

A GENEALOGY OF IDEAS



JOURNAL 2
CONFLICT ANALYSIS :
TOOLS FOR ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS

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Does the term “peacebuilder” resonate with you?

In the first issue, we explained our assumption that anyone can promote peaceful and nonviolent responses when faced with conflict and injustice.

This work isn't just for professional mediators or diplomats. Someone serving lunch in a school can have a meaningful and long-term impact on a large group of people. We can all be strategic about how to approach conflict and promote change.

Check out Issue I: *What is Old is New Again* for information on some alternative roots of the peacebuilding field and to consider how your work might fit into the movement to create a more just and less violent world.

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been faced with a conflict and unsure of what it is really about or how to respond?

The ability to analyze a conflict is an important step toward becoming conflict competent.

Communities that cultivate this knowledge and practice are able to identify more options for justice-promoting action when conflicts arise.

In this second issue of our series, we focus on tools for analyzing a conflict.

These tools or models are expressions of evolving ideas. It's why we've called this series *A Genealogy of Ideas*. Every tool reflects the assumptions and values of the person or groups who developed it and the conditions under which it was created.

If we understand the assumptions and values embedded in conflict analysis models we can better explain, use and modify them to fit our current circumstances.

This journal offers a taste of the tools for thinking that can be found in manuals on conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

For more examples and further instructions on how to use them, we recommend the books *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action* (Fisher et al. 2003) and *Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security* (Schirch 2013).

Unlike other manuals on conflict analysis, this issue follows one story of conflict and uses seven tools to uncover useful insights. Each section pays particular attention to the values and assumptions that undergird the models.

Conflict Analysis: Tools for Asking Better Questions is an invitation to more fully engage with conflict. With a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics, we can craft and carry out more appropriate and inclusive responses to disrupt unjust systems.

ETHICAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

“When academics study groups without that group’s permission and without an idea for empowering the community, serious power imbalances inevitably exist” (qtd. Minkler 40).

A crucial part of peacebuilding is addressing and reducing power imbalances. This includes the power disparities that can exist between the parties involved in the conflict and the academics who study it.

Conducting a conflict analysis is a form of intervention. By gathering information from those involved, and checking your analysis with them, you change the ways they experience the situation. It might be small, or it might entail a much larger shift, but it is a change that needs to be carefully considered.

One way around the problem of imposing external expertise on a situation is to explore conflict analysis skills *with* individuals.

Teaching conflict analysis tools for empowerment

People experiencing conflict have many problems to overcome. There is typically a lack of shared understanding about the nature and roots of the problem. Conflict analysis helps surmount misunderstandings.

About ten years ago Jayne (one of the authors) and a colleague conducted a one-day workshop in a U.S. border community that was experiencing a variety of conflicts around immigration, environmental protection and water allocation. The community leaders identified conflicts they cared about and formed groups to practice analyzing them.

The groups were comprised of people who disagreed. For that one day, they all decided to put their disagreements aside in order to focus on better understanding the multiple facets and views. Using several of the tools in this journal, the group went through a day of guided analysis.

A few years later, someone reported that the one-day workshop had influenced community practices around conflict. When a conflict related to the

library emerged, a community leader pulled out one of the diagrams and suggested that everyone work to understand what was going on before starting to fight about it.

Those conflict analysis tools didn’t solve the problems of this small town, but they were an avenue for engaging with conflict in healthy, collaborative, and productive ways.

Community-led analysis

Once equipped with these tools, people will share them. “People are influenced much more by members of their immediate family, their friends, or their neighbors - those they have long experience with and have developed trust in - than by strangers or distant institutions” (Schutt 65).

The results of community-created analysis are powerful because they incorporate multiple perspectives. The practice also normalizes listening with empathy and working to creatively address problems.



A one-day introduction to conflict analysis tools in a community in Arizona helped people commit to approaching conflict in an open and reflective way. In peacebuilding, one ethical commitment is to do conflict analysis *with*, not *on* the parties.

TELLING STORIES ABOUT CONFLICT

Humans appear to be wired to tell stories. Nothing gets our storytelling attention better than a conflict. Think about the last five substantive conversations you had with friends or family — how many included someone talking about a situation where there was disagreement around ideas, issues, plans, or goals?

When we tell a story, we choose what to include and what to exclude. We then organize the information in a manner that makes narrative sense.

Every culture produces story templates or plots for telling our own stories. Christopher Booker (2004) claims that there are actually seven basic plots that are used across cultures: Overcoming the Monster; Rags to Riches; The Quest; Voyage and Return; Comedy; Tragedy; and Rebirth.

One plot or master narrative (see the box on the next page) that often emerges in conflicts is a version of “Overcoming the Monster” — a basic good versus evil story.

Do you ever hear this version of a conflict? “Well, the other day I was talking with (fill in the blank) and I was just awful. I behaved really badly and they responded by telling me off and yelling at me. And, of course, they were perfectly justified in doing that!”

No? Humans tend to see themselves as the innocent, aggrieved party in a conflict.

The frame narrative

Another challenge for peacebuilders is the problem of the “frame narrative.” Sara Cobb and Janet Rifkin (1991) share a compelling example of the way a story can impact a mediation. In their case, a mediator (who aspired to be neutral) unconsciously followed the storyline created by the first party

invited to speak. This constructed a framework or frame narrative for explaining the conflict. As a result, much of what the second party said sounded like nonsense.

Without intending to do so, the mediator asked the second party to respond to the first story, rather than tell his own story. The second party was never fully heard and much of what he cared about was ignored. This happens easily because a good story invites us to adopt the worldview of the narrator.

If we want to help parties in a conflict, we need to avoid the frame narrative trap by creating opportunities for each party to tell her story in her own way. With all sides of the story out in the open, we can then compare the narratives to examine how the parties are working from similar or different understandings about the world.

Conflict analysis as a tool for managing narrative bias

No story encompasses the full picture. Anecdotes should therefore be seen as a *starting point* for analytical inquiry and not as a basis for immediate action.

Conflict analysis tools help us step back and interrogate the stories being told, discover information that has been left out and practice seeing the conflict from multiple perspectives.

The best punctuation mark for the analyst is the question mark.

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

The concept of a master narrative, also referred to as a metanarrative, refers to the story behind or underneath the story. You can imagine a railroad track on which the story, or train, will run. It is a way of framing anecdotes with an underlying assumption of how the world works.

An example of a master narrative in the United States is the “self-made man” - someone who “pulls him or herself up by their bootstraps” and succeeds without the help of others. While this particular master narrative might feel empowering for some: “if I try hard enough I can succeed,” it shames people who deal with legitimate oppression. When you don’t have access to a quality education because of your ZIP code, or job discrimination is thwarting your efforts to find work, the “self-made man” rhetoric could be really frustrating if not harmful.

Master narratives have also been described as the colonially-derived story of events, which emphasizes European perspectives. The counter narrative, therefore, is a part of the decolonization process.

Check out this [document from Public Works](#), which goes into detail about the master narrative and its relevance for understanding our societies.



TELLING YOUR STORY

Many individuals enter peacebuilding work in response to their life experiences with conflict, injustice and violence. The story we have chosen to tell in this issue comes from author Jayne Docherty's personal experience working at a racially integrated all girls' Catholic school in the 1980s.

Because this conflict occurred over thirty years ago, we don't have access to the other parties' perspectives. This analysis therefore represents one person's understanding of the situation.

This means that our analysis is inherently incomplete. In an attempt to remedy this problem, we will interrogate Jayne's story and point out places where other parties in the conflict would have seen the situation differently.

Many of the manuals on conflict analysis use a new case study everytime a new tool gets introduced. We decided to weave Jayne's story throughout this e-journal in order to demonstrate how multiple analysis tools can be used for the same situation.

The context of this story

To best understand the story, it is important to remember some realities about the 1980s in the United States:

The Cold War was an established feature of life. Ronald Reagan was the President. The policies that in retrospect promoted today's problems of income inequality and mass incarceration were just being adopted. The scene from the movie *Wall Street* (1987) really captures the essence of the time when the main character (based on a composite of Wall Street investors) says, "Greed is good!"

#BlackLivesMatter and the Bernie Sanders campaign based on challenging income inequality and the influence of Wall Street in politics were not even imaginable to most residents of the United States in the 1980s. Racial disparities in incarceration rates existed but had not reached the current realities that have led Michelle Alexander (2010) to describe the prison systems as the New Jim Crow.

Twenty years after the Civil Rights Movement a rising African American middle class was eager to participate in the economic growth of the 1980s. The parents of the African American students attending the all girls' school in the story clearly stated that they wanted their daughters to continue their family path of upward mobility by attending reputable colleges and universities. Investing in a private high school education was a means to achieve these goals.



