understand each other's needs as well as seems possible at that point, we move on to the next phase of the agenda: *joint thinking about solutions to the conflict*. We discourage the participants from proposing solutions in the previous phase of the agenda because we want

ideas for solution to be anchored in the problem—i.e., to address the parties' unfulfilled and threatened needs that emerged from the needs analysis. In the joint thinking phase we ask the parties to generate ideas for the overall shape of a solution to the conflict, or to particular issues within the conflict, that are responsive to the fundamental needs and fears of both parties, as presented in the preceding phase. They are given the difficult assignment of thinking of solutions that respond, not only to their own side's needs and fears (as they would in a bargaining situation), but simultaneously to the needs and fears of *both* sides.

Once the parties have achieved some common ground in generating ideas for solutions that would address the fundamental needs and fears of both sides, we turn to a *discussion of the political and psychological constraints* within their societies that stand in the way of such solutions. Discussion of constraints is an extremely important part of the learning that takes place in workshops, but we try to discourage such discussion until the parties have gone through the phase of joint thinking, because a premature focus on constraints is likely to inhibit the creative process of generating new ideas.

Finally, to the extent that time permits, we ask the participants to engage in another round of joint thinking, this time about *ways of overcoming the constraints* against integrative, win-win solutions to the conflict. In this phase of the workshop, participants try to generate ideas for steps that they personally, their organizations, or their governments can take—separately or jointly—in order to overcome the constraints that have been identified. Such ideas may focus, in particular, on steps of mutual reassurance—in the form of acknowledgments, symbolic gestures, or confidence-building measures—that would make the parties more willing and able to take the risks required for innovative solutions to the conflict.

In a volume dedicated to Tom Pettigrew, a question that naturally arises concerns the relationship of interactive problem solving to intergroup contact theory, to which Pettigrew has made—and continues to make—major contributions (e.g., Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In contrast to the typical structured contact situation, the purpose of problem-solving workshops is not to promote interaction between members of different groups as a vehicle for changing mutual attitudes and reducing intergroup prejudice. Rather, the purpose of the ground rules and agenda that I have outlined is to promote a particular kind of interaction between members of conflicting groups, conducive to the development of new insights and ideas for resolving their conflict, which can in turn influence public

opinion and the policy process within their societies. Yet, achieving that purpose clearly calls for changes in participants' attitudes toward the other group—particularly for recognition of the other's openness to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and trust in the other's intentions.

It is interesting, in this connection, that the context, ground rules, and agenda of problem-solving workshops reflect the four conditions of Allport's (1954) original contact hypothesis (as summarized by Pettigrew, 1998, and Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006): equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority sanction. Equality in the setting is one of our central ground rules and is stressed in the recruitment and briefing of participants. The common goals of the participants follow directly from the view of the conflict as a shared problem whose solution requires their joint efforts. The participants are interdependent in their cooperative work, because they must rely on each other for information about and insight into the other's situation and perspective so that they can arrive at ideas for resolving the conflict that are responsive to both sets of needs. Finally, the academic auspices of our work give the third party the authority to provide an alternative set of norms for the interaction, in place of the norms that typically govern interactions between parties in conflict, and to serve as a repository of trust for parties that view each other with suspicion.

Change and Transfer

Problem-solving workshops have a dual purpose. First, they seek to produce change in the particular individuals sitting around the workshop table—to enable them to acquire new insights into the conflict and new ideas for resolving it and overcoming the barriers to a negotiated solution. However, these changes at the level of individual participants are not ends in themselves, but vehicles for promoting change at the policy level. Thus, the second purpose of workshops is to maximize the likelihood that the new insights and ideas developed by workshop participants will be fed back into the political debate and decision-making procedures in their respective societies.

Clearly, this model is not based on the simple assumption that the aggregation of changes in individuals in the course of workshops eventually adds up to changes in the conflict system. Rather, the purpose of workshops is to create *inputs* into the larger process—in the form of new understandings, insights, ideas, and proposals for resolving the

conflict that can be injected into the political culture, the political debate, and the decision-making process in each society. This is why it is important to differentiate the purpose of facilitating changes in the individual participants from the purpose of transferring these changes into the policy process. Individual change does not automatically and as a matter of course translate into social change. The effect of individual change on social change has to be understood in the light of how changes in individuals enter into social-system processes and play themselves out in interaction with other forces that characterize the larger system.

