Conference Report

Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions:
Methodologies and Practical Experiences

27-28 April 2009, Zurich, Switzerland

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Contents

Executive Summary

How can one deal with conflicts that have a religious dimension, and how is this influenced by a particular conceptualization of religion? This report, based on a workshop that took place in Zurich in April 2009, aims to provide some tentative answers to this question. The participants of the workshop were all "reflective practitioners" yet with a diverse background, ranging from religiously-motivated peace activists to academically-oriented conflict transformation practitioners. What they all had in common was practical experience in engaging with religion-based actors in conflict transformation, in settings such as Algeria (with the Mozabite community), Denmark ("Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons Crisis), Israel-Palestine (Hudna proposal, Geneva Accords), Pakistan (enhancement of Madrasa curriculum), Sri Lanka (engagement with Buddhist monks), Syria-US (interreligious dialogue), Tajikistan (working on law on religion), and the US and Canada (pro-life vs. pro-choice activists).

The links between religion, conflict, and conflict transformation are manifold. Religion can play a role both in escalating violent conflicts and in supporting the peaceful transformation of conflicts. It can be a source of inspiration and justification for both war and peace. Religion shapes perceptions and behavior patterns; it can be a source of meaning-making and values, or it can be used as an identity-marker to forge group cohesion. Awareness of the specific role of religion is essential for designing appropriate conflict transformation strategies. In some cases, religious actors can make peace where political-secular actors are blocked, even if the conflict is not driven by religious issues. Furthermore, not all conflicts have a religious dimension, so it is important not to over-emphasize the role of faith.

If one accepts that there is a link between religion, conflict, and conflict transformation, how can one deal with such conflicts? A consistent message that came out of the seven cases was that mediators should avoid dealing with value differences head-on. Rather, it seems more effective to deal with the practical problems that arise from these value differences. Here, jointly-agreed activities can facilitate "communication" when words are no longer understood. A first step towards bridging gaps is to respect the other actor's religion or ideology for what it is: a religion or an ideology, nothing more, nothing less. Seeing religion or ideology as a pretext, covering up some "hidden agenda", is a recipe for failure. In other cases where value differences were not the problem, but religion was a way of marking a group's identity, the common values between the two religious groups helped create peace.

For some actors, divine inspirations and spiritual awakenings are a very real and powerful reality that can be used in conflict transformation, while for others they are not central, as they cannot be planned in the "time-line" of a conflict resolution process. This difference is perhaps the simplest expression of the "experiential" versus "constructivist" debate that took place during the workshop. The experiential model, often used by religiously motivated peacebuilders, focuses on the personal experience of spirituality, unity among all religions, and the importance of building personal relationships. The constructivist approach, used more by academically-oriented peace practitioners, argues for seeing religion as a web of understanding, a source of "meaning-making matrices" that give orientation and guidance to a community.

An experiential approach lends itself to building peace by strengthening those who seek peace, while a constructivist approach can be used both for building peace and for removing the obstacles to peace. One example of how this can be achieved is by working with actors

who use religion to justify violence, as it is possible to examine how the "meaning-making" matrices are used and understood in different ways. One approach, for example, is to work with radicalized groups, such as Hamas (with a national liberation agenda), in order to undermine the support of extremists, such as al-Qaida (with a universal, anarchist agenda). If the radicalized groups are isolated, they tend to become more radicalized. By engaging with them, one can work with their underlying interests and support them in the transformation from an armed resistance movement to a political force. US and EU policy, which is based on lists identifying certain armed non-state actors as "terrorists", is problematic, as it is difficult to get a group de-listed, thereby blocking conflict transformation engagements. The Swiss policy of listing individuals, but not groups, is more conducive for conflict transformation.

Policies depend on the masses as well as the elite. Media work is therefore vital for reaching the masses and clarifying misperceptions about religious actors. Pakistan provided an interesting use of the media: Three suicide bombers were intercepted on their mission and shown a five-minute film about the impact of another suicide bombing. This film had a transformative, preventive impact on two of the three potential suicide bombers.

Three of the cases illustrated how religious texts can be powerful tools for building peace. Religious actors trust them, so the text can be used as a meeting point between the parties to a conflict and those seeking to mediate between them. Often, the challenge is to redefine the religious concepts in the light of present-day needs. While this work must be done within a community, outsiders can contribute as "sounding boards". In many of the cases where communication between two "worlds" no longer works, such as in the Danish "Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons Crisis, there is a need for co-mediation with mediators from both worlds, or mediators with a deep understanding of both worlds. These two methods are perhaps among the most powerful tools in dealing with conflicts with a religious dimension, as the mediator can translate the frames of reference, the matrices that shape the meanings of the two sides, over and above any material interests expressed. Without such "mediation as translation", it is often impossible to get communication working.

A theoretical overview of the written contributions to the workshop highlighted how the choice of a model of religion affects the type of conflict transformation approach adopted. It also showed that the concepts and theories of religion used by the participants were more diverse than the "experiential-constructivist" categorization that was mainly discussed at the workshop. Both experiential and constructivist approaches are "non-functionalist" in the sense that they focus on the broader structures of conflict within which actors raise their validity claims. Non-functional models view religion as a certain type of knowledge – a body of principles, norms and rules. This shapes the socially-experienced reality of actors, as it is constantly enacted. The beauty of this model is that it can conceptualize religion both as a source of flexibility and innovation as well as a source of consistency and tradition. This helps to assess conflict from the perspective of different actors and social groups, which also change over time. Recognizing that religion shape values and identity, the third party intervener, for example, may use narratives and rituals in the dialogue process to bring the deeper symbolic dimensions to the surface. "Functionalist" models of religion, on the other hand, argue that religion hardly stands for itself, but is used for a specific purpose (i.e. "function") by the agents. Functionalist models of religion tend to lead to more "standard" approaches to conflict transformation, with the addition of being more culture-sensitive. A mediator working along these lines should, for example, have the capacity to code and decode claims, positions and interests from the religious to the political fields and vice versa.

There is not one objective or neutral conflict analysis, but multiple interpretations of any given conflict. Many of the workshop participants therefore also used more than one model of religion in their work. This helps to avoid narrow understandings of a specific conflict. As religion plays different roles in different conflicts, a diverse use of models of religion can lead to more appropriate, tailor-made approaches.

Finally, it is impossible to approach a conflict assessment without concepts, but we can try and increase our impartiality by constantly challenging our own as well as the dominant conceptualizations of religion and conflict. The conceptualization and "theory" of religion that is applied does have an impact on the conflict transformation approach adopted, so that it is important to be aware of it and discuss it with others. From this perspective, the main benefit of the workshop – in addition to developing concrete ideas about approaching conflicts with religious dimensions – was the opportunity to examine various practices and how they relate to the various conceptualizations of religion.

Editors' Introduction

The suspects of the Kampala bombings that killed more than 70 people in July 2010 said they did it out of "religious conviction."[1] Religion plays a role in fostering violent conflict, as well as guiding peacemaking. With the aim of mapping the approaches of different institutions towards the transformation of conflicts that carry an important religious dimension, a workshop on "Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: Methodologies and Practical Experiences" was convened in Zurich from the 27-28 April 2009. The presence of various researchers, mediators, peace activists, and policy-makers at the event created an opportunity to identify new venues for collaboration and to raise awareness about diverse views and experiences related to the role of religion in politics and conflict. The guiding question was: "How do you deal in practice with conflicts with religious dimensions, and how is this influenced by your conceptualization of religion?" The workshop was organized by the programme "Religion and Politics: Initiatives and Applied Research" of the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), in co-operation with the Centre for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich.

This report aims to address the guiding question of the workshop through the following four sections: Firstly, an explorative workshop overview introduces the issues discussed at the workshop, clustering the cases with two simple frameworks and developing lessons from the discussions. Secondly, a debate between Marc Gopin (Expert on religion and peacebuilding in the Middle East) and Jean-Nicolas Bitter (Scientific Adviser, FDFA) highlights the similarities and differences between an experiential and a constructivist conceptualization of religion in dealing with conflicts, opening up the question of how religion is theorized, and how this influences praxis. Thirdly, the practical experiences of the workshop participants engaged in Algeria, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Palestine, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, and the USA are summarized on two pages per case. Finally, a conceptual overview of the written workshop contributions is given. While the previous explorative overview outlines the oral part of the workshop and the practical experiences discussed, the final conceptual overview focuses on the written contributions to the workshop, and summarizes the diverse conceptualizations of religion used by the authors.

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[1] BBC News Africa, "Uganda arrests 'masterminds' of World Cup bombings," 12 August 2010,
     http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-10953207

The workshop was attended by (in alphabetical order):

- **Abbas Aroua,** Cordoba Foundation, Geneva
- **Hagen Berndt,** Freelance mediator and trainer working on conflict transformation
- **Jean-Nicolas Bitter,** Scientific adviser, FDFA
- **Riccardo Bocco,** Professor at Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva; Member of the steering committee of the CCDP
- **Marc Gopin,** Expert on religion and peacebuilding in the Middle East
- **Arwa Hassan,** German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Intercultural Relations with Muslim Countries
- **Katrien Hertog,** Pax Christi International
- **Azhar Hussain,** International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, Washington D.C.
- **Michelle LeBaron,** Professor of Law at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver and Director of the Program on Dispute Resolution
- **Simon J. A. Mason,** Mediation Support Project, CSS
- **Jean-Francois Mayer,** Religioscope (research institute and online database on religions in the contemporary world)
- **Corinne Henchoz Pignani,** Swiss FDFA
- **Emanuel Schäublin,** CCDP, Religion & Politics Applied Research Programme
- **Natalie Schweizer,** CCDP, Religion & Politics Applied Research Programme
- **David Smock,** Religion and Peacemaking Program at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP)
- **Thomas Uthup,** The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) at the United Nations (UN)

1. Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: Explorative Workshop Overview

By Simon J. A.Mason

Introduction

"Most of the world is religious, and therefore what religious leaders say and do has great resonance, whether the minority of secular people likes it or not." Marc Gopin, one of the workshop participants, pointed out the central role religion plays in the world, and therefore also in conflict and conflict transformation. The aim of this explorative overview of the Zurich workshop is to identify some of the practical lessons from the workshop discussion and the seven cases. The first, somewhat shocking, realization was that this small group of workshop participants were often talking with each other, but not understanding each other. The diversity of motivations, conceptions and practical approaches towards working with conflicts with religious dimensions is mind-boggling. All participants combined a more academic, reflective hat, with a practitioner one. Yet we had some people who were religiously motivated peacemakers, while others were much more academically-oriented conflict resolution practitioners. Some of the engagements worked with religious actors who seek peace, others targeted religious actors who seek war. We had one idea to organize a mystic musical festival with 100,000 participants across the conflict lines, while others aimed to arrange small working groups of 10 people on a "Law about Religion". One of the workshop participants had spent four years living in a Buddhist monastery, while another worked in the office of a Foreign Ministry. The practical experiences were also geographically diverse, including cases from Algeria, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Palestine, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, and the USA.

With such diversity, what was the common denominator of the group? There were two: the acknowledgement of the importance of religion in conflict transformation, and everyone's focus on practical conflict transformation activities. It was not an academic workshop for the sake of academia. Rather it focused on improving policy and practice, yet using conceptualizations of a more academic nature. At the start of the workshop, we more or less agreed on one common denominator, which was: "In some cases, religion plays a key role in conflict and conflict transformation, which cannot be reduced to other factors, e.g. psychological, political, economic etc." In other words, religion has a role to play in conflict and conflict transformation in its own right. It is not just a symptom of some other driving factor in escalating conflict, or transforming conflict. This implicit agreement in the group was the starting point for examining religion, and the fallback position if divergence became too great. We never could agree on a single common definition of religion or conflict transformation. What we could do, however, was map out some of the diversity, and come to the surprising realization that some of the conflict transformation activities we engaged in were not so different from each other, even if we argued for them from a very different angle. Accordingly, the factors that saved the discussion were often practical experiences in dealing with conflicts with religious dimensions. For this reason, one of the central parts of this workshop report are the seven cases studies that provide examples of practitioners' activities, when engaging with conflicts with religious dimensions (section three). When the concepts and theories became confusing, it was often effective to ask a person what they actually do when they are working in the field. Their concrete experiences often clarified the concepts.

Nevertheless, to communicate, explore and develop more general lessons, some conceptualization can help. For this reason, two conceptual frameworks are introduced below to cluster the practical experiences. One framework structures different concepts of religion, while the other structures the different approaches to conflict transformation. These concepts are not necessarily in agreement with those used or proposed by the workshop participants. The pros and cons of the "constructivist" approach as compared to the "experiential" approach were debated during the workshop, and a summary of this dialogue was transcribed and edited for this workshop paper (section two). The aim of the other more theoretical overview in this conference working paper by Moncef Kartas (section four), is to map out the diverse theories and concepts that were used by the workshop participants in their written workshop papers, prepared before the workshop began. This explorative overview ends with ten tentative lessons on approaching conflicts with religious dimensions.

Clustering Approaches to Religion

For structuring the cases presented in this paper, the three models or theories of religion referred to by Lindbeck[2] are used. After briefly introducing the three models, the cases later presented in this report, fitting the "theory of religion", are highlighted:

First, there is a **"propositional" understanding of religion**, where religion entails absolute truth and validity claims that give us "right" and "wrong" answers about key questions we are confronted with. Religion as a source of validity claims was not used by anyone at the workshop, yet one could imagine people in conflict using religion in this way, famously sung by Bob Dylan in "With God on our side".

Second, there is an **"experiential" understanding of religion,** which focuses on an inner, spiritual experience, where religious symbols and practices give expression to a universal, inner experience of love. This inner, experientialist form of religion is often used by religiously-motivated peacemakers. Marc Gopin refers to the difference between the propositional, validity type of religion and the experiential type as the difference between an inner and outer understanding of religion with the following words: "There are choices in prophetic Judaism, and in experientialist Islam and Christianity, that religion is primarily an inner experience, a morally-bounded experience, wisdom, love, compassion, justice. And there is an external, territorial notion of religiosity about conquest, about land, about ownership and control of space. These have been two streams all along, for thousands of years."

Both Marc Gopin (Middle East) and David Smock (Nigeria) refer to inner, spiritual experiences in their work with the actors they are dealing with, forming the first cluster of cases contained in this workshop report. In Nigeria, the experiences that the Imam Mohammed Ashafa and the Pastor James Wuye went through, which transformed them from using violence to becoming mediators, is described in this experiential way: "At the time, there were series of spiritual awakenings… they had their epiphany[3] at about the same time." In his written contribution to the workshop report, Smock used a constructivist approach to analyze religion, thereby highlighting how the two approaches are not mutually exclusive. In his work in the Middle East, Marc Gopin describes how difficult it is to grasp in words the kind of experience that he and others have come across: "The person who really got through to me was this

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[2]   Lindbeck G. 1984. *The Nature of Doctrine. Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia:Westminster Press.

[3]   "A revelatory manifestation of a divine being"… "A sudden manifestation of the essence or meaning of something." http://www.thefreedictionary.com/epiphany

spiritual Sheikh, Sufi Sheikh, who was out of this world." The experiential approach to religion leaves a lot of space for mystery, in the sense that it gives space to not being able to put a nice construct or theory on every reality and experience we encounter.