ANALYSIS TOOLS: READING THE NEXT SECTION

Putting the pieces together

We have included seven analysis tools in this issue: The Stakeholder Map, The Dugan Nested Model, The Simple Stages of Conflict, The Curle Model, The Lederach Pyramid, The Onion, and The Reflecting on Peacebuilding Practice Matrix. Each segment includes a section on the tool's genealogy - where it came from and who helped popularize it.

★ The pink star marks the values and assumptions sections. Consider those sections as an open conversation. These are the values and assumptions that the authors have identified. See if you agree with our analysis and if those particular values resonate with you.

Several of the heuristic devices have been filled in with information from Jayne's story. The segments in tan entitled "Analysing our case with ..." contain explanations of the analysis. We invite you to see how we have used the tools and then to try using them while considering a story that is relevant to you. Please feel free to challenge our analysis of Jayne's story, too. The tools are intended to inspire debate and dialogue.

ONE STORY: THE STRUGGLE TO SAVE A SCHOOL

From Jayne: “In the mid-1980s, a Catholic all-girls’ school outside of Washington D.C. hired me to develop a peace and social justice curriculum that included the theology and social studies programs.

The school was racially integrated in ways that many other private schools in the area were not. The student population was almost 50-50 White and African American with a growing enrollment of Asian American and Latina students.

Every student was required to take a semester-long course that involved deep study of a non-Western region of the world. The students were also required to do community service and reflections on social justice. I loved that school. I loved my work. I loved the students. I loved the nuns who ran the school.

But we were experiencing problems with enrollment. Like most girls’ schools, we had almost no endowment. Fewer nuns were available to teach and it was a challenge to hire lay faculty members at a living wage with health benefits.

We hadn’t figured out how to get the word out about what made our school special. More expensive and elite schools were scooping up students who might have picked us. Having identified this issue, I chose to become the Director of Recruitment and Admissions. We worked on explaining what was so unique about our school. We shared the research on why girls’ schools are beneficial for young women.

Our approach worked. In one year, we doubled our number of applicants and drew more students into our honors program. But we were not the only school with enrollment concerns. A boys’ school about two miles down the road — more conservative, traditional and less integrated than our school — petitioned the Office of Schools of the Archdiocese (the Church’s governing body in that geographic area) to be allowed to enroll girls.

Several boys’ high schools in and around the city also started exploring the possibility of enrolling girls to solve their low enrollment. We, along with other girls’ schools, protested. And that set off a long series of meetings convened by the Archdiocesan Schools Office.

In these meetings, we talked about how we could all thrive, and the Church leaders swore they were equally committed to each school. We debated the merits of single-sex education. The girls’ school leaders interrogated the boys’ school leaders about how they would prepare for working with young women. A veneer of civility papered over really hard feelings and resentments.

We argued that given our location and the way we drew African American students mostly from inside the city and White students mostly from the suburbs, that allowing our neighboring school (which drew most of its students from the suburbs) would create a situation of white flight and lead to the de facto resegregation of the Catholic schools in the area.

We reasoned that this would reverse the history of progress in an Archdiocese that had integrated its schools in the 1940s, before the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, a Supreme Court case declaring that separate schools for Black and White students were unconstitutional.

The leaders in the Archdiocese said all the right things, made all the right noises about concern for justice, and swore they wanted everyone to flourish. And, then, just as the student recruitment period opened, they approved the boys’ school’s request to go coed.

For the next four months, I worked as hard as I could to continue recruiting students. In the city, folks were excited about our school. In the suburbs, they were polite. The more honest parents told me, “Look, we love your school. We know that single sex

education is really good for young women. We know your curriculum is amazing. We know that your students get into college and do well there. And, the truth is, we like an integrated environment, but not one where our daughter will be in the minority.”

In January, when the package of applications arrived from the Archdiocese, we had three White applicants and approximately half the number of total applications we had garnered the year before.

I was exhausted, angry and frustrated. Without an endowment for non-tuition income, the Board saw no way to stay open. They voted to close the school at the end of the year. Not one of our upperclass students had applied to join the boys’ school. They all needed assistance finding school placements and we all had to grieve and manage our anger and sorrow.

Since we no longer needed a Director of Recruitment and Admissions, I became the person responsible for placing our students, including all those I had personally recruited the year before, into other schools. By the end of the school year, I was a mess of anger and resentment that bordered on toxic fury. A year later, when I heard the news that three more girls’ high schools were closing, all of the same rage came flooding back.

Then, I heard about the graduate program in conflict analysis and resolution at George Mason University. I decided to enroll. I wanted to understand what had happened and how to make sure no one could ever again deceive me with nice talk of collaboration and cooperation while at the same time making decisions behind closed doors that would promote injustice and harm. This was not the only story of conflict and injustice I brought into my studies, but it was the most recent and the most painful.”



The gym entrance at our all girls' school.

THE STAKEHOLDER MAP

A stakeholder is someone involved in a situation who cares about the outcome and/or has influence over it. Identifying stakeholders in a conflict requires judgement and is a subject of debate. Some conflict professionals only include key parties, those who are currently and directly involved in the conflict. If we make the map too small, however we may not realize that an agreement to “resolve” the conflict actually just transfers it to other people or groups. In peacebuilding it is important to include parties that appear to be on the periphery since they might be harmed by proposed resolutions to the conflict.

Identify the issue(s)

To make a stakeholder map, you have to first figure out the issue at hand. If you want to share the map and create space for dialogue, the issue needs to be articulated in a way that invites all of the parties into the conversation.

Identify the stakeholders (parties in the conflict)

The issue usually reveals the most immediate parties. If you want to make a more complete map, start by listing other parties that care about the issue and who might eventually enter into the conflict.

Placement and size

How much power does each party have in this situation? You can draw larger or smaller circles for each stakeholder to show different amounts of power or to allude to the size of their group. You can also put them in the center of the map or off to the side depending on their level of direct involvement in the conflict.

Describe the relationships

Take notes about the relationships among the parties. Which ones are friendly to one another? Which ones are in conflict with one another? Did some have a good relationship that is now broken?

Create your key

In theory, you can use any set of symbols you want

as long as you put the key on the map. In practice, there are some protocols for mapping that are widely shared among peacebuilders. On our map, we have used the key from *Working with Conflict : Skills and Strategies for Action* (Fisher et al. p. 23).

Include yourself

When you are mapping a conflict as an outsider, it is important to include yourself on the map. Who are you in relation to these parties and their issues? What power do you have? How are you perceived by the parties?

Regardless of your stated role, people in the conflict may perceive you a certain way based on your gender, race, class, accent, origins, education level or other identity features. Your behavior will also be scrutinized.

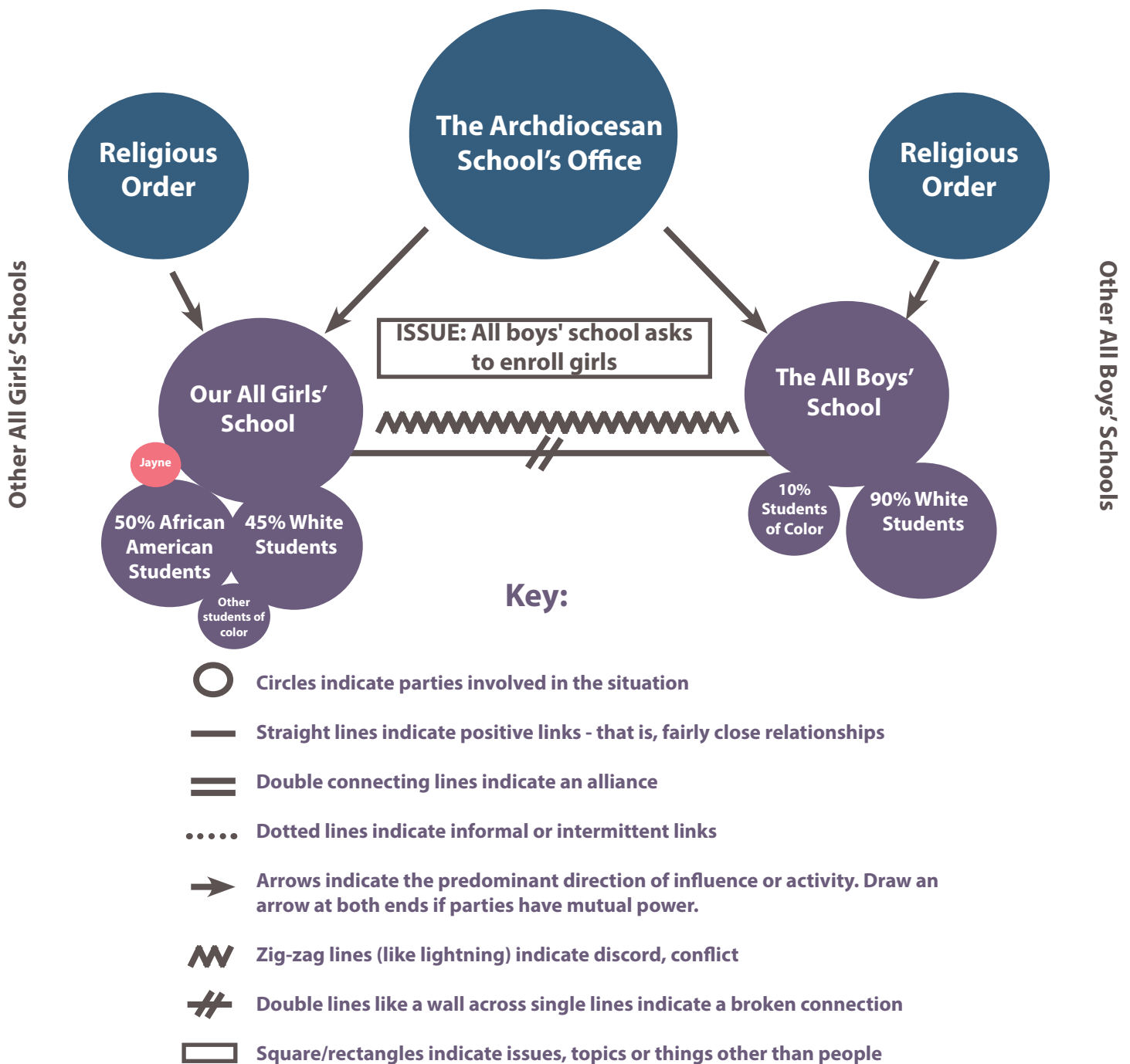
Every time you do a conflict map, include yourself or your group because in doing this analysis, you have become a part of the conflict system.