In keeping with this view, the contribution of the microprocess of problem-solving workshops to macrolevel change depends not only on what happens in the workshop itself—i.e., how effective it is in producing change in the individual participants—but on the place of the workshop program on the larger political map and its relationship to other societal processes. Several features of a workshop program may enhance its contribution to the macroprocess—or, more precisely, to the transfer of workshop products into the policy process: (1) microlevel changes resulting from workshops may have a *cumulative effect*, insofar as they are part of a range of activities within and between the two societies that interact with each other and build on each other, gradually penetrating the political cultures; (2) workshops are most likely to contribute to the macroprocess if they have built-in *multiplier effects*, best exemplified in our work by the recruitment of participants who are credible political influentials within their own societies—individuals situated in positions that enable them to influence public opinion, political action, and/or decision making; (3) depending on the nature of the participants, workshops and related microlevel activities may also have *demonstration* or *legitimation effects*, demonstrating—or at least suggesting—that serious negotiations may indeed be possible and peaceful relations attainable, and helping to make interactions across the conflict lines legitimate; and finally, (4) the impact of unofficial, microlevel activities on the larger process depends on their *complementarity* with the entire range of other activities that constitute a peace process, from the official negotiations themselves to public education and grassroots efforts in promoting peace and intercommunal cooperation.

Apropos of my earlier analogy with the social-psychological experiment, these same four features—though with different specific manifestations—apply to the relationship between the microprocess of the laboratory and the real-life situations to which we seek to generalize experimental findings. Our ability to generalize is enhanced by

the *cumulative effect* of a series of interconnected and yet diverse studies within and across experimental programs; by built-in *multiplier effects*, such as the heterogeneity of a research program's samples, experimental situations, and response measures; by the use of experiments primarily as *demonstrations* that certain relationships are possible, leaving it to other types of research to explore the contexts and conditions under which these relationships may manifest themselves; and by the *complementarity* of experimental findings with findings generated by other methods, as in the use of "methodological triangulation" (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

The dual purpose of problem-solving workshops presents one of the greatest challenges to the theory and practice of interactive problem solving: how to structure workshops so that new insights and ideas are likely to be both generated in the course of the interaction and transferred to the policy process. What is particularly challenging, to both theory and practice, is that the requirements for maximizing change in the workshop itself may be not only different from, but often contradictory to the requirements for maximizing the transfer of that change into the political process—just as the requirements for establishing a causal relationship in the laboratory and for ensuring the generalizability of that relationship, i.e., for internal and external validity (Campbell, 1957), may well be contradictory. I have described this issue as the *dialectics of interactive problem solving* (Kelman, 1979). One of the most challenging tasks in designing workshops is to navigate these dialectics—to create the proper balance between an array of contradictory requirements.

The best example of these dialectics is provided by the selection of participants. To maximize transfer into the political process, we might prefer official participants, who are close to the decision-making apparatus and thus in a position to apply directly what they have learned. But to maximize change, we might prefer participants who are removed from the decision-making process and therefore less constrained in their interactions and freer to play with ideas and explore hypothetical possibilities. To balance these contradictory requirements, we look for participants who are not officials, but politically influential. They are thus more free to engage in the process but, at the same time, their positions within their societies ensure that any new ideas they develop can have an impact on the thinking of decision makers and the public at large.

Another example of the dialectics of workshops is the degree of trust and cohesiveness that we try to engender in the group of participants. Adequate levels of interpersonal trust and group cohesiveness are

important to the effective interaction among the participants. But if the workshop participants become too trusting and the group becomes too cohesive, they may lose credibility and political effectiveness in their own communities and thus inhibit the transfer of workshop insights into the policy process. To balance these two contradictory requirements, we aim for the development of *working trust* and an *uneasy coalition*—two concepts, elaborated over the years, that have become central to the theory and practice of interactive problem solving.