Third, there is a social or cultural **"constructivist" understanding of religion**. In this perspective, there are different branches that can all be more or less subsumed under the label of "constructivist" (see section four by Kartas for more details), which Lindbeck expands on as a cultural-linguistic model. Religions are matrices " [...] that deal with all that can be considered as being the most important, the ultimate questions about life and death, about what is just and what is wrong, about chaos and order, about what has meaning and what does not have meaning."[4] He uses a very simple metaphor which asserts that religion relates to how people live as grammar relates to how people make sentences. In this sense, unlike the propositional understanding of religion that distinguishes right from wrong in all times and places, the constructivist, linguistic model sees religion like the grammar of a language, setting the malleable rules within which the formation of attitudes and actions are possible. Religion as grammar does not prescribe specific actions, in the same way that the grammar of a language does not prescribe specific sentences. Similarly to the role of grammar in language, the religious "grammar" can be used in eternally changing realities, while at the same time remaining "true" or faithful to its narrative or constitutive discourse. Grammar changes, but at a much slower pace than the sentences it produces. Opposition between various religious rules can then often be surmounted not by altering them, but by specifying when, or how, or where they apply. For example, the "rules" of driving on the left or right are both clear in meaning albeit clearly opposed to each other – except when one specifies that one is valid in Britain and the other in the United States.[5] One advantage of the constructivist approach is that it can be used to understand actors who use religion, whether to make war or peace. In this sense, it is possibly more neutral than the propositional model (which tends to fit the war-maker) or the experiential model (which tends to fit the peace-maker). However, the constructivist approach also misses something, possibly precisely because it tries to rationalize and make sense of experiences, that cannot be comprehended fully.

Jean-Nicolas Bitter (Tajikistan), Michelle LeBaron (Canada and USA, pro-life, pro-choice), Abbas Aroua (Danish "Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons Crisis), Hagen Berndt (Sri Lanka and Algeria), Azhar Hussain (Pakistan) employed variations of the constructivist approach in their work and during the conference. Bitter and LeBaron describe conflict transformation approaches that are based on an exploration and understanding of how the respective communities "constructed" their reality in Tajikistan and the USA and Canada respectively. They form the second cluster of cases in this workshop report. Aroua, Berndt, and Hussain, who form the third and last cluster of cases in this workshop report, specifically refer to the different ways of understanding religious texts and how this question of discussing religions concepts and redefining them lies at the heart of conflict transformation. They also demonstrate various types of co-mediation and mediation as "translation" between worlds – one of the golden paths in dealing with religious conflicts.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the experiential and the constructivist approaches are not mutually exclusive. It is possible to be spiritually motivated, but to apply constructivist approaches to the work. It is possible to experience intuitions, dreams, and meaningful coincidences that are hard to make sense of within the constructivist model. Drawing on his work with the Mozabites in Algeria, Berndt describes how "building trust took a long time and was supported by circumstances and events outside our control." The subsequent section

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[4]   Lindbeck G., *The Nature of Doctrine...* p. 40.

[5]   *Ibid*, p. 18.

outlines the debate on "experiential vs. constructivist approaches" between Marc Gopin and Jean-Nicolas Bitter and highlights some of the nuances and similarities of the two approaches. While Bitter argues that the experiential model leads to peace activities which lack focus as if one was "throwing water into the ocean", Gopin expresses his reflection on spirituality being an unending source of inspiration and reconciliation, and the experiential model being an approach where the peace activist is "scooping water from a limitless freshwater source". The dialogue is instructive, because it also shows that the use of one or the other model can lead to a different conflict transformation engagement. However, if it leads to the same kind of engagement, it is then argued for in a very different manner.

Clustering Approaches to Conflict Transformation

There are numerous ways of structuring the different approaches and ways of dealing with conflict. The terminology is confusing, as conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict transformation[6], peacemaking, peacebuilding, mediation and facilitation mean different things to different people. The "Reflecting on Peace Practice Project" (RPPP) used a pragmatic approach, a matrix where broadly conceived peacebuilding engagements are clustered into those that aim at changing "hearts and minds" or "structures and institutions" on the one axis, and engagements targeting "more people" or "key people" on the other axis. The idea behind the matrix is that peacebuilding efforts must address all four quadrants of the matrix in order to be sustainable.

Table 1: Examples of the workshop cases structured within the RPPP framework [7]

	More people	*Key people*
Structures and institutions, socio-political level	• Hussain: Madrasa curriculum reform (constructivist) • LeBaron: Pro-life, pro-choice dialogue (constructivist) • Mayer: Media work with Religioscope (constructivist & experiential) • Uthup: AoC	• Bitter: Tajikistan project (constructivist) • Berndt: Buddhists in Sri Lanka (constructivist) • Aroua: Danish "Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons Crisis (constructivist) • Hussain: Madrasa curriculum reform (constructivist) • Uthup: AoC
Hearts and minds, individual, personal level	• Gopin: US-Syria inter-faith dialogue, broadcasted to millions of people on TV (experiential) • Smock: Film of the Pastor and the Imam in Nigeria (experiential & constructivist) • Mayer: Media work with Religioscope (constructivist & experiential) • Uthup: AoC	• Gopin: US-Syria inter-faith dialogue (experiential) • Smock: the Pastor and the Imam co-mediating in Nigeria (experiential & constructivist) • Hassan & Kahlmeyer: GTZ Tajikistan dialogue • Uthup: AoC • Hussain: Madrasa curriculum reform (constructivist)

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6   Conflict transformation was used widely at the workshop, more or less following John Paul Lederach (1995. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press), where dealing with conflict is not just referring to dealing with material issues and interests, but relationships, empowerment of individual actors, and the change of societal structures are also addressed.

7   Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olson. 2003. *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*, Cambridge: The Collaborative for Development Action, Inc.

Many of the cases described in this paper have elements of all four quadrants. However, there seems to be a primary focus, which allows the cases to be clustered. To illustrate this point, four cases are described in more detail: At first, Azhar Hussain's work at enhancing the curriculum of Madrasas in Pakistan fits best with "key people" on the level of "structures and institutions at the socio-political level", but it is now being enlarged with a training of trainers program. Over 2,000 people have been involved in his workshops, which makes it a good example of a project that targets "more people" on the level of " structures and institutions at the socio-political level". Jean-Nicolas Bitter presents a project in Tajikistan for which three working groups of about 10-20 people each have been formed and which work, among other issues, on the formulation of recommendations to change the law on religion in the country. This is a good example of a case that targets "key people" aiming at "structures and institutions at the socio/political level". At the levels of "hearts and minds" and addressing "more people", Marc Gopin cites the example of a mystical music festival in Pakistan attended by some 100,000 people. Finally, the cooperation of Marc Gopin and David Smock with religious leaders are examples of initiatives that target "key people" on the "hearts and minds" level.

From the experiences shared at the workshop, there seems to be a close tie between the experiential use of religion and the "hearts and minds approach" to conflict transformation, as illustrated by Gopin and Smock. The constructivist approach to religion, on the other hand, tends to focus more on "structures and institutions". Both constructivist and experiential approaches to religion, in contrast, seem to relate to working on both the "key people" and "more people" levels. Jean-François Mayer, for example, shows the importance of media work with his Religioscope project that targets "more people". Religioscope's database (www.religion.info) contains reports that are written both from a constructivist as well as from an experiential angle. In the "constructivist-experiential" dialogue between Marc Gopin and Jean-Nicolas Bitter, the question of top-down work with "key people" or bottom-up work with "more people" is a recurring question; do you work with the leaders who "lead" the people, or do you work with the people who "push" the leaders?

Practical Lessons from the Workshop

The following ten lessons are identified as a tentative initial attempt to draw out some answers from the discussion and cases with regards to the workshop question: how do you deal with conflicts with a religious dimension? The number of cases in the workshop was very small, and the contexts of the cases were very diverse, so the lessons are preliminary and need to be consolidated by further research.

1/ Religion can play a role both in the escalation of violent conflicts as well as in the peaceful transformation of conflicts. From a normative point of view that seeks to minimize violence and injustice, religion is a "neutral" factor that can be used either negatively to make war, or positively to make peace. The challenge of dealing with religion in conflict transformation concerns how to "redefine" or "transform" the role of religion from a source of violence into a constructive way of dealing with societal differences. This is well illustrated in the change of heart and practice of the Pastor and the Imam in Nigeria.

2/ Religion plays many different roles in conflict and conflict transformation. Awareness of what specific role religion plays in a conflict is important to address it adequately. Religion may play a role as inspiration or justification for war or peacemaking. Religious differences between groups may incorporate value differences that cause conflict. However, religion may also be used as an identity marker, or may be instrumentalized by political elites to forge group unity. Furthermore, religious language may be used to communicate, which eventually might lead to miscommunication. Many of the workshop participants also

stressed the fact that not all conflicts have a religious component, which is important so as not to over-emphasize its role. For example, in the case of the Danish "Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons Crisis, the religious language and symbols were part of the miscommunication, but the conflict was actually driven by military, economic and political differences. In the USA-Syria relationship, religion was also not driving the conflict, but the inter-faith dialogue was used as a cover to discuss political issues in a positive, constructive manner. This leads us to assert that religion can be part of the solution even if it is not part of the problem.

3/ Avoid trying to change values, focus on bridging practical incompatibilities that arise from value differences through jointly agreed activities. Not all religious or value contradictions entail practical contradictions. However, there are cases where differences on the value level lead to conflicts over practical issues. The role of conflict transformation in such cases is not to address the value level head-on, but rather to help solve conflicts on the practical level. This is illustrated in the case describing the dialogue between adherents of "pro-life" (against abortion) versus those of "pro-choice" (allowing abortion). In some cases inter-religious dialogue clarifies issues, especially when both communities are capable of understanding the worldview of the other, as they live in the same context. When this is not the case, inter-religious dialogue may bring cognitive clarification, but not practical clarification – hence the need for co-creative solutions. Communication is difficult between very different "worlds" and their different ways of creating meaning. Yet conflicts can be transformed in such cases if the parties can agree on joint actions that deal with the conflict issues. This "dialogue through praxis" has been referred to as *diapraxis*, and the Tajikistan project of the Swiss FDFA was developed using this idea.

4/ Ideology does not necessarily hide an agenda. In many cases, ideological or religious differences are perceived by the other side to hide some "evil", "psychopathological" or "power-obsessed" agenda. The view is that people are hiding behind their ideology or religion. Using "ideology as pretext", however, is dangerous, as it hinders engagement and seeking constructive ways forward. This does not mean that ideologies are not ever misused by some elites for their own purposes. Bitter argues for accepting ideology or religion for what it is, as "their belief, their ideology, nothing more." Elites are accountable to those who follow them "against the background" of their discourse. This is the characteristic of "religious" or "ideological following", and not pure demagogy. The US and Europe seem to make the similar mistakes confronting Islam as they did confronting terrorism.[8]

5/ "Spiritual awakenings" is a reality for some, even if it is not for others. From an experiential point of view, spirituality is one of the keys to building trust and relationship. For others, this does not make sense rationally. From the experiential point of view, however, academic and scientific proof does not matter. Experientialists would argue that a deaf person watching people dancing to music, can see the dance, but cannot make sense of it, as they cannot hear the music. In a similar manner, someone with a strong rationalistic outlook could observe someone going through a "spiritual awakening" in a conflict transformation process, but not make sense of it. Both Gopin and Smock refer to such experiences in their work. Gopin mentions the difficulty of writing about it: "I barely wrote about it in my books, because it is so outlandish."

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8   The analysis and many of the lessons from the book *The Ugly American* by Eugene Burdick and
    William Lederer (1958) fit one to one in the question of how to deal with Islamic societies.

6/ *A constructivist and an experientialist tend to engage in different activities.* The kind of conflict transformation activities a constructivist engages in tend to be more focused on structures and institutions than an experientialist-oriented peace worker, who would focus more on hearts and minds and building relationships on a personal level. If they would do the same activity in a given case, they would argue for it along very different lines. Some peaceworkers focus on enhancing the positive, strengthening those who want peace, while others work on the obstacles to peace. The difference is between constructing peace or removing obstacles to peace. At least in the Gopin-Bitter dialogue, it seems that the experientialist tends to construct peace, while the constructivist tends to try and remove the obstacles to peace.

7/ *Work with the "radicals" to deal with the "extremists".* There are different kinds of actors one can engage with. The primary aim is not to engage with "moderate" actors, in the sense of actors who have developed a discourse to please those who define what is moderate. The kind of "radicals" that can be constructively engaged in a conflict transformation process are "radicals" who are ready to discuss, but who remain committed to their worldview; and their community defends itself through that worldview. The US and EU policy of listing armed non-state actors as "terrorists" is problematic as it isolates them and strengthens their non-listed opponent, which may lead to a military escalation (e.g. Sri Lanka). As a form of pressure, which is needed in many cases, listing is hard to use in a fine-tuned manner, as it is very difficult to get actors de-listed if they change their behavior. Once the tooth paste is out, it is hard to get it back in again. By avoiding engagement with radicalized groups with a national liberation agenda such as Hamas, space is given to more extremist tendencies such as Al Qaida, with a universal, anarchic vision. So many participants of the workshop argued for working with "radicals", in order to help them transform themselves politically while keeping their constituencies, instead of letting their constituencies shift to more "extremist" groups.

8/ *Media work is vital for reaching the masses and clarifying misperceptions about religious actors.* Policies need acceptance from a wider population, and their perception of religious actors, for example the Taliban in Afghanistan or the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East, is greatly shaped by the media. The events of 9/11 and the way they were utilized in the US and Europe simplified the nuanced perceptions of differences between Islamic actors in the West. Hamas, Muslim Brotherhood, Taliban, Al Shabaab were all collated with Al Qaida. In some cases, local militant groups also used the label of "Al Qaida" to gain weight and reputation. Jean-François Mayer therefore argues for non partisan information on religion and religious actors.[9] He also highlighted how objective information can be used effectively, and how powerful a simple movie can be: "I was at a conference on terrorist issues and there was a new coordinator for counterterrorism in Pakistan. He showed a movie they did in a village where a Shiite mosque was bombed by a suicide-bomber during a festival. They did not make a lot of comments in the movie. They just let people who had experienced it speak about what happened, people who are now crippled in bed, ladies who lost sons and husbands. He told me a few weeks before we met, they arrested three suicide bombers who were actually on their way to their mission. They showed the three suicide bombers the movie. Two of them broke down weeping: 'I did not realize' they said, they were totally shaken. Highly ideological people, but still human beings, because they can relate and realize: 'those [people] could be my brother or mother'. One of them did not react like that, the movie had no impact on him, but still, it shows the enormous power of media."

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[9] See the website www.religion.info

9/ *Religious texts are powerful tools for peacemaking.* Because religious people trust their religious text and use it as their anchor and main point of reference, peacebuilders can enter into dialogue with them on their religious texts. Berndt speaks about "redefining traditional concepts in light of present day needs". Hussain shows how "One can counter extremism by utilizing Islamic principles of peace and coexistence to engage those who use violence while calling themselves defenders of Islam." He added at the workshop that he found it easier to work with religious actors than secular ones, because of this possible meeting point in the religious texts. This kind of work clearly needs in-depth knowledge of the religious texts. However, it seemed to be an advantage for Berndt not to be Buddhist to enter into this dialogue with Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka because they would engage with and outsider on their religious concepts, while for Hussain it seemed essential to be Muslim to enter into dialogue with Madrasa leaders in Pakistan, in order to have legitimacy and gain their trust. Consequently, the degree of religious and cultural familiarity of the "outsider" to the parties in conflict varies, and different degrees of proximity and distance have their advantages and disadvantages.