No map can include everything

If the parties are unable or unwilling to map the conflict together, it is important for the conflict analyst to conduct interviews and create a map that brings together the various understandings. If a party cannot see themselves or their issues on the map, they won't participate in any proposed process based on the findings.

“[I]t is best not to worry how objective the map is. Instead, each person simply draws what are their subjective perceptions of the conflict. Beginning to think in these terms is already a step towards understanding and empathy” (Doucet, p. 14).

Maps are static. They represent a snapshot of a situation at one moment in an unfolding and dynamic conflict. It can be helpful to complete a series of maps to show how relationships and issues change over time.



Analyzing our case with the stakeholder map

The map on the previous page depicts the situation at the moment when the all boys' school announced their desire to admit female students. You can see from the map that this broke an existing positive relationship between the two schools.

Stakeholder maps usually start with a small group of parties around a hot topic or problem. As conflicts play out, they tend to expand. This conflict was no exception. More parties became involved. More issues were identified.

In our case, each of the schools had parents, teachers and a board of trustees. Each school was run by a different religious order. Religious orders in the Catholic church are organizations made up of religious women (sisters or nuns) or religious men (priests or brothers). Every order has a special mission or calling, for example, running schools or hospitals.

Each school answered to its own order but each school also needed permission from the Archbishop (the highest ranking Church authority responsible for Church governance in the metropolitan area) to alter enrollment.

Within the Archdiocese (the geographic area overseen by the Archbishop), the staff administered a unified entrance examination, hosted high school recruiting fairs, and received applications that were then distributed to each student's first choice high school for consideration.

Conflicts can expose internal differences within groups that appear to be a single entity. The fact that the all boys' school was predominantly White forced the all girls' school administrators to grapple with their mixed-race enrollment in new ways. Their current students were not just young women, they were young women whose decisions around whether to attend this school or the all boys' school (if it admitted girls) would be influenced by their racial identities in the context of a society shaped by the legacy of slavery and segregation as well as

continued racial discrimination.

The parents were obviously not a homogenous group. Neither were the teachers or the board members. They all saw the conflict differently.

Use your map to ask questions

A good map should generate a lot of questions. Are there other girls' schools? How will they be impacted by this development? How many boys' schools want to enroll girls? How much power does the Archdiocesan Schools Office have over the schools? By the time you finish really thinking about a conflict map, it should be covered with questions for future research.

Mapping tips

Drawing and erasing can be frustrating. Try using post-it notes or index cards and different colored ink for each party. Move the pieces around. When you want to finalize it, draw it out on a large paper. If you need a digital copy, a blank Powerpoint slide and the shapes tool work pretty well. Don't forget to include a key and to include yourself on the map.

Let go of perfection

You can never get the perfect, complete map. If you try, you will experience analysis paralysis and be incapable of moving forward. At some point you have to say that the map is good enough for now. You can always go back and modify it. It is important to regularly redraw the stakeholder map based on the changes in relationships that arise out of the choices that the parties are making in response to the conflict. Feel free to put lots of question marks on your map!

★ Assumptions and values

This tool contains a set of assumptions and values:

- **Understanding: It is important to see the big picture in a conflict.** Zooming out to everyone involved or impacted (even if they haven't yet been drawn in) will give you a better and more nuanced understanding of the issue. This tool assumes that it is better to have more information rather than less.
- **Participation and consideration are necessary:** A conflict map should include anyone who is involved or who could eventually be drawn into and impacted by the conflict. The value here is that people need to be considered. Each person has a right to be involved in decisions that will impact their lives. No one should be broadsided and used as a meaningless pawn in a conflict.
- **Relationships and power are important:** Relationships and the quality of those relationships are important considerations in a conflict. Power and relative social standing are factors in all relationships and they are factors that can influence the outcome of a conflict. They need to be mapped.
- **Do no harm should be a guiding principle:** Some businesses argue that it is acceptable to put "externalities" -- the cost and consequence of doing business -- out into the public realm to be dealt with by others. Think about a factory that dumps waste into a river in order to save the cost of dealing with it. A lot of regulations have been developed to prevent this in business. In peacebuilding there are no regulations; it is up to us to make sure we are not failing to consider others affected by a conflict by leaving them off the map.

THE DUGAN NESTED MODEL

Máire Dugan articulated this model in a 1996 article entitled [*A Nested Theory of Conflict*](#).

According to Dugan, theoreticians rarely write in the first person and therefore don't explain how they arrived at their conclusions. They also tend to use inaccessible language that further mystifies the process of theorizing.

To articulate her Nested Model, Dugan did the exact opposite. She explained her personal involvement in a conflict that influenced the creation of this analysis tool. Her story has a lot of parallels with the story we have chosen to use in this journal.

In the 1990s, Dugan was asked to mediate a conflict that involved two groups of boys at a suburban Virginia high school. A fight broke out after White students came to school wearing jackets with Confederate flags sewn to the backs, even though this symbol had been banned from campus. The fight was between the White students wearing the flag-adorned apparel and Black students who identified the symbol as racist.

Dugan realized that this was not just a fight on campus, and that mediating between the groups of boys would not address or transform the underlying conflict. She discovered that the school teams were called the Rebels, the school was located on Rebel Run, and the school mascot had been a Confederate soldier character until it was changed by order of the principal in 1985. The city where the school is located was the scene of battles in the Civil War.

The school had been all or mostly White until the 1970s, but in the 1980s and 1990s was becoming racially diverse. Some of the White students were from local families whose parents and grandparents had attended the school and played for the sports teams. They were angry when the Confederate flag, a symbol they identified with, was removed.

The students of color felt the school still maintained

exclusionary cultural practices and that they were essentially second-class members of the community.

The school administrators' approach was to focus on the fight between the two groups of students and put energy into repairing relationships. Dugan believed this approach would only cover over deeper conflicts that needed to be addressed. But how could she explain this to the administrators and others in a way that could be easily grasped? The answer came in the form of the Nested Model.

The image of nested circles

There is nothing unique about the drawing used by Dugan. The power and resonance of the diagram stems from the commonplace understanding that systems are layered or nested inside one another.

We grow up thinking of ourselves inside a set of nested systems. For example, we are part of our family which is part of our community (or tribe or clan) which is part of our ... and so on. The logic of nested systems plays out for all of us. Each society names the levels differently, but the nesting process is common to human communities.

Dugan uses the nested model to focus on the ways that conflicts manifest themselves at different levels. She is talking about three different levels of social organization that interconnect: the relationships between or among the parties, the communities or organizations where they encounter one another, and the large social systems that influence their relationships.

The levels

The lowest circle on her model is not actually a level. It is more of a flashpoint where the conflict becomes visible due to a specific encounter or incident.

The relational conflict refers to direct relationships that are impacted by the incident.

The subsystems are organizations or communities that we can “get our arms around” meaning we can see the rules and regulations that shape them. We can even influence those systems in many ways.

The larger systems are harder to grasp. They exist “out there” in the larger society, and include the many “isms” (racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc.) that are reinforced by cultural practices and laws. The larger systems enter into the subsystems through cultural practices and through rules and norms that govern behavior in the subsystem.

Because the subsystem and the system are connected, over time, changes in the subsystem will modify the largest systems. At least that is the theory Dugan was working with, and it remains an important theory in peacebuilding today. We can influence changes in society by altering our organizations and communities.