In view of the dialectics of interactive problem solving, we aim to foster *working trust* among workshop participants, in contrast to trust based on interpersonal closeness (Kelman, 2005b). In the relationship between parties engaged in an existential conflict, I maintain, it is neither possible, nor necessary, nor even entirely desirable to create the kind of trust that develops from personal relationships, friendship, or shared values. The working trust we hope to generate is trust in the other side's seriousness and sincerity in the quest for peace—in their genuine commitment, largely out of their own interests, to finding a mutually acceptable accommodation. An interesting paradox is that this kind of trust among adversaries increases to the extent each is convinced that the other is moving in a conciliatory direction *out of their own interests*. This contrasts with the finding from research on persuasive communication that the trustworthiness of communicators declines if they are seen as having a personal interest in promoting a particular point of view. In our situation, self-interest provides the strongest evidence of the seriousness and sincerity of the other's intentions.

Working trust, however, can develop only if the parties are convinced that the other's pursuit of accommodation, though interest-driven, is genuine: that it represents a strategic choice, not just a tactical maneuver. This is the basis on which, I believe, working trust developed between Rabin and Arafat after the Oslo agreement—a trust that eroded with Rabin's assassination. At later stages of conflict resolution, as a set of shared interests becomes defined, working trust and interpersonal trust may merge. But at earlier stages, the attempt to go beyond working trust is not only unrealistic, but may also be counterproductive because it may undermine the credibility of participants in their own community and thus their ability to transfer their insights to the larger process and to influence public opinion and policy decisions.

Turning to the concept of the *uneasy coalition* (Kelman, 1993), I have conceived of problem-solving workshops and related activities as part of a process of building coalitions between those elements on

the two sides that are interested in exploring the possibilities of a negotiated solution. Because this coalition cuts across a very basic conflict line—a line that divides people along their core identities—it is almost by definition an uneasy coalition. The uneasiness of the coalition has the consequence of feeding mutual distrust and often complicating coalition work. This uneasiness, however, is not only an inevitable reality (insofar as coalition members are bona fide representatives of their national groups, as they must be to contribute to change), but also a necessity—primarily, for present purposes, because of the reentry problem and the transfer of change. A workshop group that becomes overly cohesive may undermine the ultimate purpose of the enterprise: to have an impact on the political process within the two societies. Workshop participants (and, of course, negotiators) who develop a close identification with their counterparts on the other side and express trust in them violate a powerful group norm in a situation of protracted conflict. They thus run the risk of becoming alienated from their own co-nationals, losing their credibility at home, and hence forfeiting their political effectiveness and their ability to promote a new consensus within their own communities. Therefore, the most effective overall relationship between participants is best described as an uneasy coalition—sufficiently cohesive so that the members can interact productively (which is a requirement for *change*), but not so cohesive that they lose credibility and political effectiveness in their own communities (which is a requirement for *transfer*).

In sum, one of the challenges for our work is to create an atmosphere in which participants can begin to humanize and trust each other and to develop an effective collaborative relationship, without losing sight of their separate group identities and the conflict between their communities.

Conclusion

A central characteristic of our work in conflict resolution has been its pursuit of a scholar-practitioner model, very much in the Lewinian tradition of action research. In keeping with this orientation, the two major tasks on our agenda at this point are: (1) to develop appropriate ways of evaluating the effectiveness of interactive problem solving and related approaches to conflict resolution through systematic research; and (2) to adapt the approach to the requirements of changing political circumstances, such as those that characterize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today.

Scholar-practitioners in the field of conflict resolution, including standard, experimental or quasi-experimental model of evaluation is not applicable here because the focus is not the effectiveness of a specifically targeted social program, but the impact of a social movement designed to interact with other events and experiences to produce a change in political culture. I have argued (Kelman, in press) that evaluation of interactive problem solving requires the gradual accumulation of pieces of evidence in support of its underlying assumptions and have proposed two models of evaluation that follow this strategy: the "links-in-the chain" model identifies and tests each of the steps in the process of interactive problem solving that are presumed to account for its effectiveness, starting with the microprocess of workshops and ending with the macroprocess of conflict resolution; and the experimental model calls for systematic tests of some of the assumptions of the approach in settings that may be quite different from problem-solving workshops (though they may include analogs and simulations of such workshops).