10/ *Co-mediation is needed to deal with conflicts with a religious dimension.* When the two religions or "worlds" are very different, then a mediator needs a very deep understanding of both "worlds" (such as 20 years living in these "worlds") or preferably has to work together with someone from that other world in a co-mediation team. Without the deep understanding that comes together in the co-mediation team, it is not possible to understand the underlying goals and interests and "translate" them to the other side. As Aroua says: "I should not rely on what is said, I look at what is meant. What they want to say is different from what they actually say."

2. Experiential or Constructivist? The Gopin–Bitter Debate on the Use of Religious Models in Conflict Transformation

Introduction and Summary

The following dialogue started during the coffee break of the second day of the Zurich workshop, and went on into the afternoon session. Jean-Nicolas Bitter argued for the pros of a constructivist approach, and Marc Gopin argued for the pros of an experiential approach to religion in conflict transformation. The dialogue was audio recorded, transcribed by Lyna Comaty, edited by Simon Mason, and checked by Marc Gopin and Jean-Nicolas Bitter.

People using different models and worldviews of religion may not understand each other, so there is a need for translation into the other model, or into "ordinary words", irrespective of which model is used. One simple way of translating is by using examples and specific cases. In this dialogue, reference is made to music festivals for Shiite-Sunnis in Pakistan, the Hudna[10] ceasefire and the Geneva Initiative in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The experiential model is intuitively easier to grasp, seems to be more used by religiously-motivated peacebuilders, and has a larger following in the Europe and the US. It is not always easy to use this model to formulate clear policy approaches, however. The constructivist model is more often used by academic-oriented peace practitioners dealing with religion and conflict. It is harder to communicate, but seems useful for policy prescriptions, even if some people arrive at the same ideas intuitively. A constructivist and an experientialist may arrive at the same conflict transformation activity, but will argue for it in different ways. In this debate, the experiential approach was used to call for bottom-up mobilization of the masses, aiming at changing hearts and minds; and the cultural-linguistic model was used to call for a top-down and "surgical" way of working with key people, seeking to affect structures and policies. However, Marc Gopin and Jean-Nicolas Bitter agreed that both bottom-up and top-down approaches are needed: the masses that push the politicians, the politicians who lead the people.

Dialogue

Simon Mason: "By using the three models or theories of religion, 1) the propositional/validity claim approach, 2) spiritual, experiential or inner experience oriented, and 3) social constructivist, linguistic model, are you not already going to lose the average diplomat and UN officer? Is it not too complicated for most people? And furthermore, by using these models, it seems you are arguing from a constructivist point of view, and may therefore lose the spiritual, experience-oriented peacemaker, who sees religion as some universal, bridging factor? The very idea of using 'models' or 'theories' of religion is not an idea that would come to someone who has had a spiritual, universal experience. So by using

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[10] A Hudna is a bilateral ceasefire or truce agreement, with conditions on both sides. Hudna is recognized in Islamic jurisprudence as a legitimate and binding contract whose objective is to bring about a cessation of fighting with an enemy for an agreed period of time.

your models, it seems you are imposing your constructivist way of seeing the world onto other people, e.g. a diplomat who does not understand what you are about, or a spiritually-inclined peacemaker, who feels you have missed the essence of religion? By doing so, I think you will just be confronted with resistance, and will not get the message across."

Thomas Uthup: "I am afraid I have to agree with you. Of course you do encounter different people. There are some people who want to get into the nitty gritty of it, but everyone is very busy, so often they want something in a very short, succinct manner, a simple mind map so that they get it. You may have an Ambassador who comes back and says: 'I want to see the theory behind this', and you can say: 'OK, the theory will be out in one year from now.' But others, practitioners, even those who have nothing to do with religion, for example 'Médecins sans Frontières', may be interested in very simple concepts to make sense of what they are encountering in the field."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "When using the cultural-linguistic model of religion, there is resistance from some people. That is correct. The cultural-linguistic model is less popular, more difficult from the faith point of view, but it seems more useful to integrate different ways of using religion."

Michelle LeBaron: "Any theoretical construct will show you a certain world and will hide others. So if this cultural-linguistic construct shows some very important things that don't show up or don't feature in any other constructs, then for me it is useful. Besides the usefulness of the theoretical construct per se, the challenge is to translate it into words that can be understood by anyone. When we use a theoretical construct that is not understood, we have to translate it. So, for example, when I work with intelligence analysts, I can't talk to them about constructivist linguistic approaches at all, but I do so, but just in a different language. That's the key. I use it for myself and then I talk to them in a way that I think would be useful and understood by them. When I started working with them years ago I asked them: 'What is good writing?' One of the first things they said to me was: 'Writing without adjectives' because they work like that. OK, then that is where they are. So I use a constructivist theory to make sense of what is going on, but then translate it into 'normal words' when I talk to them. So for me, I think you are both right: on the one hand there is no use in imposing a theory that is not understood or is felt as 'missing the point', yet on the other hand there is a lot to be said for using the cultural-linguistic model, as it show things that other models cannot, you just need to use the right words in communicating it. I think it is a question of taking the validity of what in the world it clarifies, and then framing it in a very careful way. We often judge a theoretical model not by its usefulness in showing certain aspects, but in how the person speaks about it. One should not mix the messenger with the message."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "I have difficulties translating and entering into other modes, so what I do is practice, because that shows them. Even in conflict resolution, everybody uses words in different ways. Even in my section of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, which deals with peace policy and conflict resolution, people use words but mean different things! So the framing you mention, Michelle, is very important, but I think it does not just mean using the language used by the diplomats. It is not what people use. It is not their language. The model has to show something they cannot see, something new, to be of use. When I discuss with them, for instance, the question of how to deal with extremists, I would say something like 'If you want to address the extremists and broaden the political space, you need the radicals. So, for example, let us use Hamas to be the ones who will address the extremists, e.g. Al Qaida.' You want to broaden the political space, not working with the moderates (who already want peace), not working with the extremists (who will never want peace), but working with the radicals in between, who can pull a large part of their constituencies with them. They are your allies. This is something derived from the cultural-linguistic model, that comes out of that frame, and diplomats perfectly understand that kind

of language. Yet they would not have gotten the idea themselves, see how long the US, EU and other states avoided – and still avoid – contacts with Hamas, while Switzerland and later Norway were in contact with them. ”

Michelle LeBaron: “They avoided working with Hamas because their cognitive frames excluded 'extremists'. They feared contamination by association. They were not thinking along constructivist lines, but political ones. ”

Simon Mason: “I am not sure about that, I have met many mediators who know nothing about the cultural-linguistic model, but who would intuitively understand the logic of working with Hamas, a national resistance movement, so as to broaden the political space and minimize the influence of Al Qaida type groups, with their universal, destructive approach.”

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: “Yes, of course. But while some have the intuition; others may be helped through a model.”

Marc Gopin: “Yes, some get the idea intuitively, and they are helpful because they can expand the political framework we can work in. Due to the Moroccan Ambassador's understanding of Arab culture, he understood the kind of things we did in Damascus. He understood the issue with respect, and honor. He got it intuitively. But I think that we do need more help in framing it in ways that make sense in terms of power politics. We haven't participated in this enough; we need to work on this, to reach out to those policy-makers who do not get it intuitively.”

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: “We have a worldview discussion going on among ourselves even in this little group. But that is exactly why this group is here together, with their different worldviews and concepts. The challenge is to be able to go from practice, which is a ground where we can start from, which unites us, but then also get into the question of how to frame our practice, how to use cognitive, conceptual models to make sense of what we are doing, so as to communicate and improve our practice, even if it is challenging.”

Marc Gopin: “I don't want to muck this up with messy cases, but I can't even begin to give an account of what I've been through, which was very different compared to what I wrote up about the Damascus case. What I did frame in the Damascus case was so realistic and pragmatic, compared to what I had really gone through. The insanity of all the advice we got! The person who really got through to me was this spiritual Sheikh, Sufi Sheikh, who was out of this world. He brought together rabbis, and others, who came to him, and honored him, and they were able to make him do incredible things that Barak and the others never got him to do. Because we appealed to his heart and he was a religious man. How am I supposed to begin to talk about this to policy-makers? I barely wrote about it in my books, because it is so outlandish. And yet, I saw it with my own eyes. I was with him, I saw him change, do things. Yet I also saw him spit in the face of the same people at Camp David. In front of us he acknowledged the Wall as a Holy Jewish space, and said he prayed in front of it when he was a child. And at Camp David, he said it wasn't even a Jewish site. So I watched the impact of using honoring versus dishonoring approaches – Barak was great at dishonoring – and its effect. But how can I translate that?”

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: “I can't answer, of course, as I don't have that experience, but I think it should be possible. There are two levels: the first is to get an objective handle, a language on it, and the other is to pass it on to policy-makers. You need people like Michelle that are going to do the translation, use the language, or instruments that come from this apparently sophisticated model of understanding which is neutral, and translates it for policy-makers in a way that they can read it. One way of doing it is to relate back to an experience they know. Take, for example, the ICRC delegates or diplomats who were used in the 80s and

90s to deal with communist rebels and their ideology. They negotiated with them, and entered into a whole society where people were living their ideological view. Now we are talking about Islamism, well it is not different. So you relate back to this experience. What one has to be aware of is not to use the 'theory of pretext', that the ideology is a pretext, a cover for some 'evil or psychopathological intention'. There is a belief that people are hiding behind their ideology, that they have a hidden agenda, that 'there has to be something hidden'. No! There is nothing hidden behind. It is their belief. It is their ideology. Islamists are the same. It is not the same grammar, not the same vocabulary, but it works the same way. People who were working in the communist world can use their experience to work in a similar respectful way in the Islamist world."

Marc Gopin: "I sat with a group of colonels of the US Army at their training course in Washington, and it is the same thing. There is almost a brainwashing in the US in these circles, that Islam is unchangeable and war-like. Period. I just looked at them and said: 'It sounds quite the same as what you were saying about communism during the Cold War. So where do you account for what happened?' They just looked at me as if they had never made the connection. That kind of behavior is something we need to look into."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "Exactly, and here we have a cultural-linguistic approach which is collective. The difference with a personal approach, for example, is that when an Islamist leader makes a speech, it doesn't make a difference whether he believes in his speech or not. This question always comes up 'Oh, and what if he doesn't believe?' In Christianity it is the same: 'Does it matter if the priest believes what he is saying or not?' The answer is: no. The priest or Islamist leader says it, people believe in it, and he induces action. That is it. So the focus is on the collective, on what action is induced, and not on the inner belief, experience. This makes it a more neutral, objective model."

Simon Mason: "What are the limits to the cultural-linguistic model? Because then you can know where you can use it and where not. Any model will be useful for some things and not for others, and you need to know the limits to be able to apply it well."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "That is where I need this group. I think that practically speaking one of the limits is the challenge of translating it into language that is understood. Perhaps another limit is that in our sociological bed, which is here, the experiential, spiritual, inner feelings model – which is linked to what we call in theology the 'liberal trend' – is something that appeals much more to people sociologically speaking, than the cultural-linguistic model. Larger numbers of people can relate to it. So actually it is much easier to find followers, there is more social acceptance of that model. The problem is that it has its limitations. "

Michelle LeBaron: "Exactly. It only gets a certain way down the road. Any model will be needed in some worlds and not in others."

Marc Gopin: "I think we need to work more with policy-makers. I'll give you an example, which I read about in National Geographic. In Pakistan, at the same dates, the Taliban were having a head-chopping ceremony, about 300 people showed up. At the same time, there was a yearly mystical Sufi festival, where people came from all the regions, and 100,000 people came. If we had a construct of global diplomacy that is trying to push communities in a certain direction, we wouldn't always be rewarding the event when the Taliban are chopping off heads, we would be giving Pakistani people a choice, and saying 'where did the majority of the people go?' But we don't think that way. Media and policy-makers are focusing on the wrong issues. What if there was the suggestion, in Israel-Palestine for example, to have the prime minister and the president of both parties say to their people: 'We want you to mix'? We never had a third party say to them: 'We need your people to engage each other on a massive scale' or: 'We think that music festivals for

both communities could be a path forward'. We sort of let everybody who is in the experiential mode hang out dry. They are just out there, all these decent people who want an experience and positive feelings across Shiite-Sunni lines in Pakistan, and we leave them out dry and focus on Taliban, Taliban, Taliban. What I am saying is that this has policy implications. If we created a paradigm shift and we had leadership that says 'where we shift people and what we encourage, matters'. Then the experiential would take on greater importance. Is that so wrong, or weird?"

Michelle LeBaron: "Are you talking about the contrast between experiential and a constructivist, cultural-linguistics model, or between experiential and a certain *Realpolitik* which doesn't even see the various worldviews as existing?"

Marc Gopin: "I am talking about *Realpolitik* taking the experiential seriously as an asset. That is all."

Michelle LeBaron: "Fair enough. OK."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "There are two levels. First, what happens on the ground in foreign countries as an object of foreign policy, and secondly what appeals sociologically to people in Europe and the US. That is a different issue. Probably the experiential thing can appeal more naturally to people, individuals, Ambassadors and so on. The problem is that it is difficult to translate into policy, because of the construction of the theory. There is a problem here. A way of bridging would be to say that what happens in Pakistan can also be constructed in a policy relevant way, using the constructivist, linguistic model to conceptualize the experimental, spiritual approach. The cultural-linguistic model perfectly integrates the experiential part.

Simon Mason: "So the question is, with your model, Jean-Nicolas, would you start focusing on Marc's kind of suggestion of media work for this festival? Does the conceptual model you use lead to the same or different types of conflict transformation activities, or not at all?"

Marc Gopin: "Take the sacred music festival, would you do it?"

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "Let me answer: yes, I would do it. But I want to ask: 'What do you do it for? And what is it relevant for?' It has to be clear. It is not 'We are going to transform the world by transforming individuals and shifting paradigms'. In conflict resolution, we are doing mobilization on the basis of what is important for the people, the most important thing of their life. If you can tell me that this activity touches on one key phase, or one element, that it is important for different groups to live together politically in society: fine."

Marc Gopin: "When you say: 'Fine', what does that mean in your language? (laughs). You mean good, or not good?" (everyone laughs).

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "It means that I could use such a festival on some stage for some specific purpose in a conflict resolution process, but I would have to know for what purpose. If that is clear, then I would do what I can to find money for it."

Marc Gopin: "For example, we have endless conversations in the West about clash of civilization or the danger of it. And we see a product called the 'Fez Music Festival', which is barely funded by some generous people from the World Bank and some others, and is on the verge of bankruptcy. Can we say, to use your terms, that the *Realpolitik* of the situation is that we need as many paradigms for the reintegration of civilizations as possible? And to combat the notion that there is a clash between civilizations, we are going to heavily invest in the sacred music festival, and…."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "No."

Azhar Hussain: "Because it doesn't fit into your conflict resolution framework. It is not specific enough."

Simon Mason: "You are going to miss something, something that is diffuse. You need to be aware of that. You use a model, and it makes you miss something."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "What am I missing? If I had millions, if I had the limitless resources I would do it, of course. And I would go to the festival and I would love it. But I have, like anybody else, limited resources, and I have to be focused and do it in a way that does not take water and throw it into the ocean."