The proposed intervention

Dugan’s argument to the school officials was that if they tried to address a conflict that was being fueled and sustained from the system and subsystem levels by only focusing on immediate presenting issues and relationships, they would be disappointed. The conflict would come up again in another way until it was addressed at all the levels. Since the school had already experienced several prior conflicts around this issue, that argument made sense to some school leaders.

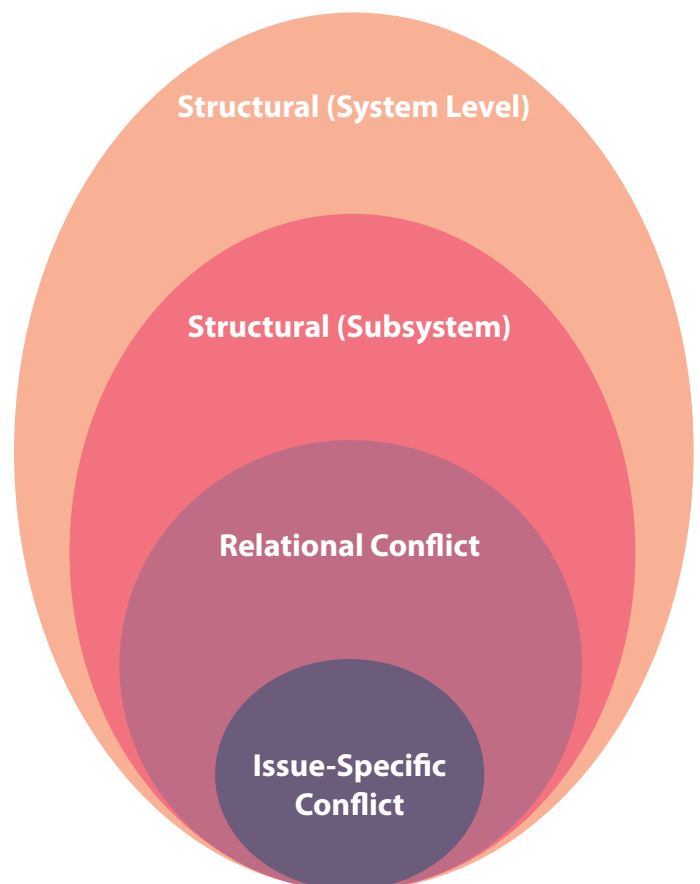
With this analysis, Dugan designed an intervention to address the systemic issues of racial disparities in this school. Her plan included:

- Teaching teachers about the different treatment that Black and White students receive to help them

realize the disparity and then hopefully enact equal treatment.

- Telling the history of Black and female achievement in the history books as a counter narrative to the European male-centered story.
- Engaging the entire student body and community on the heritage and presence of racism.
- Holding mediations for the boys who were in the fight.

What do you think about this intervention? What might you add or change? What are your theories about tackling hard problems such as racism and the conflicts that arise from systems that oppress some people while giving others advantages?



Analyzing our case with the Dugan Nested Model

The Issue:

As we mentioned with the stakeholder map, it is sometimes hard to get all the parties to agree on the nature of the problem. Both the all girls' and the all boys' schools were being harmed by the drop in enrollment, but they chose different responses to the crisis.

The all girls' school increased efforts for recruitment and started talking about the school in a more strategic way. They assumed that the all boys' school could have experienced a similar success if they had tried the same strategy.

The all boys' school ultimately chose to enlarge the overall pool of applicants by admitting girls. They were also trying to compete with coed public schools. They reasoned that eighth grade students who did not want to attend a single-sex high school were opting for public school, but they might choose a Catholic school if it were also coed.

With all that in mind, a mutually agreeable framing of the issue might be "enrollment for both schools is down."

The Relationships:

Before this time, relationships between the schools had been positive. Many students at the girls' school had brothers and boyfriends at the boys' school. But now the schools were competing for students and there was a high probability that the boys' school decision would harm the girls' school. The threat quickly triggered overt hostility from some of the adults at the girls' school and made conversations about possibilities for collaboration extremely difficult.

The Subsystem:

The subsystem refers to organizations that you interact with on a daily base. In this case, the subsystem would include the schools, the neighborhoods, and the Archdiocese.

When they were founded, both schools were White or almost all White. The girls' school, founded in the 1930s, drew from White communities in the suburbs and the City while the boys' school, founded in the late 1950s, drew primarily from the suburbs. As the population of the city shifted, so did the enrollment at the girls' school.

Starting in the 1960s, sociologists and public policy experts began studying issues around integration and a phenomenon known as white flight. There was no research on what would motivate families to choose a highly integrated high school, but there was a lot of research focused on figuring out whether public schools and neighborhoods reached a "tipping point" where a particular level of in-migration by non-White families would result in a rapid out-migration of White families.

At the neighborhood level, would White families move to a different neighborhood if "too many" non-White families moved in? At the school level, would White families enroll their children at segregated private schools if "too many" non-White students enrolled in their neighborhood school? The research indicated that a tipping point was more likely to occur when the non-White population approached 20-30%.

With a 50-50 enrollment, the research suggested that our all girls' school was extremely vulnerable to white flight if circumstances changed. With the boys' school essentially targeting the White half of the girls' school as potential students, the girls' school thought that systemic issues like racial integration and segregation should be discussed in the meetings.

The leadership at the boys' school did not think this was relevant. They also indicated that the desire to discuss questions of racism and segregation were a veiled accusation they they were racially biased. The Archdiocese took the side of the boys' school and kept that issue off the table.

The System:

Race was not the only social factor at play in this case. The schools were differently impacted by gender inequalities in US society. Generally speaking

girls' high schools had smaller endowments than boys' high schools because women who did not work outside the home had little or no disposable income of their own.

Their contributions to their alma mater depended on their ability to move family wealth towards that purpose. Their husbands, however, earned the family money and often assumed the right to donate to their own alma mater without needing to negotiate with their wives.

An endowment generates interest that can be used to grow the school or support programs when there is a shortfall in tuition. Consequently, during hard times when enrollment was down, boys' schools were often more resilient than girls' schools.

For example, the boys' school could afford to undertake construction to modify facilities such as bathrooms for girls and they could afford to hire additional personnel for activities such as coaching girls' sports teams.

Both schools were also part of the Catholic Church, which is a male-dominated organization. Women cannot be priests, bishops, cardinals or the pope. Men control many of the systems of power and decision-making in the Church. Men in church leadership are often graduates of boys' high schools.

Girls' schools create spaces where all of the student leadership roles are occupied by girls. This girls' school was defying the social norms around both gender and race. However admirable, these stances did not work to their benefit.

While the Archdiocese integrated its schools more than a decade before the Supreme Court decision that mandated the integration of public schools, the Church itself remained a predominantly White organization.

Most of the African American students at the all girls' school were not Catholic, although many had attended Catholic elementary schools. The Catholic school system had been providing a low-cost, high quality private education to working- and middle-class African American families for forty years. But

the families enrolling their children in the schools did not typically have access to the halls of power in the Archdiocese.

The African American parents also had concerns about enrolling their children in schools that respected their racial identity. This influenced which Catholic high schools they selected for their children. One question we could ask is why the all boys' school, which was located approximately two miles from the all girls' school did not have a similar mix of male students.