As for adapting the approach to the requirements of changing political circumstances, I proposed above that interactive problem solving is potentially relevant at all stages of a peace process. However, at different stages of the process, the precise agenda and procedures of problem-solving workshops may have to be modified in order to be relevant to the political necessities and possibilities of the moment—as long as they remain consistent with the underlying logic of the approach. Thus, in the period following the 1993 Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization—in contrast with our earlier practice—our Joint Working Group on Israeli–Palestinian Relations was specifically devoted to producing and disseminating joint concept papers on issues left to be resolved in final-status negotiations. In the current phase of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which is marked by the breakdown of once promising negotiations, a central task for interactive problem solving is to help rebuild public trust in the availability of a credible negotiating partner on the other side. To that end, it is important to frame a final agreement in terms of a principled peace, embodying a historic compromise in the form of a solution that enables each people to express its national identity in its own state within the shared land. Such a framework can mobilize wide public support for negotiations by reassuring the two publics that a negotiated agreement is not jeopardizing their

national existence and that it offers a vision of a mutually beneficial common future. Interactive problem solving is well suited to constructing such a framework since it represents a joint process, in which each side can acknowledge and accommodate the other's identity in a context in which the core of its own identity is affirmed.

References

- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Burton, J. W. (1969). *Conflict and communication: The use of controlled communication in international relations*. London: Macmillan.
- Burton, J. W. (1979). *Deviance, terrorism and war: The process of solving unsolved social and political problems*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Campbell, D. T. (1957). Factors relevant to the validity of experiments in social settings. *Psychological Bulletin*, *54*, 297-312.
- Campbell, D. T., & Fiske, D. W. (1959). Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix. *Psychological Bulletin*, *56*, 81-105.
- Kelman, H. C. (1972). The problem-solving workshop in conflict resolution. In R. L. Merritt (Ed.), *Communication in international politics* (pp. 168-204). University of Illinois Press, Urbana.
- Kelman, H. C. (1979). An interactional approach to conflict resolution and its application to Israeli-Palestinian relations. *International Interactions*, *6*, 99-122.
- Kelman, H. C. (1986). Interactive problem solving: A social-psychological approach to conflict resolution. In W. Klassen (Ed.), *Dialogue toward interfaith understanding* (pp. 293-314). Tantur/Jerusalem: Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research.
- Kelman, H. C. (1993). Coalitions across conflict lines: The interplay of conflicts within and between the Israeli and Palestinian communities. In S. Worchel & J. A. Simpson (Eds.), *Conflict between people and groups* (pp. 236-258). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Kelman, H. C. (1995). Contributions of an unofficial conflict resolution effort to the Israeli-Palestinian breakthrough. *Negotiation Journal*, *11*, 19-27.
- Kelman, H. C. (1997). Group processes in the resolution of international conflicts: Experiences from the Israeli-Palestinian case. *American Psychologist*, *52*, 212-220.
- Kelman, H. C. (1998a). Interactive problem solving: An approach to conflict resolution and its application in the Middle East. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *31*, 190-198.
- Kelman, H. C. (1998b). Social-psychological contributions to peace-making and peacebuilding in the Middle East. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *47*, 5-28.

- Kelman, H. C. (2002). Interactive problem solving: Informal mediation by the scholar-practitioner. In J. Bercovitch (Ed.), *Studies in international mediation: Essays in honor of Jeffrey Z. Rubin* (pp. 167–193). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kelman, H. C. (2005a). Interactive problem solving in the Israeli-Palestinian case: Past contributions and present challenges. In R. J. Fisher (Ed.), *Paving the way: Contributions of interactive conflict resolution to peacemaking* (pp. 41–63). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Kelman, H. C. (2005b). Building trust among enemies: The central challenge for international conflict resolution. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 639–650.
- Kelman, H. C. (in press). Evaluating the contributions of interactive problem solving to the resolution of ethnonational conflicts. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 14.
- Kelman, H. C., & Pettigrew, T. F. (1959). How to understand prejudice. *Commentary*, 28, 436–441.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1991). Toward unity and bold theory: Popperian suggestions for two persistent problems of social psychology. In C. W. Stephan, W. G. Stephan, & T. F. Pettigrew (Eds.), *The future of social psychology* (pp. 13–27). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65–85.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 751–783.
- Rouhana, N. N., & Kelman, H. C. (1994). Promoting joint thinking in international conflict: An Israeli–Palestinian continuing workshop. *Journal of Social Issues*, 50(1), 157–178.