Azhar Hussain: "So you try and apply these resources with the largest impact."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "In Pakistan, some of the projects that have immense possibilities of changing policy are quite cheap."

Marc Gopin: "That is a good analysis of scarce resources and I would respect that scarce resource analysis. However, I would argue that if a sacred music festival happened to have brought people from Pakistan, or from Palestine/Israel, together, and they formed a bond and a cooperation at the music festival, then it would be practical, yes?"

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "What I need to know, and to be convinced is that the action you take is on what I would call a tectonic line, which would really move things. Like you have the rift in California, and if you put a small piece of dynamite, and you light it, then the rift shifts. You want an activity that causes a political earthquake."

Marc Gopin: "My humble and honest experience of 25 years of practice in this is that this is very hard to predict. We don't know why some things take off and some things don't. We don't know why things erupt. We don't know what happened between Carter, Sadat and Begin during Camp David…"

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "With symbolic work it is very hard to do it. With a power analysis basis, which is derived from the cultural-linguistics model (not the power paradigm model), this is much more realistic. You can never predict, but you are not throwing water into the ocean."

Marc Gopin: "Give me an example of what tectonic plate to shift?"

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "For example, the Hudna process between Hamas and Israel. You see what the military is doing, even with the wish of 60% of the population to talk to Hamas. You find a way slowly to get the different means that such a Hudna proposal from Hamas (e.g. period of 5-10 years ceasefire, under condition that Israel pulls back to pre-1967 lines) can be used, because there is trust in Hamas. It would open the way for a two-state solution, on condition that there is the will for peace from Israeli decision makers, which does not seem to be the case at the moment. If you go with that idea, then you have very little means, with a very careful surgical design."

Marc Gopin: "OK, so there are two completely different worldviews going on here. This is a European worldview, which is heavily out of touch from the American and Jewish worldview. The American and Jewish worldview is that Hamas is dedicated to the destruction of Israel, that a large part of the Muslim and Arab world is dedicated to the destruction of Israel, and that it is going to take a hell of a lot more evidence of the possibility of an alternative relationship in order even to get to the place of Hudna. That is why for me, the pragmatic

approach is to take a fledgling notion, a small NGO like 'Sulcha' that nobody funds, but that brought together a couple of thousands of Israeli and Palestinians, and ratchet it up to a 50,000-100,000 gathering, which would have been possible if we had the funding, and that would then set the stage for a realistic Hudna. Your perception of reality is that Israel is not interested in peace for the next twenty years. You are absolutely right, but from their perspective it is on the basis of a large group of people around the world that feel with them that the Islamist forces are only interested in violence and their destruction. They are in a narrative and a worldview that – whether you agree with it or not – is a reality for them. That's not to say that there are not unscrupulous politicians who use that, just as there are unscrupulous Islamist politicians that use the paranoid Islamic worldview. But these are realities. The pragmatics of *Realpolitik* (which I think the first track, governmental level, has not understood yet), is that if you want to make changes you need a much larger number of populations to be with those changes, in order to push politicians along. We cannot shift people like Livni or Olmert or all sorts of actors, without large populations saying: 'Hey guys, you're behind the times'. What we have now is politicians hanging themselves by the neck when they dare to talk about peace. So that means we have a lot more work to do with populations. The stuff that looks soft. So I agree with your Hudna idea, but I don't think we have the critical mass of people on both sides screaming for it."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "You have to work on the worldviews, which is not only work with the people, but also with the media."

Marc Gopin: "How do you work on the worldviews?"

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "Not on the Israel Palestine case, but I can give you an example on what happened in Switzerland with regard to the Islamists. After the Iranian revolution, you had all these bearded guys in the newspapers, and there was fear for everyone. You know, heads cut off, all the nice things, and people feared Islam. In Switzerland, there has been some work through the media[11] that has been done, working on the Muslim Brotherhood, not only about the nice Sufi guys, but media work about the Muslim Brothers, to say that they have a political agenda, they are not necessarily violent, they do that for self-defense and for resistance, etc. You had a more positive image in the Swiss media which influenced people in their opinions until 9/11. So it is possible through active media work to change people's perception and world view about an actor, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. There was the beginning of the creation of a political space for these movements to engage in. After 9/11, the whole scene was concentrated on Al Qaida, and probably there were a lot of people that were happy that this happened. They were happy to be able to collate Hamas and Muslim Brothers with Al Qaida. This policy killed the political space; it reduced in the long run the political space available. This was made top-down, it had nothing to do with the people."

Marc Gopin: "So how do you fight that?"

Michelle LeBaron: "Jean-Nicolas is saying that you also have to target things at the structural and policy level, even if you want to influence the worldviews of the masses."

Azhar Hussain: "With the Oslo process, there seems to be some evidence that it would have worked if there was, like Marc was saying, a larger group of Palestinian and Israeli religious leaders pushing it, and a larger support on the grassroots level. Yet it was only left up to politicians, so it collapsed. Is that true? That it collapsed in part because it was not a popular grassroots process but more a top-down approach?"

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[11] See the website www.religion.info

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "I cannot answer to that. In some circumstances, you have a political process and it is going to fail without the people's support. In other circumstances, you don't need the people. You can make peace without the people, in Central Asia it worked, between governments, where the people are not used to being listened to anyway, where they do not drive the conflict. It depends on the people and the context. In the Geneva Initiative they tried very strongly to mobilize the people for it, they printed the documents, sent it to every citizen in Israel, they tried to make a lot of noise inside the country and outside, and it didn't work. Probably not because of the type of mobilization, but because the process had flaws in it, e.g. the Israeli Government was not part of it, the issue of refugees was not addressed, Hamas was not in, etc. Still there is a need for mobilization. So what we should work on together here is *how* to do this mobilization?"

Marc Gopin: "One of the reasons why we are sitting here is because religion, and I would also add the word culture, embraces a large group of people who were excluded from the process, even as third parties tried to get Geneva and other accords to obtain a lot of signatures and get a lot of people involved. The reason is because they were all liberals talking to liberals. It was people from one kind of traditional and ethnic background, and only rich people from the north of Tel Aviv. Another deeper critique of the Geneva process that I've discovered among my religion peacebuilder colleagues, is that it was very thin, very thin in terms of relationships, except for a few people directly engaging with each other. There was no attempt to create thousands and millions of relationships, they just felt they had enough among the intellectuals. I will never forget sitting next to someone from the Geneva Accords, a year before Hamas was elected, and I said to him respectfully: 'I love your accords, and I just want to know, I heard that a lot of the Imams speak out against them in the mosques. What do you plan to do about it?' I thought he was going to say: 'Well we are having meetings with this Imam and that Imam.' But no! He looked at me straight in the face, and he said: 'We're going to put the Imams in the mosques; we are going to shut the doors, lock the door, and throw the key away'. He was a Palestinian. This was not an Israeli secular intellectual. I would argue the way to go is exactly the opposite. Instead of coming to the leaders and saying we have the maps, we know exactly where everything should go, we have a simple thing to do: we go to President Obama and other presidents, sit with these guys in a room and say: 'We're not going to get out of this spot until you start mobilizing both your people to be for peace. That means you have to go out tomorrow and issue a press conference and say to your people "You have to start knowing your neighbors and treating them as equal"'. This has never been said in 60 years. Not once has anybody called upon an Israeli prime minister to say to his people: 'It is time for the equality of Jews and Arabs."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "Should somebody from outside say that?"

Marc Gopin: "Absolutely! Third parties are there to take care of arrested people who are in a sick conflict. You have to help people sometimes. Froman is saying even more extremely, he is saying to me: 'We are waiting for the great father of America! The great president, he is our father!' It sounds silly, but he knows the politicians inside out. And he says the same things that Vamik Volkan says in his books. And he says that they are arrested, childlike, and waiting for someone to tell them what to do. This is the relationship between USA and Israel. This is a scared country that bullies somebody because they are terrified of the world. And they are waiting for somebody more powerful to tell them this is what you have to do. And nobody has been able to tell them that because they have this great lobby and all sorts of ways to prevent this from happening. They need to hear that message. But this is also the case that in the Palestinian and Arab world, there is another weapon, not the F16, it is called the 'child', it's called making the child want to blow himself up. It is called making the child hate. And they know very well that it is a good weapon, it works very well to scare the hell out of the Jews and intimidate them. Again, you need a third party…"

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "Can we draw back from there, and look at what the practical implications are, briefly, without the examples?"

Marc Gopin: "Yes, sorry. It's just mobilization of millions of people as a part of any peace process. We have a long way to go, a refugee problem to address, a holy city to address, we need and expect both parties to start to mobilize their populations, to talk to each other on a massive scale, to help each other, to do joint projects in medicine, and in employment, and we need to get this going."

Jean-Nicolas Bitter: "When I hear what you are saying, in terms of what is the specific case, I see that there is place for the design of a much more precise intervention than that. Much more precise, much more focused than what you are saying. It is not necessarily mobilizing millions of people to talk to each other on every side. There are specific issues; there are leverages. The Jewish lobby in the US that makes that the US does not speak to Israel, well how to create a counter lobby, which is happening. And maybe the government is conducive to that now. So there are much more precise things than to mobilize millions of people to talk to each other. One approach is to 'build peace', another approach, which I would argue for, is to focus on eliminating the obstacle to peace, of course in a constructive manner."

Marc Gopin: "If American Jews saw that their Israeli cousins, who they defer to, were told by their prime minister to go and invite Arabs into their homes, and they start to see it in the media, then they would shift their lobby! In other words, it's all connected! What I am saying to you is that we need leadership to make people at the centre of this process! Secular people, women, professionals, youths, rabbis, a whole range of people that will be mobilized and we say that these people are important for the future. We cannot figure out what to do with the holy sites without the religious people involved. I need to hear that from a third party and from the prime minister and the president of these two countries, to say we need religious people from both sides to deal with the future of Jerusalem. That in itself would be revolutionary."

Michelle LeBaron: "Let me try and summarize: Jean-Nicolas proposes a Hudna policy as an example of a specific, cost effective, 'surgical' approach. Marc says the politicians and the populations are not ready for it and are not pushing for it, so you need activities with hundreds of thousands of people, to push the politicians. Jean-Nicolas says the world view of the masses is not necessarily created bottom-up by working with the masses, but policy-makers can minimize, or create political space, top-down. The media has a key role. Marc Gopin says a greater diversity of actors at different levels have to be involved, and through relationship-building between people they can shift the influential lobbies. It seems slowly you are converging, although from different conceptual models, experiential and constructivist, and from different levels, top-down, bottom-up. Maybe it is time for coffee?"

3. Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: Practical Experiences

The following cases are clustered into three groups: 1) David Smock and Marc Gopin using an experiential approach, 2) Michelle LeBaron and Jean-Nicolas Bitter using a constructivist approach without direct reference to religious texts, and 3) Abbas Aroua, Hagen Berndt and Azhar Hussain using a constructivist approach, working with religious texts and concepts, as well as using co-mediation and "mediation as translation". Lessons from these practical experiences are summarized in the abstract that introduces each case, as well as more generally in the explorative workshop overview.

Nigeria: Religion as Identity, Religion as Bridge

By David Smock

Abstract: In Nigeria, in a local community conflict between Christians and Muslim groups, economic, historical, ethnic, political and religious factors have all played a role. The tensions between different ethnic groups were often fierce, and the religious identity has been used to mobilize and form alliances among them, against the other religious group. A Pastor and an Imam, who were involved in such clashes by formerly leading the respective militias, changed their understanding of religion and started to work together to resolve the conflicts in their community. They also partnered in another case in Nigeria, where 1,000 people had been killed in Christian-Muslim clashes. People from other countries, e.g. Kenya and Iraq, have been inspired by their approach which includes co-mediation with mediators from both sides of the conflict, references to the Bible and Qur'ân, a personal story of transformation, and the ability to create values people can commit to despite their differences.

Religion is the primary identity in Nigeria. If you ask most Nigerians: "What is your primary identity?" They will not say: "Nigerian", but rather "Christian" or "Muslim". Nigerians like to talk about their country as the most religious country in the world. This is their self-image. Political parties also use religion as a mobilizing factor. The communities are divided along ethnic lines, and in many ways, the ethnic identity is the most competitive, but religion is used as a mobilizing factor to bring different ethnic groups together. This can undoubtedly lead to conflicts. In the case of the State of Kaduna in North-Eastern Nigeria, the conflict opposing Christian and Muslims militias was rooted in various causes. The spark that ignited riots was the market, which each community wanted to be in "their" place. As a result, Christian militias were fighting against the Muslim militias. Imam Mohammed Ashafa headed the Muslim militia in the fighting in Kaduna, where he lost two uncles. On the Christian side, Pastor James Wuye lost his right arm and also had some of his followers killed. It was a bloody affair.

At the time, there was a series of interventions and spiritual awakenings. Both Wuye and Ashafa began to realize that their own faith, Christianity or Islam, was for peace. They realized that they should not be fighting against each other but that they should rather be making peace. They had a mutual friend, who also helped bring them together. When Pastor James Wuye's mother was sick, their mutual friend said to Imam Ashafa: "Pastor Wuye's mother is sick. What would it be like if you actually visited her in the hospital?" Then this friend made sure they sat next to each other. He saw the potential and found the way for them to meet. He enabled them to identify their common religiosity and commitment, and so they came together. They had an epiphany at about the same time (see the film "The Pastor and the Imam"). They formed the inter-faith center in Kaduna and helped forge the Kaduna Peace Declaration, which was influenced by the Alexandria Declaration.[12] I heard about it and contacted them. We organized training programs in peacemaking and in interreligious dialogue for young religious leaders. We had another conference to try to stimulate the formation of a National Inter-faith Council independent from the government.

In 2004, I read that 1,000 persons had been killed in the community of Yelwa-Nshar in Jos State as a result of Christian-Muslim violence. I urged Wuye and Ashafa to offer their services as mediators in order to bring peace to this community. They undertook field

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[12] The Alexandria Process led to a peace accord between Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

research in the community to understand the causes of the fighting and to identify Muslim and Christian leaders who could participate in a peacemaking process. They also obtained approval from the governor of Jos State to undertake this peacemaking effort. The Governor said that he had tried to mediate, but as a Christian, he had issued a report which was biased towards the Christian side and had been completely rejected by the Muslims. So he said: "I cannot do it anymore". Wuye and Ashafa served as mediators between the leaders of the two religious communities. They had an impressive methodology: First of all, they divided the Muslims and the Christians into two separate groups of twenty-five persons each. During the first two days, Wuye was heading the Christians and Ashafa was heading the Muslims, talking about what the Christians like about Muslims, what they don't like about Muslims, and vice versa. They talked about the issues at the root of the conflict, and each group identified seven key issues that had caused the conflict. One of the issues was that the Muslims had not respected a chief who was Christian. The Muslims wanted to build a Mosque in a Christian-dominated market; a move which the Christians saw as totally inappropriate. The Muslim youth had thrown stones at the chief's car. Underlying this, the more fundamental division was that the Muslims had only lived in this area for two or three generations. They were considered foreigners by the Christians, who felt they didn't belong there. They did not have land. They were cattle herders and traders. The Muslims were dependent on the Christians to rent them land for their crops. The Christian controlled the chieftaincy, as they were the indigenous population of the area. In addition, there was a notable class difference between the two groups as the Christians were poorer than the Muslims. All these economic, historical and ethnic factors played a role. The indigenous and foreigner issue was central, as in other conflicts in Nigeria.