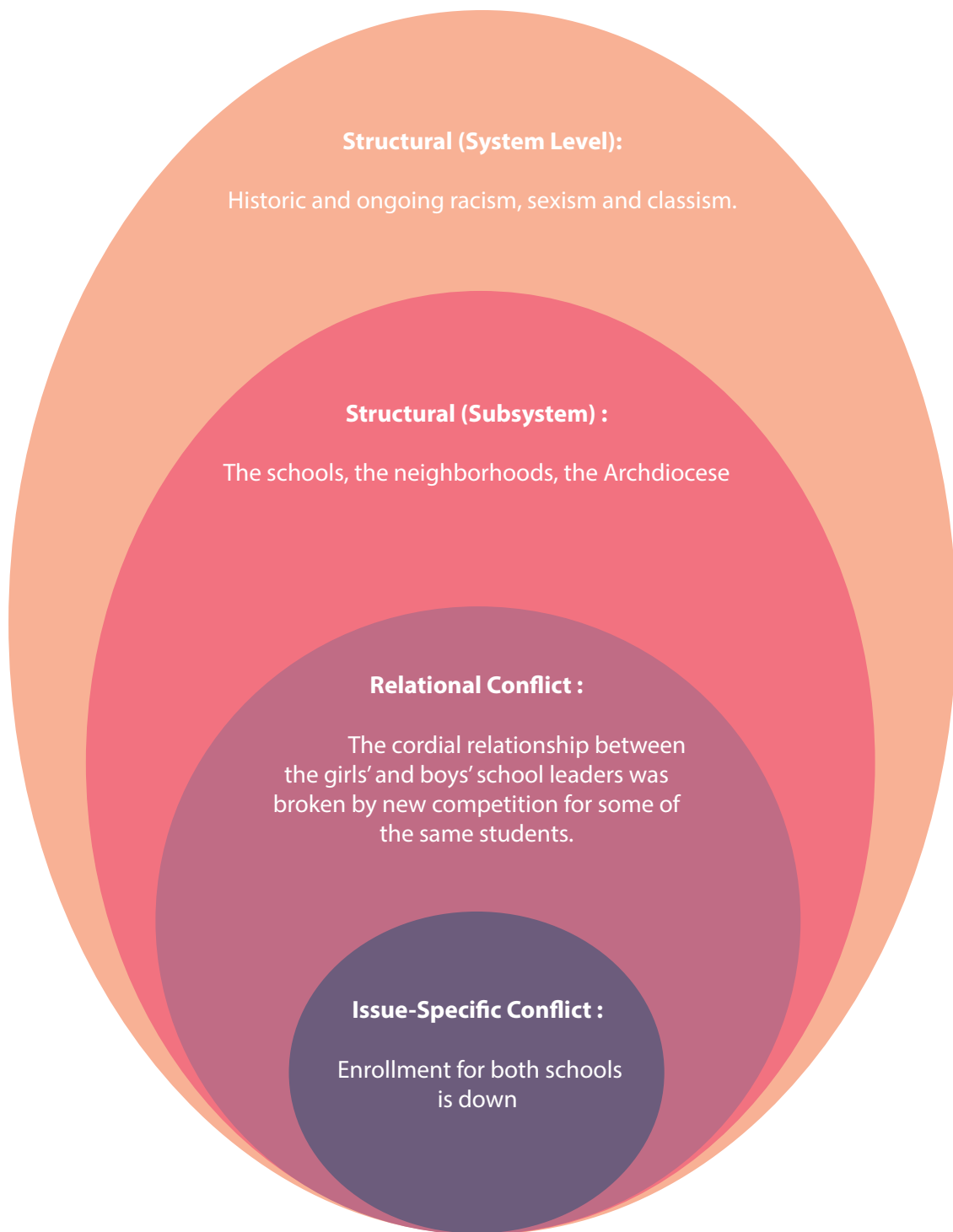
Why were families from the city sending their daughters to our all girls' school but selecting other schools for their sons?

The answer is complicated. There were several integrated boys' schools in the city that provided a high quality education to the brothers of the girls that were opting for the girls' school. So, there was more market competition for the boys' school when it came to recruiting students from the city. And, there were transportation issues. (On page 24-25, we use the Stakeholder Map to redraw our case. This time, we use the question of transportation to analyze what was happening.)

In our case study about the Catholic schools, the different stakeholders were having conversations framed around surviving the downturn in enrollment.

There was unfortunately no discussion of how Catholic schools had been leading the integration movement before the Brown v. Board of Education decision or the less powerful position all girls' schools held in the Archdiocese. There was no discussion of class differences. What looked like a problem for select schools was nested in a whole system shaped by inequities.

Experiences of injustice can make parties in a conflict blind to other factors. Concerns with righting wrongs can block empathy with other parties who seem to have benefited from the inequities.



Analyzing our case with the Dugan Nested Model continued ...

The Dugan Model led Jayne to ask some hard questions:

Did we (the girls' school leaders) harbor resentments about male dominance in the church that made it difficult for us to empathize with the realities facing the boys' school?

Did we fail to leverage past positive relationships and thereby polarize a situation that did not have to be so rancorous?

Did we not listen carefully to the market analysis of the boys' school?

Were we unreasonable in our assumption that they could have recruited more African American students if they wanted to do that?

Worse still, did we also harbor attitudes of superiority when positioning ourselves against mostly African American girls' schools in the city? Were we already harming those schools by recruiting students from their neighborhoods?

And, were we so caught up in our sense of the wrongs being done TO us that we did not consider wrongs being done BY us? The next section holds some evidence that we were not just the innocent victims of decisions made by others.

★ Assumptions and values:

Had Dugan decided to do a mediation between the Black and White students, it would have pushed the conflict back into a latent stage. The conflict wouldn't have disappeared but the administrators might have falsely assumed that it had been "resolved." This model communicates that there is value in thinking about external factors and historical harms to figure out what is really going on at multiple levels.

What looks like a dispute can be and often is a manifestation of larger social conflicts. This model is rooted in a view of the world that says that through our actions we create, recreate and challenge historical relationships of justice and injustice. Every conflict therefore becomes an opportunity to address these bigger issues. Perhaps the largest value present in this model is the implicit assumption that we have a responsibility to understand and directly address injustice in multiple spheres.

REVISITING THE STAKEHOLDER MAP

The questions sparked by applying the Dugan Model to our sample case focused our attention on issues that were not well explored during the conflict: Why was the boys' school less integrated than the girls' school? Did the girls' school leaders focus on justice issues and forget to look at other factors?

Each parent or guardian was making complex consumer choices. As Jayne worked on enrollment, she asked parents how they were making their decision. Location, transportation and the school's reputation for helping students excel were high on their list of considerations.

The majority of White students who went to the all girls' school and the all boys' school were dropped off by their parents who drove from the suburbs into the City for work. Many of the African American students took the Metro from inside the City to what was, at that time, the last stop.

There were high quality Catholic boys' schools in the City and on the Metro lines. As a result, the young men living in the city had good options that were close by. There were a couple of girls' schools in the city that were almost 100% African American. Whether justified or not, there was a perception among many parents in the city that those schools were not as good as the girls' schools in the suburbs.

Did we, perhaps, share that attitude as we were recruiting students? That is a hard question to ponder, but important to consider in our analysis.

In this graphic, we have mapped the two schools based on their actual location with the Metro as the backdrop. To draw a more complete map, we would locate the other girls' schools on the map and begin asking questions about racial makeup of student populations, class makeup (which we haven't even talked about here!), reputation of the school, how much money the school had for scholarships and its proximity to various transportation systems.

If you interrogate the Stakeholder Map plus the geographic location and analyze the issues of the parties as they were influenced by issues of race, class, and gender privilege you begin to see how the "isms" of society were manifesting in Jayne's conflict story.

Patterns take a long time to emerge

Patterns and trends are not always apparent in the moment. According to the American Sociological Association, "While segregation from neighborhood to neighborhood is decreasing (micro-segregation) within metropolitan areas, segregation from suburban communities (e.g., towns, villages, and cities) to other suburban communities within the same metropolitan areas and from major metropolitan cities to their suburban communities is increasing (macro-segregation). In other words, instead of people of different races living in distinct neighborhoods in the same major metropolitan cities and suburban communities, these major cities and suburban communities are becoming increasingly racially homogenous."

White suburban communities across the United States have and continue to use taxes and zoning laws to include or exclude racial and ethnic minorities. This map does not explain that complexity. Nor does it illuminate Washington D.C.'s complicated history of gentrification. But by bringing physical location and public transportation into the mix, it starts to hint at those realities and gets people asking pertinent questions about the issue, the relationships, the subsystems and the larger systems.

Key:

- Circles indicate parties involved in the situation
- ⚡ Zig-zag lines (like lightning) indicate discord, conflict
- ≡ Double lines like a wall across single lines indicate a broken connection



SIMPLE STAGES OF CONFLICT

The Stakeholder Map and the Dugan Model are both static depictions of conflict. Like a photograph, they freeze a dynamic experience in order to examine its features. But conflict is more akin to a film than a single photograph. Conflict changes and evolves. So how do we capture that aspect of conflict in an analytical tool?

The Simple Stages of Conflict model was developed as a response to discussions about the most effective time to intervene in a conflict in order to resolve or transform it. The model builds on an assumption that human societies and systems are like living entities; they have a life cycle. Conflicts are born, they intensify, and then they may fade away, die out, or be altered by human interventions.

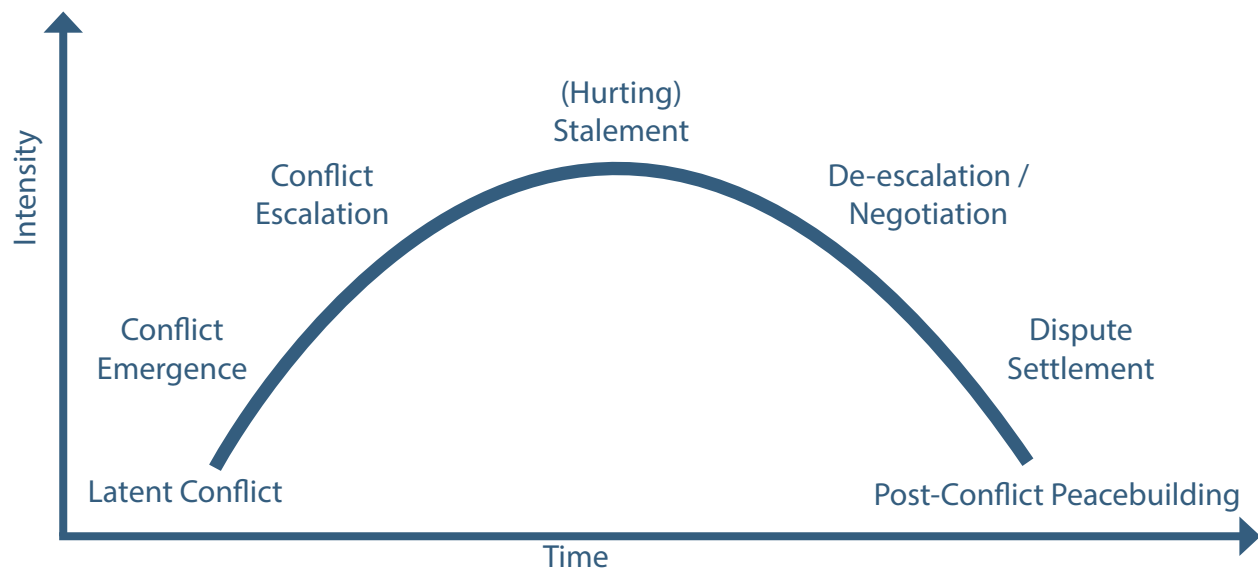
Various versions of this model feature different labels but the ideas are similar. Doucet (p. 26) uses "formation, escalation, endurance, improvement, and transformation" to describe the states or stages of the experience. The version shown here is remade from a Beyond Intractability article by Eric Brahm.

Hurting Stalemate and Conflict Ripeness

Simple Stages of Conflict models often reference a condition called a hurting stalemate, or a mutually hurting stalemate. This condition is found on the highest point the model's arc, when conflict and/or violence peaks.

According to the United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) [glossary](#), a mutually hurting stalemate is "a situation in which neither party thinks it can win a given conflict without incurring excessive loss, and in which both are suffering from a continuation of fighting."

William Zartman (2008) is one of the strongest advocates for connecting the condition of a mutually hurting stalemate with the concept of ripeness - a time when interventions will be well received. The USIP editors follow Zartman's lead when they say that when a conflict reaches a mutually hurting stalemate, "the conflict is judged to have entered a period of ripeness, a propitious moment for third party mediation."



The merits of focusing on mutually hurting stalemates and the condition of ripeness for action have been vigorously debated. Objections to focusing on a hurting stalemate as a necessary condition for action include:

- How do you know this is a stalemate and not just a pause in the conflict?
- How can you figure out whether both parties are hurting equally (or adequately) to say this is a stalemate?
- Just as important, are there ethical problems with requiring peacebuilders to withhold intervention until “enough” people have been hurt and “enough” damage has been done for the parties to acknowledge a stalemate? This is like saying we can’t intervene in an epidemic until enough people have died.

For these reasons and others that we will explain in the next section, we prefer the Curle Model of conflict stages, particularly the version of the Curle model articulated by John Paul Lederach (1997). This model captures the idea that you *can* do something to promote peace at every stage of conflict if you match your actions to the conditions and if you understand the ways that conflicts change over time

THE CURLE MODEL

Adam Curle, a Quaker from the United Kingdom, profoundly influenced several generations of peacebuilders. His work and writing spanned from the Cold War era through the Balkan conflicts.

As Tom Woodhouse (2010) notes, Curle's theories about peace and peacemaking were based on a synthesis of ideas derived from psychology, anthropology, and development theory. He was also influenced by the work of other innovators in the field of peace studies such as Johann Galtung and Kenneth Boulding (Woodhouse 1). Equally important for his thinking was Curle's professional experience as an international development adviser in former British colonies such as Pakistan and Nigeria.

Like many former colonies, Pakistan and Nigeria experienced violent internal conflicts after gaining independence. Curle directed his attention to what he called "peacemaking." According to Curle, "peacemaking" is a necessary part of development work. His 1971 book, *Making Peace*, chronicles his changing understandings as he synthesized lessons from his experience and formed them into guiding principles and models to assist others entering the field.

Curle is widely recognized for the way he approached his work. In Curle's view, the foreign advisor who comes into a conflict zone with answers is a "veiled insult." This approach, Curle writes, "... presupposes that the persons for whom the adviser's services are intended are, at best, inadequately trained to do their own jobs and, at worst, stupid and incompetent" (*Making Peace* 48).

To overcome this problem, Curle tested a new approach wherein he elicited help and knowledge from the people most intimately involved with the conflicts. You can read more about Curle and his legacy in [*A Genealogy of Ideas, What is Old is New*](#). Curle's approach has caught on: Goal 16 of The

2015 UN Sustainability Goals is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The Stages on the Curle Model

At first glance, the Curle Model appears to mirror the Simple Stages Model. We see some of the same phases laid out in a different way.

Latent: The conflict is hidden or not widely discussed/known.

Overt: The conflict comes out into the open and awareness of the problems increases.

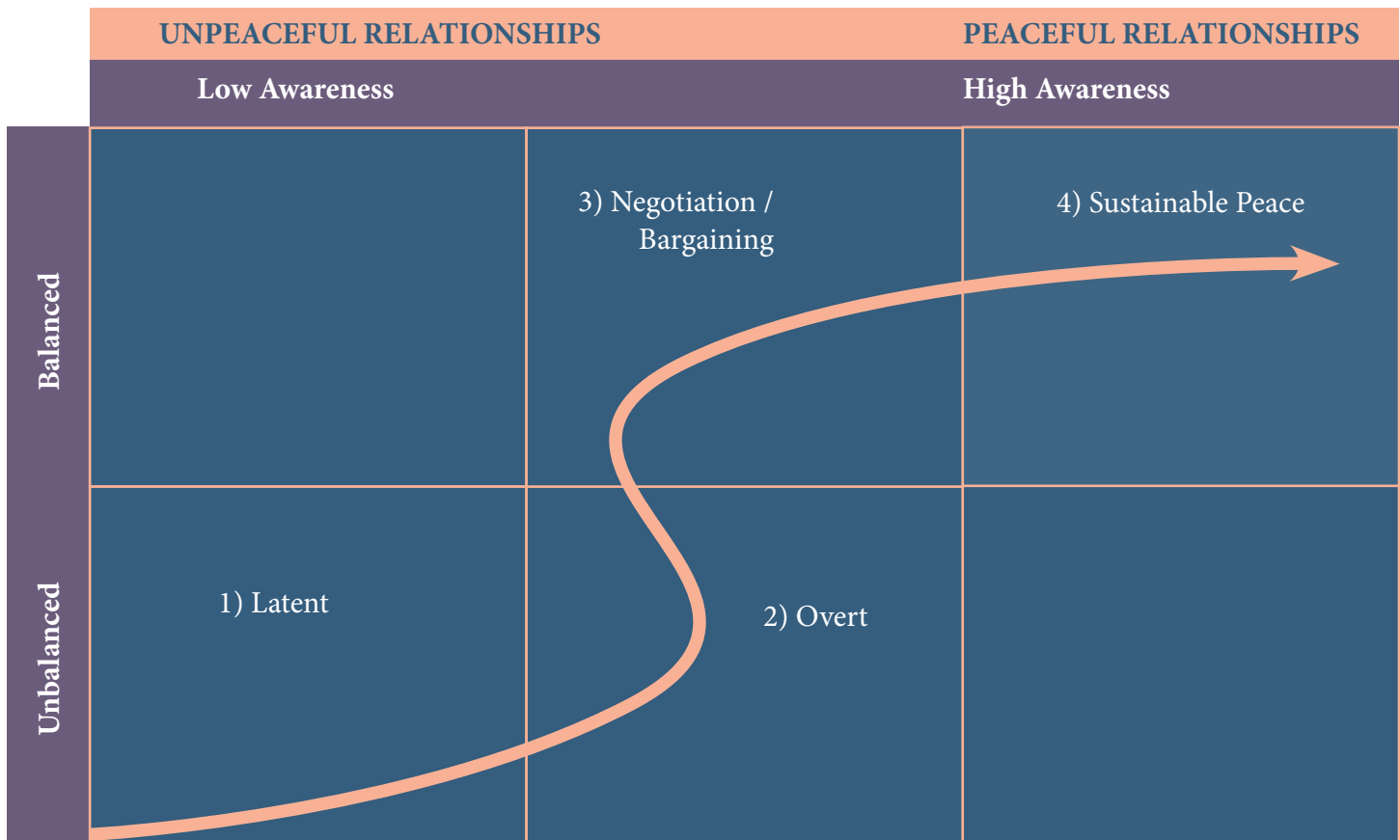
Negotiation: Successful negotiations and mediation lead to a restructuring of the relationship. The result of a successful negotiation is what Curle refers to as increased justice or more peaceful relations.

It is after negotiation that we see a difference between the two stage models; Curle identifies a new phase that he calls sustainable peace.

The Simple Stages Model shows conflict as episodic and isolated from its context. Curle recognizes that conflicts are embedded in a larger social context and they leave a lasting mark on the fabric of society.