The two groups came together after the two days. Each side chose ten people who gathered to share their findings. The police were present to protect against possible outbursts of violence. Wuye would mediate at times, Ashafa at other times. Both religious men would quote from the Bible and the Qur'an. There was a high level of religious expectation, in addition to Western resolution techniques and the traditional methods of conflict resolution. The combination of secular and religious conflict resolution approaches worked magically. A notable weight was put on the role of forgiveness and apology. The Christians made their complaints about two or three issues in particular. When the Muslim leader stood up, he was silent for a long period. Then he turned to the Muslim youth leader and said: "Will you admit that you did these things?" Instead of verbally aggressing the Christians, the Muslims apologized and said: "Everything you said about us is true, we have done this and we will work with you to make things right". The Christians were taken off guard because they thought they were ready for a battle. Instead, they were met with people who admitted their wrongdoings and said they were willing to work together to bring peace. Over the course of the week the community leaders reached an agreement on all the major outstanding issues or at least the identified processes through which resolution could occur. During the following two months, the agreement was promulgated among other community members who gave their support. The peace declaration was then celebrated in a ceremony attended by the governor and other dignitaries. Peace has prevailed in Yelwa-Nshar since then.

It was too sensitive to bring the two sides together in the other cases of conflict in the country, but Wuye and Ashafa could still work with each side separately. We were surprised to see that people from other contexts were also inspired by their work. For example, we showed the film to Iraqis who were very taken by it. The film brought tears to their eyes: "This is exactly what we need to see. This is exactly the type of reconciliation process we could be engaged in". Although the personal story plays a big part of the success, the fact that they are able to generate another set of values that people were committed to despite their differences inspires other cases of conflict resolution on religious lines.

USA-Syria: Inter-faith Dialogue to Prevent War and Create Tolerance[13]

By Marc Gopin

Abstract: Between 2006 and 2008, in the context of an increasingly hostile US policy towards Syria that aimed for regime change, religious actors created space for public conversations focusing on pluralism and tolerance. Sunni, Shiite, Christians and Jews were televised speaking on the same podium, broadcasted to hundreds of millions of people. In the US, this helped to show that there is a serious partner to engage with in Syria, undermining the neo-conservative agenda in Washington. In many Muslim countries, it helped counter-balance the typical image of Jews that dominates the Syrian media. In a situation where states and NGOs could not work, religious actors working in their personal capacity could break an impasse that could not be broken in the secular-political realm.

In the broader lens of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Syria is often left out of the discussions, also because of the pan-Arab rejectionist position. Syria had also become the principle conduit of funding for Hamas. My Syrian partners and I felt that the key to the Middle East centered on the question of how to help Syria engage with the West, and specifically with the US. It was also a confluence of interests, because Syria is a very serious police state, and my friends were limited in their freedom to do certain things in the non-religious sphere. From the beginning, this was a conflict resolution technique that had a strong religious dimension. It was to be good for Syria, good for the world, good for peace. It also had a very public dimension from the start as it began during a phase when the US had become far more aggressive towards Syria, with a strong interventionist desire to create regime change. We wanted to prevent violence and create space for tolerance. Many motivations existed simultaneously, including the notion of a possible new channel for Jewish-Syrian relations. If successful, this could lead to rapprochement between Syria and Israel, which would create a comprehensive peace process, instead of Israel-Syria and Israel-Palestine tracks going ahead separately. From the beginning, I wanted to bring these tracks together but we approached this issue very indirectly. Another motivation was to promote liberalization in Syria, which was not possible through normal processes such as when the West focuses on human rights issues. Thus there was a confluence of Syrian interests as well as our own motivations as Arab and Jewish peacemakers for creating this initiative.

Our starting premise was that Syria as a country takes great pride not in human rights, but in a notion of pluralism. So if we highlighted Syrian pluralism, it would be good for the Syrian image, it would undermine the neo-conservative movement in the US, and it would set the stage for conversations about politics which were not possible in Syria at that time. This way, through the medium of inter-faith relationships, and with the deep engagement of the Grand Mufti of Syria, we started to create public conversations. The first meeting was held in the Assad National Library in 2006 and it was heavily televised all over Syria and attended by all the Ambassadors. It concerned the future of the Middle East and framed, along inter-religious and inter-cultural ways, a demonstration of tolerance in Syria. Through inter-faith dialogue, we created authentic dialogue with different audiences and speakers that had never been achieved before. While I talked about inter-faith, we actually had a ninety-minute question and answer period with cameras rolling, where people raised all

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[13] See also Marc Gopin. 2009. *To Make the Earth Whole: The Art of Citizen Diplomacy in an Age of Religious Militancy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

of the Middle East issues. All this was given permission: Nothing happens without the permission of President Assad. The other agenda, of course, was to demonstrate to Washington that they were making a mistake in targeting this country for regime change. We knew that a debate on regime change was raging in Washington.

We started the Syrian dialogue process, but then it mushroomed. I managed to earn credibility with the Syrian people due to the way I talked. This is where we can discuss lessons learned. My Syrian partners and I emphasized the notion of positive peacebuilding and positive messages. Even if there were problems, we always emphasized the positive aspects of Syrian culture, Syrian revival, and Syrian religious pluralism, as a way to move civil society forward again. It worked remarkably well. Prior to this, there was very little positive engagement in Syria, because the Baathists suppressed everything. By engaging in a very positive way, by envisioning a future for Syria, we were challenging the present paradigm with its widespread corruption that everyone opposes without knowing how to move forward. The peace agenda and the inter-faith agenda coincided with a civil society agenda. We moved from there with a more explicitly inter-faith cooperative paradigm. We created an inter-faith press conference, where we spoke about religious tolerance from the perspective of the multiple religions. I was told that was the first time ever that Sunni representatives of the Mufti met together with Shiite leaders in a public space. If you focus only on clerics, it is all male – so we had a feminist agenda and men and women attended. The agenda was to create male-female cooperation, including non-clerical actors on the podium of representatives. A Shiite woman was one of the representatives, and there was also a veiled Sunni woman from the Center for the Study of Nonviolence on the panel. They also had someone who was a classic atheist in Syrian tradition, who argued that this was all just a waste of time! I also hosted Syrians at my center in the US, with the goal of creating a different dynamic, a different image of Syria in the United States, while following the evolution of cultural reality inside Damascus. There was no possibility for NGOs operating here due to the intense antagonism, so we had to cover our own costs and work in our personal capacity.

Our guiding notion was that religion could be used as an unusual but valuable method of breaking an impasse that others had not been able to break in the secular-political realm. The intention was to undermine the perception in Syria that peace with the West was not possible, and, at the same time, to undermine equivalent perceptions in Washington, as well as in Israel. I would take a land route through Jordan, between Syria and Israel: everyone knew this was a form of shuttle diplomacy. I ended up appearing on Israeli television, telling them about Syria. I would go to security officials in the US and Israel, and I would tell them about the positive things I was seeing. At first they did not believe me, then the realization moved up to Congressmen, to the security people, it went up to the intelligence people, and it became harder and harder for the Washington establishment to claim that there is no serious partner in Syria. It became harder and harder for the neo-conservatives in Washington to say there was no one to talk to. As a result, we created an enormous debate within the State Department.

There was never the notion that there was a serious religious problem in the Syrian-Israeli-American relationship. There is a proud tradition of progressive Islam that the Mufti was inviting, as well as a proud tradition of Syrian pluralism that allowed us as Jews (even if I was the only Jew and Rabbi), Christians, and Muslims to be equally honored in the public space. This notion of progressive Islam and religious pluralism was the notion we used as a bridge between enemies that did not – and could not – exist in the political-secular realm. This undermines paradigms that religion has to be part of the problem, and instead makes it part of the solution. Sometimes religion can create bridges and solutions that are not possible within the secular realm. It was a way to prevent war and create more tolerance on a large scale. Through the television stations such as Al Jazeera, the dialogue reached hundreds of millions of people.

Canada and USA: Pro-life, Pro-choice Dialogue[14]

By Michelle LeBaron

Abstract: Some years ago I was asked to evaluate a series of dialogues conducted by the Network for Life and Choice. These dialogues had taken place in Canada and the United States between pro-choice and pro-life activists on the subject of abortion. Media reports had contributed to a significant "charge" around abortion conflict, and hope was in short supply. Those who favored publicly-funded, legal abortion were discouraged by the violence and escalation around what they saw as a basic human right. Pro-Life advocates had a thin grasp on hope given the prevailing legal regimes in both countries. A positive climate increased for both parties when they engaged in dialogue leading to joint action including writing and releasing a paper on acceptable behavior outside clinics and collaborating on other concrete steps. While the abortion issue is not focused explicitly on religion, it plays out across religious lines. Religion is a spectre in every engagement, bolstering claims, escalating stakes, and fueling framings by each group related to morality and right action. While religion is seldom named as a factor in the midst of adversarial exchanges, it is the grammar that shapes arguments and the foundation that fuels behavior. It has also functioned as the rationale for resisting and even attacking the other, invoking the paradigm of righteous war.

When I was asked to evaluate these "pro-life/pro-choice" dialogues, I was skeptical, as it seemed clear that it was about deep issues of conviction and identity and I was worried about the idea of people trying to change someone else's convictions related to their identities. Furthermore, I knew that the people engaged in the process were doing so at high cost, as they were often seen with suspicion by their own constituencies. I started my engagement by asking them: "Why are you doing this?" One of the clergymen in the room answered by saying: "I do it because I see God in the eyes of the other." The benefit of the dialogue was not to change the other, but a deep recognition of the sacredness and humanity of the other. During this research, conducted with PhD candidate Nike Carstarphen, we found that not one person ever said they had changed their mind about their pro-life or pro-choice stance.

The dialogue process worked well because it brought groups of 12-30 people together and provided a container that focused on *symbolic* aspects of their identities. It created opportunities for participants to explore *who* they and others in the abortion issue are, in all their complexity. It also gave them ways to learn more about the "grammar" of being of themselves and others: those deep structures that influence thought and action. One particularly effective element of the dialogues involved asking participants to complete surveys on their views on a range of issues related to abortion, unwanted pregnancy and reproductive choice. The surveys were constructed with a Likert scale, offering participants a range of answer choices from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Once the surveys had been collected, participants were asked to fill in the same survey again, this time as someone from the other side would answer. In every instance, the tabulated results demonstrated that the gap between answers from pro-life and pro-choice participants was far smaller than their perceived differences. This result had implications not only for participants' perceptions of their counterparts but also of themselves and their "home" group. When people realize there is a smaller gap between them and others than they had imagined, they adjust their image of others and themselves positively, recognizing

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[14] For more on this process, see 1) Michelle LeBaron and Nike Carstarphen. 1997. "Negotiating Intractable Conflict: The Common Ground Dialogue Process and Abortion. " *Negotiation Journal*. Vol. 13, No. 4, pp.341-361. 2) The interview between Michelle LeBaron and Julian Potilla, http://www.beyondintractability.org/audio/ michelle_lebaron/?nid = 2457 and 3) http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/us/pdf/manual.pdf, a manual developed by the two women who originated the dialogue process, Mary Jacksteit, JD and Dr. Adrienne Kaufmann.

affinities, possibilities and openings that were previously unseen. Another powerful tool that helped to create mutual recognition involved asking participants to relate how they came to their views, and to identify their heroes and heroines. The focus on heroine figures led people to reveal what they really care about and value. Sometimes, people from different sides were surprised to find that their heroes or their heroines were the same.

As participants engaged in the dialogue, they began to shift their perceptions of counterparts, and even of themselves. For example, when a participant heard another's account of how they came to their views and moved from "The other side is evil" to "My counterpart made a difficult choice in agonizing circumstances and – while I disagree with her choice – I feel her anguish and know that place myself." Besides creating empathy, deeper understandings and shifting perceptions, there were also numerous practical outcomes from the dialogues. Participants agreed on the mutually acceptable goal of decreasing violence related to these clinics. They discussed common ground about behaviour outside clinics. Based on this exchange, some pro-choice and pro-life activists got together and wrote a paper about acceptable and unacceptable ways of protesting. Other participants from dialogues worked in various ways to increase services for poor women and families. These practical efforts helped to reduce the charge and violence around the conflict. Those within the movement who advocated violence or very extreme views became more marginalized.

In the dialogues held in communities across the US and Canada, the media were not present. Organizers believed that a media presence would inhibit complex conversations because of the tendency for each side to play to their constituencies. One of the barriers to effective communication between the sides was how politicization and polarization had obscured and inhibited exploration of nuances and complexities of the issues. The media were involved in later stages of dialogue processes. One local group of activists from either side worked for over a year to prepare for and hold a press conference about their common ground. At a conference held to reflect on the abortion dialogue process in Madison, Wisconsin, members of the media participated in panels and workshops. Frank discussions were held about why dialogues and common ground initiatives often receive less press coverage than more sensational events. Following this conference, several journalists went on to write in-depth pieces exploring dialogue processes as ways of bridging deep value differences.

Across deep trenches of difference, misperceptions escalate and enmification increases. Preparing to bring people together from across these divides requires a lot of pre-work including relationship-building, ensuring similar numbers and levels of participation from each side, and securing agreement on ground rules before joint meetings. Rather than skills and techniques, what is most important for third parties designing dialogues is a focus on relationship. Relationship is more possible when people gain perspective on their own and others' "grammar of being". Good facilitators help people loosen their creative genius and imagine ways through, rather than focus on applying skills and techniques. Successful dialogue facilitators cultivate and model self-awareness and help ground people in their own experience of past successes in shifting stuck dynamics. Among the powerful lessons that arose from this evaluation is the importance of a constructivist approach to dialogue design. Recognizing that religion and *Weltanschauung* shape values and identity, the dialogue designers used narratives and rituals to bring these dimensions into the process. The survey methodology combined with inviting personal narratives of "How I came to my views" served to de-center or disturb fixed perceptions rooted in religious and *Weltanschauung* understandings. From this place of de-centering, further surfacing of values from the heroine exercise and other activities followed, leading participants to the following realizations: 1) Media images of "the other" are more extreme, unidimensional and emotionally-inflated than real individuals from either side; 2) Each person's views have been shaped by deeper structures of understanding and – while the objective of dialogue is not to change these – examining and sharing them can help identify common ground; 3) Advocacy groups mobilize based on passion about issues and an often-attendant enmification of "the other". There are ways to do advocacy that evoke common ground and do not rely on a negative portrayal of "the other".

Tajikistan: Relationships between State and Religious Organizations

By Jean-Nicolas Bitter

Abstract: The Tajik peace agreement of 1997 has not succeeded in easing the tensions between the different actors in Tajikistan, especially between the secular and Muslim elites. A dialogue with representatives from these groups was set up with the expertise and support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Experience shows how debates about values and worldviews divide people, but how the joint exploration of practical activities to address concrete problems helps to ease tensions. Three working groups were established and jointly developed recommendations for the "Law on Religion", the enhancement of Madrasa curricula, as well as further practical confidence-building measures across the religious-secular divide.