Furthermore, conflicts are opportunities for transforming the social, political, and economic realities out of which they arose in the first place.

Sustainable Peace: "A peaceful relationship is one in which, irrespective of balance, the potential of both parties is more easily realized because of the quality of that relationship" (*Making Peace* 95). Sustainable peace is not a state of no conflict, but the conflicts that arise can be handled in ways that do not disintegrate into violence.



The original Curle Model, published by Adam Curle in his 1971 book *Making Peace*. Colors changed.

The Curle Model is often drawn with a straight arrow that starts in the bottom left-hand corner and moves to the top right-hand corner. This can be misleading as it implies that conflict progresses neatly through the stages identified by Curle. This is clearly not what Curle wanted to communicate. We have drawn the line to look more fluid in an attempt to demonstrate that peacebuilding is not a linear process.

More Than a Stage Model

Curle did not focus solely on the stages of conflict. He wanted to identify variables that influenced the way a conflict developed over time. In this respect, his model is much more holistic and dynamic than the Simple Stage Model. It is also a more helpful model for those trying to identify actions for addressing a conflict, because the variables he adds are things we can change through our actions.

On the horizontal axis of his diagram, Curle identified states of awareness. "Awareness refers to the degree to which relevant actors are aware of the

conflict, its sources, and viable solutions" (Dugan 2003). In a latent or hidden conflict, awareness is lower. As awareness increases, the conflict becomes overt.

The complexity of the Curle model comes when we add the variable on the vertical axis, which Curle labeled simply "unbalanced" and "balanced". He never specified clearly what he meant by balanced and unbalanced.

Because Curle emphasized relationships in his own work and writing, some have speculated that he was referring to some state of the relationship as balanced or unbalanced. His vagueness certainly opened space for a lot of creative conversation among his protégés.

John Paul Lederach (1995, p. 12) argued that Curle was referring to *power* as balanced or unbalanced and many others have followed his lead. Many versions of the Curle Model label the vertical axis *unbalanced power* and *balanced power*.

Taking action at each stage of the conflict

As Curle wrote, “What happens, schematically, when a dispute arises, is as follows: the recognition of some (possibly minor) injustice, a byproduct of the main conflict of interest, leads to confrontation that is, a demand by the union and – possibly – a strike. This confrontation does not, however, aim at challenging the power of the management, merely at achieving a particular objective. Thus when the union begins to bargain without having gained equality it sacrifices its opportunity of resolving the essential conflict ... Bargaining carried out before confrontation has led to the establishment of a balanced relationship is not conducive to peace” (Making Peace 138).

Later authors such as Maire Dugan (2003) and John Paul Lederach (1997, p. 97) have attached specific activities to the Curle Model. Dugan identified four broadly defined activities – education, confrontation, bargaining, and conciliation – as integral to the Curle Model. She explained that each

activity corresponds with a particular stage of the conflict. Education helps move conflict from latent to overt. Confrontation helps balance power for negotiations or bargaining. And, conciliation is essential for sustaining peace.

The Curle Model also broadens the conversation about conflict ripeness. Rather than thinking a conflict is ripe for action only when the parties reach a hurting stalemate, we can ask, “What action is this conflict ripe for right now?” Or, “What actions can we take at this stage of the conflict to ‘ripen it up’ for actions that will ultimately support sustainable peace?”

Video on the Curle Model

Still unsure about the Curle Model? We've made a video to explain it in a different way. Click [here](#) to see it.

UNPEACEFUL RELATIONSHIPS		PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIPS	
Low Awareness		High Awareness	
Unbalanced	1) Various forms of education to increase awareness of the conflict, its sources, and appropriate means of addressing it.	2) Various techniques of confrontation aimed at reducing the imbalance and enabling the aggrieved party to negotiate or mediate on an equal footing.	3) Techniques of conciliation and bargaining to agree upon a resolution of the conflict and create the possibility of development.
			4) Development and restructuring of the formerly unpeaceful relationship.

Analyzing our case with the Curle Model:

The conflicts over race, class, and gender privilege in the church were latent. The all boys' school going coed ripped the veil off and made the conflicts overt, at least in the eyes of the leaders of the girls' school. Awareness of a conflict does not progress at the same pace for all the parties. The lower power parties often see a latent conflict much more clearly than the more powerful parties.

When we entered the bargaining phase, the relationships were not balanced. The leaders of the girls' school had decided to not mobilize the students or parents out of fear that currently enrolled students would transfer. So there was high awareness of the conflict among school administrators but low awareness among students and parents.

We ended up with a top-down decision that ultimately resulted in the closing of four girls' schools, and in so doing reconfigured the Catholic schools and facilitated further racial segregation.

Various techniques of confrontation could have helped the parties discuss the underlying issues of racism and sexism in order to balance the relationships and raise awareness about how systemic issues were being manifested in the subsystem of these schools. Which leads to the question: Did the girls' school administrators make the wrong decision when they did not expand the conflict and mobilize alumnae, parents, and others to resist the change?

★ Assumptions

Conflict is a system that changes over time depending on many different variables. To be strategic, your actions should take into consideration where the conflict falls on that trajectory. Curle's ultimate goal was sustainable and dynamic peace. Freezing a conflict or brushing it out of sight by not dealing with underlying issues will not lead to transformed relationships and sustainable peace..

★ Values

Curle drew upon his Quaker understandings and worldviews as well as his exploration of Buddhist teachings to inform his work and thinking.

According to Sue and Steve Williams in their book *Being in the Middle by Being at the Edge: Quaker Experience of Non-official Political Mediation*, "The phrase most commonly used by Quaker mediators to explain their work is the belief in 'that of God' in each individual they deal with. They respond to the spark of goodness at the heart of each person, and this permits them to deal on equal terms with people on various sides of a dispute. This belief leads the Quaker mediator to approach relationships with all sides in a spirit of love and tolerance that can be quite disarming. Adam Curle refers to a kind of 'realization that makes it possible for us to relate deeply, at the level of shared ground of being, with all human beings'" (p. 2).

Adam Curle's understanding of and quest for peace is therefore rooted in "a profound optimism in human potential, despite frequent evidence to the contrary" (Woodhouse 4).

You might not be coming from a Quaker or a Buddhist background or framework. But if you want to use this model, it is important to understand Curle's motivations, values, and assumptions. The Curle Model is a good tool for analysis, but it is also a tool used for planning responses to conflict. When used as a planning tool, it is important to remember Curle's commitment to promoting human dignity, supporting just relationships, and acting with love towards all parties.

THE LEDERACH PYRAMID

There is a tool for thinking about the parties that have an interest in a conflict, and how they might be included in building peaceful outcomes to conflicts.

John Paul Lederach created The Pyramid model in the 1990's based on his many years of peacebuilding experience, specifically the Nicaraguan and Somali conflicts. Lederach reflects on watching top and grassroots level peacebuilding initiatives take place in isolation from one another (Sampson & Lederach 52).

In the book *Into the Eye of the Storm*, Lederach writes, "I usually start with a simple tool: a pyramid that looks at three levels of actors and activities in peacebuilding work, including ways in which they are vertically and horizontally connected," (p. 38).

At the top level, you find what the media commonly refers to as the peace process. Lederach says that this often refers to official level negotiations between well-known and visible leaders who are representing the government as well as the leaders of opposition movements.

The middle-range includes civil society actors, for example nongovernmental agencies, national networks and organizations. You might find religious leaders in this middle section.

The bottom section includes people working with local grassroots and community-level initiatives. These are locals who see the conflict on the ground level.

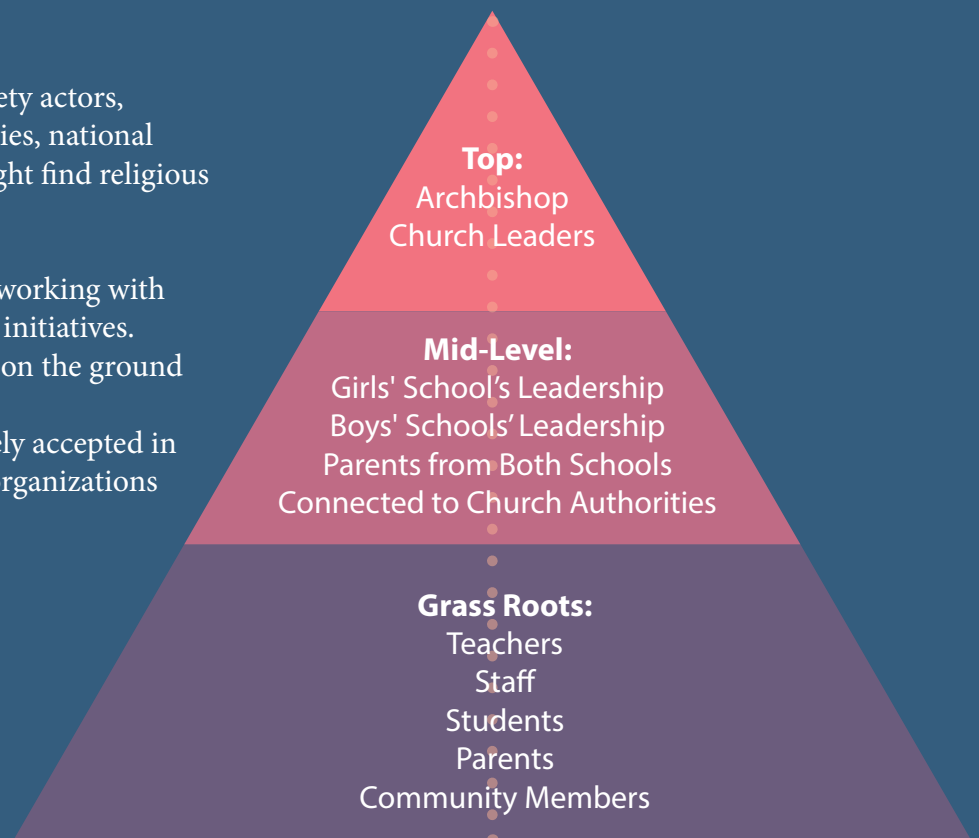
The Pyramid Model has become widely accepted in the peacebuilding field, even in big organizations

like the United Nations.