The role and place of Islam in the process of nation- and state-building of post-Soviet Muslim countries has been an acute issue since these countries gained independence in 1991. Mistrust between between the former foes, secular elites from inside and outside government on the one hand and Muslim elites on the other, is deep. The National Reconciliation Commission (NRC 1997-2000) has not managed to achieve a concrete rapprochement. Since 2002, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has supported and helped facilitate ongoing dialogue efforts to transform the peace talks that ended the Tajik civil war into sustainable cooperation activities. Key political figures and scholars with both secular and Islamic backgrounds have taken part in a creative process and have developed a platform for dialogue and practice.

The participants in the Secular-Islamic Dialogue have underlined that even though the peace process was a great achievement and provided for the current stability and development of the country, many questions related to the relations between the government and the religious sphere remained unsolved. Potential tensions can and do arise around problems related to legal issues (the shortcomings of the "Law on Religion", the diverging interpretations of the law and its implementation); a polarization of the society along religious/secular lines (for example, the revival of traditionalism, partly linked to Islam, which the government has only recently taken into consideration in its state policy); the weakness of religious education in Tajikistan (the low level of religious education resulting in religious conservatism, the alienation of Madrasa students from the mainstream society, and the emergence of foreign schools of Islamic thoughts in Tajikistan through students receiving religious education abroad).

In general, these problems reflect the urgency for rethinking what secularism represents in the Tajik context and how this principle can be defined practically. It was acknowledged that such a critical issue can only be pragmatically and suitably addressed through a cooperative process between representatives of the secular government and representatives of the religious sphere. Concretely, dialogue participants have been working on how to bridge the gaps in Tajik society in the framework of working groups focused on religious education, legal issues related to religious organizations, and ways to prevent radicalization. Their methodology starts with the identification and analysis of the problems at hand, followed by the development of projects that directly address the issues and their joint implementation and supervision.

The experience of the working groups in general, and, in particular, the one addressing the prevention of radicalization, has shown that debates about values or world views tend to divide interlocutors, whereas the search for and implementation of practical means of living together can help to build confidence and common ground. The secular-Islamic

dialogue in Tajikistan validates the lessons learned in Swiss history and in other countries: in order to be successful, a dialogue involving parties with different world views – cultural, religious or other – should focus on and go hand in hand with practical measures; a most creative process.

The project has developed a "dialogue through practice" approach, which can be explained through the concept of *diapraxis*, an adaptation of a method proposed by Lissi Rasmussen. Rasmussen, based on her experiences in Africa and Europe, proposed a specific approach to dialogue, which engages actors in joint work on concrete issues: "While dialogue indicates a relationship in which talking together is central, *diapraxis* indicates a relationship in which common praxis is essential. Thus by *diapraxis* I do not mean the actual application of dialogue but rather dialogue as action."[15] Rassmussen stresses that joint practical action is essential in building relationships: people meet in order to transform the reality they share. Tajik participants to the secular-Islamic dialogue have themselves creatively developed a process that can be described as *diapraxis*, with the objective of consolidating the social and institutional fabric of their country.

Though still in its early stages, the Tajik secular-Islamic *diapraxis* has already produced some concrete results. The working group on "Law, Politics, and Religion" has agreed on a compromise list of recommendations aimed at improving the "Law of Religion" and submitted proposals to the President. The participants also assessed the relevance of providing legal assistance to Mosques' registration processes. One concrete output of this process was a booklet collecting all relevant laws for Mosques, as it was found that daily law enforcement was often stricter than actually stipulated in the laws, a consequence of misinterpretations of laws, or their unavailability to public knowledge. The second working group on "Religious Education" started developing a uniform curriculum for Madrasas. The aim was to offer Madrasas a curriculum of upgraded religious education including elements of civic education. The idea is to contribute to the integration of Madrasa students in Tajik society. A key aspect of the project is that it is not imposed on the Madrasas, but developed collaboratively with their representatives. A third working group on "Prevention of Radicalization" agreed to work out and implement a project on "Confidence building workshops for students at the Civil Servants Training Institute". They also began to participate in the development of soap operas addressing the issues of tolerance and cooperation between secular and religious outlooks co-existing in Tajik society. These are to be broadcasted on Tajik radios in the framework of the "Silk Road Radio" project (UNESCO Tashkent office).

Participants to the dialogue have thus jointly developed a cooperative platform, thereby contributing to the strengthening of the Tajik state and society. If this development is endorsed by the government and by religious organizations, the dialogue forum could represent a first step in the realization of a model that could become an original and specific policy model for the establishment of peaceful relationships between state and religious/faith-based organisations in Tajikistan.

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[15] Lissi Rasmussen. 1988. "From *Diapraxis* to Dialogue. Christian-Muslim Relations" in Lars Thunberg/Pandit, Moti Lal/Fogh-Hansen and Carl Vilh. eds. *Dialogue in action: essays in honour of Johannes Aagaard,* New Delhi: Prajna Publications. pp. 277-293, at 282.

Danish "Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons Crisis: Mediating Between Two Worlds

By Abbas Aroua

Abstract: Communication is one of the key challenges in conflicts with religious dimensions, such as in the "Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons case. People from the two "worlds", the Danish-secular and the Danish- or Oriental-Muslim, were addressing each other, but not understanding each other. In a similar manner, international law is not trusted by many Muslims, and has to be translated into local language if it is to be heard and understood. Therefore mediators who have a deep understanding of both worlds are needed, to translate the divergences and create channels of communication.

In 2006, the Cordoba Foundation led a mediation process between the Danish authorities and a group of NGOs from the Arab-Muslim world about the crisis caused by the "Faces of Mohammed" cartoons published on 30 September 2005 by the Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten*. The protests in the Muslim world, which in a few cases took a violent form, were often expressed in religious terms. This put forward the image of a clash between Islam and the West, seeing that the slogans used were religious. However, during a dialogue between a Danish and a Muslim delegation, facilitated by the Cordoba Foundation in Geneva in 2006, the underlying goals (interests and needs) of the latter were found to be less religious than they appeared to be in the first place. In other words, although the slogans in the streets were referring to religion, the grievances put forward around the table of dialogue were expressed in a different way. The Muslim delegation stated that the situation in the Muslim world was characterized by intense, popular, and widespread anger, with the feeling that the honor and sanctity of Islam and its followers was being trampled on. The delegation added that the crisis was indicative of the resentment of Muslims against Western policies in
the Muslim world, more precisely against the various forms of aggression practiced by the West and in particular the military invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan (Denmark being involved in both cases). Thus one of the recommendations put forward by the Muslim delegation was: "Pull out from Iraq and Afghanistan". A Danish Ambassador explained that Denmark's role in Iraq was not military but rather humanitarian, as well as contained to safeguarding water sources.

Consequently, we have to be cautious when we hear a religious discourse. It might hide another message; one has to go beyond the surface and see what issues are really at stake, i.e. the conflicting goals. I think the Muslims don't feel that Islam is endangered, but rather that the Muslim community is disrespected. To further explain this point, I have heard Muslims evoking a historical event that happened at the time of the grandfather of the prophet when Mecca was invaded by people from Abyssinia: The Abyssinians came with elephants. The grandfather of the prophet came to discuss this with the leader of the army. His concern was about his camels. He was bargaining and negotiating. The leader of the Abyssinian army was astonished. He said: "I thought your concern is about the Kaaba, the House of Abraham built in Mecca". The grandfather of the Prophet said "No, the Kaaba has a God who takes care of it. I care about my camels". This story is often mentioned today. God protects the religion of Islam. What is of concern is that we have a billion human beings being humiliated in their most sacred values. It's not only military aggression that was put forward in these discussions, but also the Western interference in matters such as education.[16] These are interferences that create a malaise in the Muslim world.

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[16] That is why we have to be cautious not to demonize the Madrasa because of the reaction it provokes. The Arabs, especially in the Middle East, were really angry about the interference of, for example, the U.S. in the development of educational curricula. Agencies and corporations like the RAND come to this region of the world ready to impose their ideas. In Qatar, they have a 25-year contract with the Qatari government to reshape the educational system. In Algeria, a French commission audited the educational system. One of the recommendations of this commission, which was chaired by Simone Veil, was to remove all references to some Quranic verses from the school curriculum, because, according to the commission, this type of education would build generations of children ready to be fundamentalists.

When the Muslims were most angry, they used wording and phrased their claims in religious terminology because it is most familiar to them. Why did they not use political language? They could have said for instance: "We don't want an external power to offend us or to interfere with our political and cultural system." Instead, they used slogans such as: "The infidels...", or "The crusaders are against Islam". They are using slogans that are taken from the cultural reservoir. This could be explained by different factors, notably the lack of political culture in vast segments of the population due to decades of dictatorship. Religion is the only shelter for many Muslims, as they have few political institutions were they have their say. It then becomes normal to use the language and the channel of communication they are most familiar with.

Another aspect is that there is a lack of trust and confidence in international law. The "International" component of international law has been discredited as "Western" and "not neutral". Many Muslims do not believe in it. Many Muslims do not trust the UN Human Rights Council or the UN General Assembly. This is mainly because they observe a lack of equal and fair implementation of these bodies' resolutions. Yet the same issues expressed in a religious-based language rooted in the Islamic tradition will be listened to and understood. There is a great amount of work to be done to translate international law into local language that is understandable. Consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example: if one takes its articles one by one and tries to validate them by Islamic principles, they will be accepted by everyone. When I talk about torture, I never mention the UN Convention Against Torture. Rather I say: "The Prophet said that the human being is more sacred than the Kaaba, than the House of God".

For this kind of work, we need translators who understand both "worlds", mainly because the capacity to adapt to each "world" is weak on both sides. We need translators able to navigate in between. This is a very difficult task because one has to master both systems in order to be accepted as a translator in each system. Such a mediator does not necessarily have to be a Muslim; he or she should be aware of the culture and the discourse. This is a long process. A Westerner who has been living in a Muslim country for 15 to 20 years or a Muslim who has been living in the West for a long period of time would have the capacity to do it. The main lesson I learned from this mediation experience is that I should not rely on what is *said* but rather look at what is *meant*, at what a person *wants* to say. Of course, there is always an underlying danger of false interpretation and making mistakes. This is why one should go through long discussions with the parties until one discovers what the underlying goals are.[17]

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[17] For more on the Danish "Faces of Mohammed" Cartoons Crisis, see Simon Mason, Abbas Aroua, and Annika Aberg. 2010. "Spannungen um den Islam in Dänemark, den Niederlanden und der Schweiz: konstruktiver Umgang dank mediativer Ansätze?". In Andreas Wenger, Victor Mauer, and Daniel Trachsler (eds.) *Bulletin 2010 zur schweizerischen Sicherheitspolitik*. Zurich: ETH.

Sri Lanka and Algeria: Dialogue with Religious-Based Actors

By Hagen Berndt

Abstract: Religious concepts can be drivers of violence as well as of peace. Living in a Buddhist monastery in Sri Lanka for four years, and working with the Mozabite community in Algeria, showed how an outsider can engage in developing a long-term, respectful relationship with religious-based actors. This kind of relationship was appreciated by them, to discuss their ideas and concepts related to religion and conflict. The task of re-defining traditional religious concepts in the light of present day needs has to occur from within a community, yet outsiders can be useful counterparts in this process.

Counseling the Buddhist monks

I lived in Sri Lanka between 1987 and 1990 and worked with the leadership of one of the three Buddhist *nikayas* on approaches to the civil wars in the south and in the north-east of the country. This was followed up with a less physical presence during the following years. The project was self-funded by the monks, who got personally involved in it, and based on their personal request. The majority of the Buddhist clergy at that time were very conservative; they were related to one of the larger political parties and inactive on issues relating to the major conflicts in Sri Lanka. A small group of dissident monks mainly belonging to the Ramanya Nikaya, the youngest segment of the Buddhist order in Sri Lanka, challenged this attitude by arguing that the main purpose for the creation of the monks' *sangha* by Gautama Buddha was to serve society instead of fulfilling a merely spiritual role. One of the monks wrote his PhD thesis on this topic, but it could not be printed in Sri Lanka. Several presented their ideas regularly on radio and debates were held between monks on this issue.

During the JVP's (People's Liberation Front) uprising between 1986 and 1991, the monks were trying to instil meaning into the Buddhist precept of *ahimsa* by developing a third, non-violent, role in the conflict, located somewhere between the violence of the military-political establishment and the underground rebels of the JVP. This succeeded locally, an indicator being the massive support for the temple that launched the project. However, the initiative did not exert strong influences at the national level. My main role in the project was that of a counterpart with whom ideas and concepts were tested by the monks who, traditionally, are never challenged by the local population (although they had become victims of politically motivated violence). I did not have any decision making power in the project and had to adapt to life in a traditional Buddhist temple, though my outsider status was always respected. The monks were committed to providing me with security at times when all expatriate personnel had fled the remote south of Sri Lanka. Issues for discussion with me revolved on strategies (when to confront actors using violence), organizational aspects, as well as questions related to the adaptation of traditional Buddhist concepts to real-life circumstances. An important issue was to relate the experience of civil war in the south to the protracted war in the north-east of Sri Lanka and to develop a role for the Buddhist clergy in this conflict. This failed, since during my presence other problems (mainly the wider context of war) were too pressing and only little energy was spent on the larger context. Later, the project adopted a rather traditional perspective on the issue (questions such as the unity of the island, Sri Lanka as *dhamma dipa*, the island of the Buddhist teaching) with mainly symbolic actions (visit of monks to Jaffna after the Sri Lankan army regained control, teaching novices the Tamil language).

The main approach to conflict transformation was from within society in the south, building a peace constituency and providing practical alternatives to violence, as well as building bridges to both armed actors. My outside intervention predominantly held a coaching role, but demanded good language skills, knowledge of the context and adaptation to difficult living circumstances. The fact that no funding agency had been involved increased credibility with local actors.

Counselling Mozabite leadership

In southern Algeria, around the town of Ghardaia, seven settlements provide the basis for a small ethnic and religious community, the Mozabites, the name of the Berber tribe derived from the dry river bed of the Mzab. The Mozabites have settled there for the past 1,000 years after fleeing from the north when their kingdom in the Atlas Mountains was destroyed by invaders. They developed a highly secluded and introvert society based on the Ibadite form of Islam, distinctive of Shiite or Sunni thought. The community was able to maintain a high level of internal autonomy throughout the pre-colonial and the colonial times as well as in independent Algeria, with well-functioning and economically prosperous municipalities. This began to change during the 1990s when Algeria changed to a more market-oriented system and the civil war in the north encouraged settlers to move to the south. Mozabites realized that they were beginning to become a minority in their own valley and that the state was posting outsiders as administrators in their municipalities, and that their traditional leadership bodies were beginning to lose authority.

After a violent confrontation between the Mozabite traders and the Algerian administration supported by the settlers in Ghardaia in 2004, I was asked to develop conflict mediation skills within the traditional councils. I worked together with a Mozabite mediator resident in Paris who was more often in the region. The project consisted of several visits, including two longer workshops and five meetings with different local leadership groups. It was entirely funded by the Mozabite municipalities who took turns hosting meetings and who contributed to the overhead expenses as well as to my expenses. Commitment to the process was high and follow-up meetings and briefings were organised in-between sessions. Inclusion of new people in the process happened regularly. Mistrust and critical questions by leaders who so far had not been involved continued throughout and were countered and openly discussed at meetings organised by the councils with interested members of the leadership. Only men participated; the need to involve women was recognised, but for various reasons did not occur.

As this was work in a secluded society which only recently had become aware of, and open to, the importance of looking at other experiences in a comparative perspective, building trust took a long time and was supported by circumstances and events outside our control. In spite of the strong doubts with regard to the compatibility of conflict transformation and especially mediation techniques with "Islam", the rapidity with which skills were appropriated was stunning. A part of the group had voiced their concern that "traditional dispute resolution" as practised by the councils was no longer functional. They saw opening up and learning from others' experiences as the only way to make their structures survive. As an outsider, I had to respect certain rules of Mozabite etiquette in order to be accepted to the meetings. None of the basic generic mediation techniques were changed to fit into the context; on the contrary, they were found relevant as applied locally by the participants in the process.

Conflict transformation can only be successful if those who are most concerned by it get involved and take responsibility. Outside actors can be effective in their support, yet they need to be aware of power relationships (including power imbalance perceived by actors in the south towards interveners from the north), and they need to develop language and inter-cultural communication skills. Religious-based ideologies as well as religious institutions often support instruments and methods in conflict (e.g. violence) that are not always supportive to constructive conflict dynamics. This demands a re-interpretation of religious concepts, as well as the delimitation of the space reserved for the religious from the space for non-religious approaches, which in turn might be challenged by religious-based actors. Thus an important method for generating understanding and empathy is asking questions about the meaning of concepts derived from religion and confronting the responses with realities. In some cases, different members of the same community may come up with contradictory perceptions and ideas. Work on redefining traditional religious concepts in light of the current needs has to be done, especially from within a community.

Pakistan: Enhancement of Madrasa Curricula as a Path to Peace

By Azhar Hussain

Abstract: The Madrasa acts as a social-religious educational system and has a strong influence on how Pakistan manages conflicts. Madrasa reform has often been met with resistance, as there is a perception that exposure to outside, Western forces hinders progress for Muslim countries. Yet, developing relationships built on mutual trust can lead to acceptable Madrasa curricular enhancement. Since 2004, the International Center for Religion & Diplomacy (ICRD) has engaged 2,225 Madrasa leaders from 1,500 Madrasas in curricula enhancement workshops. A key approach is to appeal to Islamic values. No matter how legitimate grievances or injustices are, there is nothing in Islam that justifies the killing of innocent people or taking one's own life.

Most violent conflicts are not caused by religious differences, yet in many instances religion is co-opted by power politics and used as a badge of identity or a mobilizing force for nationalist or ethnic passions. Pakistan is a land laden with conflict, much of which affects and directly involves the Madrasa community. While the majority of Madrasas are not involved in militant activity, Madrasa students have fought in paramilitary conflict with India in Kashmir, the Pakistani Army in the tribal regions, and even NATO coalition forces in Afghanistan. Many of the recent drone attacks in Pakistan have targeted religious schools, drawing students closer to the prospect of conflict with America. Sectarian violence is perhaps the greatest conflict affecting the Madrasa community, with statistics from the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies indicating a 746% increase in terrorist, insurgent, and sectarian attacks from 2005-2008.[18] For Madrasas, involvement in armed conflict particularly took off when there was great encouragement by both Western and domestic governments to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan under the religious banner. Madrasa students were encouraged to "defend Islam" by fighting the godless Soviet troops. They then moved on to "defend Islam" by fighting India in Kashmir. Now they are "defending Islam" by fighting the NATO coalition soldiers and even the "un-Islamic" sects of Pakistan.

The role of the Madrasa in Pakistan is that of both a community-supported religious seminary for impoverished children and an Islamic alternative to secular education for those of means. Nearly every Madrasa is affiliated with one of the five Islamic sects of Pakistan which provide oversight through private boards of education. The current population of Madrasas is a matter of estimate and debate: 16,000 Madrasas had been registered with the Pakistani Government as of 2007, with general estimates of the total Madrasa population ranging from 20,000 to 25,000.[19] Because they occupy positions of respect and influence, Madrasa leaders can play a critical role in discrediting violent interpretations of Islam and promoting peace. Madrasa leaders have a special relationship with the populations most affected by conflict, as their institutions are considered trustworthy and credible by the local population on the different sides of the conflict.

The concept of Madrasa reform dates back to the early period of independence when the Government of Pakistan began a series of attempts to implement reforms. These never achieved great success and were typically abandoned under pressure from the religious

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[18] International Crisis Group. March 2009. *Pakistan: The Militant Jihadi Challenge*. Islamabad/Brussels: International Crisis Group, p.3.

[19] International Center for Religion & Diplomacy. 2008. *Madrasa Enhancement and Global Security: A Model for Faith-based Engagement*. Washington, DC: International Center for Religion & Diplomacy, pp.46-48.

community. Perceived threats to the Madrasas' identity, or more generally to Islam, have only fostered a sense of urgency to build more Madrasas and led to their explosive growth. A large number of Madrasas perceive that it is exposure to outside, Western values that makes it impossible for the Muslim countries to progress. The rationale behind this is that Western countries engage Muslim leaders and intellectuals to strengthen their own countries and use these Western-educated Muslim intellectuals to push "loose" moral values on Islamic countries. In this case, ethnic and cultural values tend to dominate a Madrasa's willingness, or lack thereof, to open up its syllabus and create modern organizational reforms where transparency and growth can take place.

Since 2004, the ICRD has been engaging the leaders of Pakistan's Madrasas directly in the reform process, in an effort to promote curricular and pedagogical enhancement with an emphasis on religious tolerance, human rights, peace education, and conflict resolution skills. Through a gradual process of direct engagement of religious leaders, we have been able to develop partnerships based on mutual respect and trust. To date, the ICRD's program has engaged more than 2,500 Madrasa faculty and religious leaders from over 1,500 Madrasas, representing all five Madrasa boards and every province and territory of Pakistan. While our program was first met with a great deal of suspicion, we now face a more daunting challenge as many Madrasa leaders have asked that similar training be provided for all of their teaching staff, and graduates of ICRD's "Master Trainer" program are already conducting training workshops for other Madrasa leaders. Both male and female Madrasa leaders are also now requesting our training programs for the female teachers of girls' Madrasas, something that the men had previously strongly opposed.

The central component of Hussain' Pakistan Madrasa Project is its system of Madrasa teacher training workshops, which provide an entry point and means of sustained engagement with the Madrasas, while developing their capacity for enhancement. We have found that the most effective way to stimulate Madrasa leaders to embrace change is by appealing to Islamic values. This approach also invites Madrasa leaders to draw upon the past accomplishments of Islamic education and expand their expectations of what can be accomplished in their own schools. In our workshops, Madrasa leaders reflect on Islamic values relating to peace and tolerance and the role they played when Madrasas were the unrivaled nucleus of learning excellence a thousand years ago. One can counter extremism by utilizing Islamic principles of peace and coexistence to engage those who use violence while calling themselves defenders of Islam. Working within the tradition and capitalizing on the strength of the Islamic faith in promoting peace strengthens, rather than threatens, religious leaders' identity by appealing to their most sacred religious values. Terrorism and extremism survive on hatred, and the hatred is disguised in a "victim" cloak of grievances and injustices. Because Madrasas largely empathize with the grievances of extremist groups and actively provide assistance via human resources and – more importantly – moral and religious legitimacy to many of these groups, it is necessary to address this issue squarely and from Islamic traditions. Islamic principles dictate that the quest for justice must be pursued with justice. The Qur'an says: *"O ye who believe, be upright for God, witness in justice; and let not hatred of a people cause you to be unjust. Be just – that is closer to piety."* There is usually a total agreement with this Qur'anic verse, and we explore with Madrasa leaders how to respond to current injustices in a way that is consistent with Islamic principles. Or take another example: the Qur'an says: *"And fight in the way of God those who fight you, but do not commit aggression. God loveth not the aggressors."* In discussions, we clarify how this means that a Muslim must never fight an ethnic or religious group; he must never fight because of vengeance, anger, or for personal satisfaction; but wages jihad against injustices without holding hatred for the enemy.

4. Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: Theoretical Workshop Overview

By Moncef Kartas

Papers (in alphabetical order)

1. Abbas Aroua (2009), 'Conflicts in or Involving the Arab World: Does Religion Matter'.
2. Hagen Berndt (2009), 'Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions'.
3. Jean-Nicholas Bitter (2009), 'Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: A Swiss Contribution'.
4. Marc Gopin (2009), 'Social Network, Citizen Diplomacy and Friendship: The Three Nodes of CRDC'.
5. Arwa Hassan and André Kahlmeyer (2009), 'The Contribution of Dialogue Processes and Confidence Building Measures in Conflict Prevention'.
6. Azhar Hussain (2009), 'Enhancement of Pakistan's Madrasas as a Path to Peace: A Model for Faith-Based Engagement'.
7. Michelle LeBaron (2009), 'Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: Methodologies and Practical Experiences'.
8. Jean-François Mayer (2009), 'From a Website to a Research Institute: Religioscope – Informing on Religions and their Role in the Contemporary World'.
9. David Smock (2009), 'Religion and Peacemaking: The U.S. Institute of Peace Experience'.
10. Thomas Uthup (2009), 'Transforming Kindling for Conflict to Saplings for Peace: The Alliance of Civilizations, Religion, and Peacebuilding'.

This theoretical review of the papers addresses the conceptualization of religion. Not all papers are systematically discussed, as it would produce a lengthy analysis without adding to our insight. Rather, the idea is to firstly highlight the principal differences in conceptualizing religion in the papers. The section is not meant as an individual critique of each paper. Secondly, the different conceptualization of conflict are brought in relation to the approaches to conflict presented in the papers.

Conceptualization of Religion

In his paper, Jean-François Mayer introduces the work of Religioscope, a research institute which grew out of a website project that gathers data and information on religious actors, movements, and organizations. The project combines an academic approach with a journalistic one to present both information and analysis of religion-related matters. Although Religioscope's primary focus is not on conflict, it suggests to be used as a tool for deliberation on intra- and interreligious conflicts. As a critical source of information, Religioscope focuses on religion in its organizational form. According to the institute, organized religion mediates specific beliefs and practices channeling norms constitutive of the way people orient themselves in the world. Adopting a dynamic view of religion, Religioscope is interested in its function as a spiritual framework within which individuals or groups interpret their social world and adapt to external changes. The conceptualization

of organized religion emphasizes its institutional, normative, as well as spiritual nature, which is crucial for the constitution of social reality. Hence, religion may often play an important role not as a belief motivating violent behavior, but as a narrative justifying or even making validity claims intelligible. The data and information made available by Religioscope contribute to conflict resolution or transformation to the extent conflict parties and mediators make use of it.

The paper advances a constructivist approach to religion. But it does not address if and how a conceptualization of religion as an organized and constitutive element of the social world influences the process by which the website collects, organizes and presents data. It is however an interesting point to reflect on the way our conceptualization of religion affects the framework and categories we use in understanding the role of religion in politics and conflict.

Religioscope's conceptualization differs from "thin" constructivist approach in as much as it emphasizes the constitutive role of religion in shaping the identity of actors (political or religious) and, thus, helps to understand actors' behavior in terms of role-play and scripts. A conceptualization of religion as a core element of identity construction assumes the presence of more determinant forces of structures on individual or group behavior. Inversely, the "thin" constructivist approach is mostly based on the notion that, although mediated by sensory perception, language and culture, social structures are real and change only gradually. Therefore, the main focus is on agency, which is mainly influenced by identity and its concomitant interests. Similarly to the liberal paradigm, religion's role in conflict is mainly instrumental, yet interests are not given by assumption but deducted from the identity and role played by the actors.

"Thin" constructivism seeks to keep the model more concise and focuses mainly on interaction rather than on communication. Therefore, validity claims are mainly understood as strategic speech acts. For instance, an actor will express a validity claim referring to religious and cultural beliefs and norms to legitimize specific acts or decisions, or to mobilize a certain group.[20]

"Thick" constructivism, in contrast, emphasizes the importance of communication and focuses on the interpretation of validity claims. Such constructivist models share many assumptions with pragmatic language philosophy (such as the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and John Austin). From such a philosophical stance, interpretation is the mode by which religion as part of the social, cognitive background allows actors to act like players in a game. Their actions do not follow a script, but are made possible by the rules of the game. Understanding the role of religion in conflict focuses mainly on the interpretative resources provided by religion a) to faith-based actors to give meaning to their environment and their actions, and b) to mediators and researchers to understand and give meaning to the actions of faith-based actors.

Religion plays an important role in the construction of social reality according to both "thin" and "thick" constructivist perspectives. However, assessing the difference between both approaches illustrates how conceptions of religion affect the way conflict resolution and conflict transformation are dealt with. On the one hand, according to the "thin" constructivist

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[20] See John Searle. 1997. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Although Searle has provided a very rich and complex discussion of speech acts, his conceptualization of social reality may lead to such an unhappy interpretation of speech acts as strategic moves. A good example is the securitization approach in security studies (see Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers).

stance, conflict transformation would mainly focus on changing interests, behavior and identities of actors; social structures would then only transform gradually. Accordingly, the level of analysis of the conflict would remain mainly focused on the religious and political positions of the actors, and on contradictory issues in their worldviews.

On the other hand, a "thick" constructivist conceptualization of religion would draw its attention to the broader structures of conflict within which religious and non-religious societal and political forces raise their validity claims. Such an approach would seek to understand the struggle over interpretations within which the more visible conflict between the actors and groups are embedded.

Interestingly, some of the papers oscillate between these two conceptualizations of religion. For example, Hagen Berndt's paper underlines the constructivist dimension of religion, but sees them both as constitutive of identity and as a source of interpretation. Through this flexible use of religion, his analysis of conflict zooms in and out between more agent- and structure-based explanations. The multiple roles and effects of religion in and on conflict are explained by Berndt's functionalist understanding of religion, namely that its role differs according to the specific context. According to Berndt, the conceptualization of religion is thus context-specific. The question becomes *how* it is used in a specific conflict. Thus, the approach to the transformation of conflict has to be adapted to that specific context.

The functionalist conceptualization of religion made explicit in Thomas Uthup's paper is more implicit in other papers. Nevertheless, we can differentiate between functional and non-functional (or conceptual) notions of religion. From the functional perspective, religion hardly stands for itself but is used for a specific purpose by the agents. Even if religion is compared to culture and seen as a worldview or symbolic resource in communication, its role will depend on the way it is used by individuals or groups. Non-functional perspectives have a more "universal" claim, as they tend to conceive religion in analytical terms. Religion is more a certain type of knowledge – a body of principles, norms and rules which through their constant enactment shape the socially-experienced reality of actors. Religion from that perspective is a particular and intricate part of the specific culture of individuals and groups. Hence, individuals having the same "cultural" background (e.g. French, German, or English) can have different religions (e.g. Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist) and may thus share broad "cultural" traits, but will hold differing interpretations of their shared culture. The role of religion in conflict is not assessed through its use by individuals or groups, but by its structural effects on the conflict. Religion is thus conceived as a framework making actions possible, informing actors about "appropriate" behaviors, and, at the same time, analytically providing the references for mediators, researchers and other observers to understand behaviors. Spiritual and experiential understandings of religion also hold non-functional conceptualizations of religion as a universal and privileged access to the human soul.

Nevertheless, many papers rest on the underlying assumption that religion fulfils many different functions. In fact, pinning down religion to a single dimension seems counter-intuitive. Azhar Hussain, for example, suggests that religion is a source of identity having a symbolic and rhetorical force that in some cases can be used to mobilize followers, and thus functions as validity claim to justify actions or to evade responsibility of one's acts. Therefore, this utilitarian conception of religion can imagine religion both as a tool to fuel or tame conflict, although neither Hussain's paper nor that of any other author conceives religion as the sole driver of conflict or avenue to peace. The authors underline a more complex view of the sources, drivers, and underlying fault lines of a conflict, but the prominence taken by religion in conflict varies considerably. While Arwa Hassan and André Kahlmeyer see religion as source of identity, they suggest that competition over resources is the main driver of conflict. In this sense, identity can then be used to draw dividing lines between the conflict parties. A very broad conceptualization of religion comes from Uthup's paper, which compares

religion to culture with seven functional dimensions; the validity claims justifying behavior towards the environment; towards other religious groups; and towards the use of force; legitimization of political hierarchies; legitimization of social hierarchies; the way religion affects the believers' perception of the nature of conflicts; and the source of identity that religion can be. In contrast, David Smock's paper comprehends religion simply as a source of conflict which, amongst others, opposes different religious groups.

Abbas Aroua's paper differs substantially in the way it conceives religion. The function of religion is not only context-specific, but also specific to the religion itself, i.e. Islam has a different function for Muslims in the Arab World than for Christians in Europe. According to Muslims, religion "is both a personal spiritual experience, a source of inspiration for the conduct and action of the individual, and a collective experience that provides a system of values and normative framework to the community" without the need for a centralized system of institutions. If we extend Abbas' perspective, one could question the universality of all models approaching the religious dimension of conflicts. Perhaps the process by which social structures are emerging and transformed also differs according to the language and culture of the religious communities. In fact, all the papers present approaches to conflict resolution and transformation based on predominantly western, scientific and highly individualistic modes of reflections. From a constructivist position, the question must at least be twofold: Firstly, what is our conceptualization of religion and the subsequent role we assign to it in a conflict? Secondly – and this is the question no paper effectively addresses – how are the groups and individuals from the different communities and conflict parties conceiving religion and conflict? Concomitantly, to what extent is the conflict transformation model adapted to assess these differences?

A quite different perception of religion is expressed in Marc Gopin's paper, which emphasizes the spiritual dimension of religion as a very specific form of knowledge. In contrast to rational and scientific knowledge, which is only accessible to a small elite, spiritual knowledge is the most common form of comprehension of the world. Gopin seems to suggest a universality of spiritual knowledge, which has an important impact on his approach to conflict transformation as argued below.

On a final note, Michelle LeBaron and Jean-Nicolas Bitter distance themselves from utilitarian and functionalist notions of religion. LeBaron conceptualizes religion as a constitutive element of the social episteme, although she uses the term "worldview" not in the sense of perception but as *Weltanschauung*. However, the mechanisms of the social construction are based on systems regulating the production of meaning. Bitter underlines that the approach of religion-politics-conflict (RPC) does not apply to conflicts in which religion plays a role as an identity marker, i.e. in which religious symbols are used to draw a boundary between groups and hence produces insiders and outsiders to the groups. His paper argues that the highlighting of differences does not fundamentally affect the social construction of reality. RPC focuses on conflicts in which religion is a constitutive element of substantially different social and cognitive backgrounds, such as in the cases of conflicting "worlds". Referring to Lindbeck, the author adopts a cultural and linguistic model of religion. The reference to Wittgenstein is clear: grammar as a normative structure makes language and speaking possible, but does not determine the content and meaning of an utterance as it would be necessary to have a specific rule for each possible utterance. Hence, religious doctrines provide a rich resource of possible actions adapting to changing realities over time, but remaining true to its core narratives. Finally, religion as a constitutive element of the social episteme does not only produce security through internal cohesion or trust building, but it also induces power effects by structuring the field of possible actions. Hence, the re-production of structures not only produces a certain meaning (i.e. knowledge) but also "empowers" the structures, i.e. making actions possible which in turn may structure the field of possible actions.

From this brief review we can distil the following appreciations of religion:

- Religion as validity claims
- Religion as constitutive element of identity
- Religion as spiritual approach and framework of analysis
- Religion as constitutive element of the social episteme

The papers, however, show that conceptual boundaries are fluid and that some approaches rely on quite flexible concepts of religion when dealing with conflicts. Therefore, the following table should be read only as an approximation offering simplified overview on the different approaches:

Table 2: Outline of the different approaches to religion used in the papers

Functional		Non-functional	
Instrumental, liberal	*Thin, constructivist*	*Spiritual, experiential*	*Constructivist*
Smock (paper)	Berndt	Gopin	Berndt
Hassan and Kahlmeyer	Hussain	Abbas	LeBaron
Hussain	LeBaron	Smock (conference)	Bitter
Uthup	Uthup		Abbas

Conceptualization of Conflict and its Transformation

Most papers conceive conflict transformation as some form of mediation process involving a third party. Arwa Hassan and André Kahlmeyer do not elaborate on their understanding of conflict, but seem to imply that conflict is a form of competition over resources. In this sense, the transformation of conflict consists in creating dialogue structures and institutions encouraging nonviolent competition. Such dialogue structure could translate into the construction of formal democratic institutions that guarantee constant multi-stakeholder consultations. Alternatively, a dialogue process could imply a more informal structure by simply creating communication channels and confidence-building measures, thus making stakeholders realize that a solution to the conflict is only possible through a minimal degree of cooperation. While their implied notion of conflict suggests a conflict transformation approach directly tackling the problem of scarce resources, their approach to conflict centers its focus on changing the behavior and attitude of the multiple stakeholders. Religion mainly plays a role in informing development agencies in terms of conflict sensitivity. The material dimension of the conflict is not placed at its core, but is addressed indirectly through the delivery of conflict-sensitive development aid.

Hagen Berndt defines conflict as an incompatibility between actors, thereby locating the locus of conflict at the level of issue and relationship. Concomitantly, he sees the potential for conflict transformation as a competence inherent to a community. His approach is characterized by a flexible adaptation to the circumstances and can range from mediation as a negotiation tool to supporting a group or community in building up peace constituencies. Hence, due to the actors-based definition of conflict, structural change is not the prime target of the approach.

Abbas Aroua's spiritual notion of religion leads to a conception of conflict transformation in the form of a rationalizing problem-solving approach. Such an approach seeks to find a political solution between incompatible goals, thus focusing narrowly on the issue level of the conflict. The spiritual dimension, "religion", comes into play in the analysis of the

goals and the communication of the solutions in spiritual terms. It is a two-way process of decoding and coding. Spiritual claims must be first decoded and translated into political problems in terms of goals, which makes the rational solution of the problem possible. The results must be then coded back into spiritual vocabulary to gain credibility and legitimacy within the religious community.

David Smock's paper accounts for the Religion and Peacemaking Program housed in the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The program works with the assumption that although in many cases religion is not the main driver of conflict, local inter-faith organizations can be valuable mediators. Therefore, the program identifies and supports religious activists as potential peacemakers and provides them with technical and financial support. The program's functional conception of religion's role in conflict is reflected in the approach described in Smock's paper; it rests on traditional means of conflict mediation and suggests that religious peacemakers experienced in inter-faith dialogue may address effective leverage points in the mediation process.

Marc Gopin's approach stands in stark contrast to individualistic and rational approaches to conflict. He eschews all direct links between religion and conflict, and his approach runs counter to the idea of formulating a general and rationalizing notion of conflict. Conflicts with a religious dimension require a spiritual access to the conflict. Religious symbols have a strong communicative force and religious sermons appeal to the emotions. Therefore, he argues in favor of the involvement of religious peacebuilders as they can address social networks in a very efficient way. The key to Gopin's approach is the transformation of conflict from below through diffuse networks of citizen diplomats building up pressure on official diplomacy. Political change, in the sense of overcoming the political system's reproduction of conflict, can only occur when the networks diffuse across enemy lines and build informal relationships among citizens, thus steadily creating relations of friendship. Gopin's approach can be clearly categorized as a conflict transformation approach targeting political as well as, in part, social change. However, the meaning he gives to political change is not that of the reform of political institutions – as they are part of the problem – but that of circumventing political institutions and approaching reconciliation through grassroots networks. With their spiritual appeal, religious peace activists become crucial players in building up networks. Thus, he asserts that religion bears a bigger potential for transforming conflict than for fuelling it.

In stark contrast to Gopin, Jean-Nicolas Bitter emphasizes a top-down approach in the use of religion as a resource for the peaceful transformation of conflict. His approach is not aimed at the grassroots but at elites and decision makers (Track 2 upwards), and thus clearly seeks to change attitudes and relationships of the participating political and religious actors in order to remove obstacles to political solutions. Accordingly, the approach is open-ended, as the actors might endorse solutions igniting political change. It does not directly target social change and focuses on mediation. The mediator's task is to create a social space in which conflicting parties can encounter each other. The space does not follow a traditional problem-solving approach of conflict analysis and deliberation about values, since such an approach tends to force each party to compromise on core narratives of their belief and endorse discourses foreign to them. Religion, with its capacity to structure a field of action without changing its "grammar", offers the possibility of conflict transformation. Therefore, dialogue alone is not sufficient, and must take place within structures of common practical action towards a specific project, such as a common task, or a project that may not directly affect the conflict. It is within this type of cooperation towards a concrete project that each party can bring in its own narratives for the creative problem-solving, thus engaging in *diapraxis*, a dialogue through practice. The *diapraxis* approach oscillates depending on the "content" of the cooperation, both between conflict resolution and transformation and between changing attitudes and the political field.

Linking dialogue to practice and, thus, to shared experience is also central to the approach presented in Michelle LeBaron's paper. Yet the level of action focuses on civil society actors

and seeks to engage in inter-cultural, inter-faith and/or deep-rooted conflicts. Similarly to Gopin, the approach she presents sees rationalizing approaches as limited and not sustainable when agreements have to be implemented. To affect worldviews and the system's symbolic reproduction and regulation of communication, conflict transformation must directly target what enriches the system's structure: the practical experience. Art-based and creative approaches offer a concrete field of interaction/communication and evoke intellectual as well as emotional production of meaning at the symbolic level without direct enactment of core narratives. Art-based approaches tackle the symbolic realm of worldviews and it is in this realm, according to LeBaron, that religion deploys the most effects. The art-based approach targets the attitude (worldview, empathy and understanding) of individuals and groups at the civil society level, yet does not offer a strategy for social change.

Conclusion

The theoretical review of the papers has brought to light how the conceptualization of religion affects the level at which conflicts are analyzed and the way conflict parties are defined. The way religion is conceived is in direct link with one's understanding of conflict. Surprisingly, none of the papers have addressed the issue of conflict parties. In most cases, conflicts are attributed to clearly visible conflict parties with relatively well-defined grievances and confrontational goals. In this sense, the focus on religion might strengthen the apparent division between parties. The more the conceptualization of religion is functional and utilitarian, the more "standard" the methods of conflict resolution are. Whilst applying a cultural-sensitive stance to account for the religious dimension of the conflict, the papers that adopt a functional concept of religion all focus on religion as the central dimension of the conflict, and imply that the solution has to be found where the theme of mediation is to be found. Consequently, little emphasis is placed on conflict analysis as such, even though it seems evident that conflicts with a religious dimension also have non-religious dimensions.

For their part, "thick" constructivist approaches underline that religion will always be an important background for the interpretation of non-religious conflict issues. As Jean-Nicolas Bitter points out, religion as discourse has important power effects. But how do such power effects manifest themselves? The dialogue from the previous section gives us an excellent example, in which two statements by Marc Gopin illustrate the way power structures are effective:

 1) "The person who really got through to me was this spiritual Sheikh, Sufi Sheikh, who was out of this world. He brought together rabbis, and others, who came to him, and honored him, and they were able to make him do incredible things that Barak and the others never got him to do. Because we appealed to his heart and he was a religious man. How am I supposed to begin to talk about this to policy-makers? I barely wrote about it in my books, because it is so outlandish."

2) "Media and policy-makers are focusing on the wrong issues. What if there was the suggestion, in Israel-Palestine for example, to have the prime minister and the president of both parties say to their people: 'We want you to mix'? We never had a third party say to them: 'We need your people to engage each other on a massive scale' or: 'We think that music festivals for both communities could be a path forward'. We sort of let everybody who is in the experiential mode hang out dry. They are just out there, all these decent people who want an experience and positive feelings across Shiite-Sunni lines in Pakistan, and we leave them out dry and focus on Taliban, Taliban, Taliban. What I am saying is that this has policy implications. If we created a paradigm shift and we had leadership that says 'where we shift people and what we encourage, matters'. Then the experiential would take on greater importance. Is that so wrong, or weird?"

Gopin's statements show how certain discourses of diplomacy and *Realpolitik* are silencing out experiential conflict transformation approaches. The discourses' dominance renders experiential approaches somehow idealistic and far from "reality". Civil society actors or organizations can engage in such activities and utter statements of "coming together", but such an approach is not enough to become an appropriate diplomatic and policy tool. The power structure does not work with coercion (preventing Gopin to write about this in his books or punishing diplomats who use alternative methods), but it makes such propositions and approaches sound absurd. What is clear from a close reading of the papers is that all the actors struggle to grasp the power effects of discourses in conflict, be it with or without a religious dimension. Yet, eventually they all entail some aspiration to change the forces supported by powerful discourses, both at the agent or the structural level. Therefore, a conceptualization of religion and conflict should also focus on such power structures in which conflicts are embedded and the role of religion as a constitutive element of social reality in strengthening or weakening those power structures.

On a final note, one should be aware that it is impossible to assess a conflict without concepts or from an objective perspective and pretend to have a "neutral" stance on the conflict. However, one can be impartial. The papers have shown that one's conception of the role of religion in conflict *affects,* but does *not determine,* one's approach to conflict resolution/transformation. Nevertheless, to gain a better understanding of the interplay between power structures and our cultural frameworks and background, and to remain as impartial as possible, it is necessary to constantly challenge one's own as well as the dominant conceptualizations of religion and conflict. Dealing creatively with conflicts needs not only to approach the different worldviews of the conflict parties, but also to challenge and "test" the mediator's worldview shaping his or her approach to the transformation of conflicts with a religious dimension.

Annex I:
Workshop Objective and Program

Objective of the workshop: To increase our understanding of and map conflict transformation approaches to address political conflicts with religious dimensions.

Day 1: Monday, 27 April 2009

Time	Topic
08:30	Arrival & Coffee
09:00	Session 1: Introduction & Setting the Scene
10:30	Coffee Break
11:00	Session 2: Conflict Transformation Approaches: Concrete Cases
12:30	Wrap-up
12:30	Lunch
14:30	Session 3: Conflict Transformation Approaches: Concrete Cases
16:00	Break
16:30	Session 4: Concept of Religion and Conflict
18:00	End
19:00	Dinner

Day 2: Tuesday, 28 April 2009

Time	Topic
08:30	Session 5: Mapping of Methods & Approaches
10:00	Coffee Break
10:30	Session 6: Lessons Identified & Best Practices
12:00	Lunch
13:30	Session 7: Looking Into the Future: Needs & Potentials
15:00	Break
15:15	Session 8: Wrap Up & Next Steps
16:30	End
19:00	Dinner