Today, even the top level actors and big institutions recognize that authentic and sustainable peace requires activities at all levels of society.

If you draw a vertical line down the middle of the pyramid to represent the divisions between the parties, the Pyramid Model is a reminder to work both horizontally and vertically.

Horizontal work involves bringing people from the same level but representing different conflict parties together for peacemaking. Vertical work involves connecting the horizontal work at each level with the other levels. This is holistic peacebuilding.



Analyzing our case with The Pyramid Model

When we apply the Pyramid Model to our case, we can see that only a limited range of actors were involved in attempts to resolve the conflict. The top people – the Archdiocesan leaders – convened meetings that involved only administrators from the two high schools. By this time, the conflict had widened to include others girls' schools that felt threatened and the other boys' schools that were considering enrolling girls. Despite this shift, the only actors at the table were from the middle level. Some useful actors were excluded – for example, parents with influence in the Archdiocese. At least we can say they were not in the room. Some of them might have been lobbying behind the scenes for their preferred outcome.

In the meetings, the focus was entirely on reconciling the conflicting parties into a “win-win” solution, if possible. In the next section it will become clear why a win-win was probably not possible in this case, at least not in the time allotted for making a decision about whether to allow the boys' school to enroll girls.

For now, sticking with the Pyramid Model, we can see that the girls' school did not adequately expand the parties involved. They had brought in other girls' schools, but they did not invite influential parents into the middle level discussion. And they did not mobilize the grassroots level to protest and otherwise try to influence the decision-makers.

If the administrations of all of the girls' schools in the room had adopted this strategy, a lot of parents, alumnae, and students would have gotten involved. It would have changed the nature of the conflict. It would have expanded the venue for the conflict to include the public arena and not just the meetings convened by the church leaders.

That kind of mobilizing could have forced some conversations about inequalities within the church around race and gender. By “playing nice” and working within the process crafted by the church officials, the girls' school and their sister schools failed to mobilize much of their power to influence the outcome.

★ Assumptions

The Pyramid Model is based on the assumption that all parties in a conflict have access to some form of power. While groups at the top might be equipped with money and influence, groups at the bottom may have strong networks that can mobilize around an issue. Peacebuilding, as we define it, requires paying attention to all of the levels and mobilizing power for positive change at every level.

★ Values

Relationships matter. The Pyramid Model reminds us to look for both horizontal and vertical relationships that can make change happen in a conflict. This tool highlights the value of relationships. For peacebuilding work to be effective, Lederach contends that peacebuilders must weave a network of people. This includes connections that run both vertically and horizontally.

While acknowledging that society is organized as a hierarchy that involves power differences, the Pyramid Model rests on the claim that all forms of power are useful and everyone is significant. Anyone in any position can work to build peace and real peace requires involving everyone regardless of their status.

THE ONION

The source

The Onion Model is featured in the book *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action* (2000). Spearheaded by the organization Responding to Conflict, the contents of the book come from "... the collective wisdom and experience of some 300 practitioners from all over the world who have worked with Responding to Conflict (RTC) since 1991" (Fisher et al. p. xv).

Authors Simon Fisher, Jawed Ludin, Sue and Steve Williams (see [Journal 1](#) for more information on the Williams and Quaker contributions to the field of peacebuilding), Dekha Ibrahim Abdi and Richard Smith have lived and worked all over the globe.

The resource book they created presents clear techniques for analyzing conflicts while also providing real examples from Cambodia, Afghanistan, South Africa, Kenya, Northern Ireland and Colombia.

"In each place these ideas and techniques have mutated in the light of local needs and circumstances, so that the contents of this book have been and still are in a constant state of change" (xv). The authors have worked to capture an ever-changing Genealogy of Ideas!

The layers

Like its namesake, the Onion Model has several layers: "The outer layer contains the **positions** that we take publicly, for all to see and hear. Underlying these are our **interests** - what we want to achieve from a particular situation. Finally, at the core are the most important **needs** we require to be satisfied. It is useful to carry out this Onion analysis for each of the parties involved" (Fisher et al. p. 27).

Some modifications

Not all conflicts are about interests. Our values regularly guide our positions. With this perspective in mind, Catherine Barnes has made two modifications to the Onion Model:

- 1) Between the Position/Demand and Interests, Barnes has added a ring for "Goal" since a party's end goal might be different from their stated position.
- 2) Barnes also added a wedge entitled "Worldviews and Values" that runs through each of the rings to support the idea that worldviews and values inform all the other dimensions; they are the foundational perceptions and beliefs that shape our goals, demands, interests and needs.

★ Assumptions

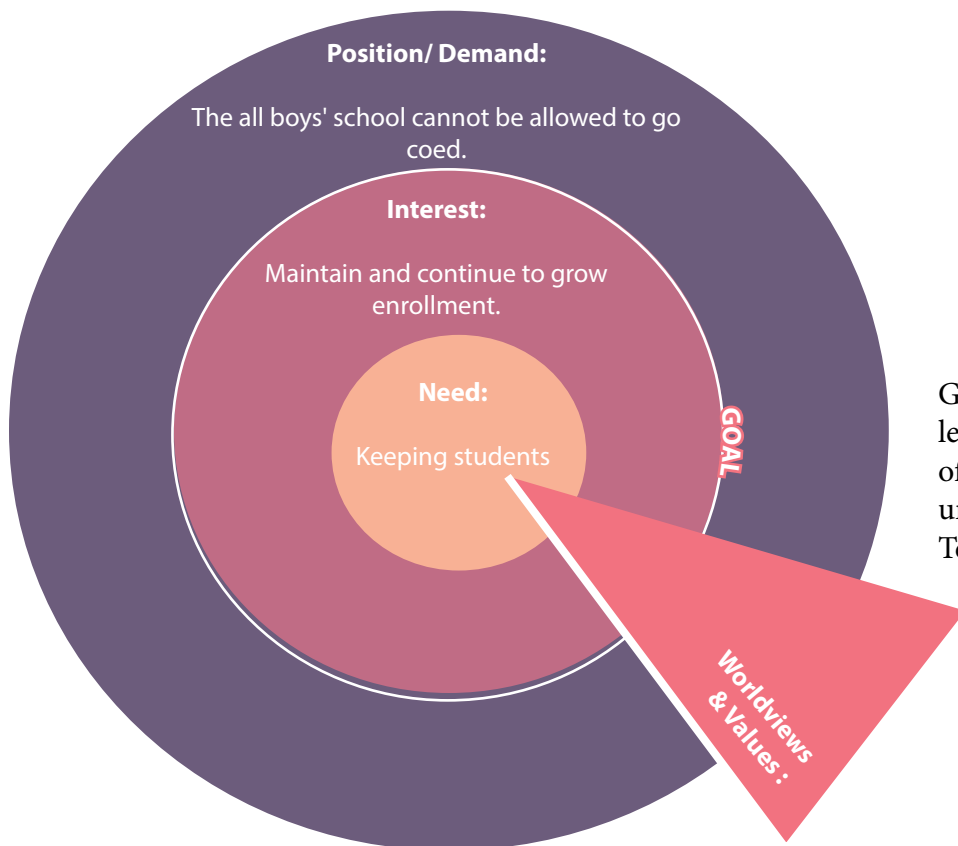
This tool assumes that we as humans are complicated and that our actions are informed by different facets of our identities and personalities. Our positions or demands are the easiest to discern. Underneath each stated position lie the goals, interests, needs, worldviews and values of each individual or group.

If the parties begin to trust one another, they might reveal the other layers of their motivations. However when groups keep the conversation centered on positions and demands, they will have a hard time finding "the elusive and highly valued win-win outcome."

★ Values

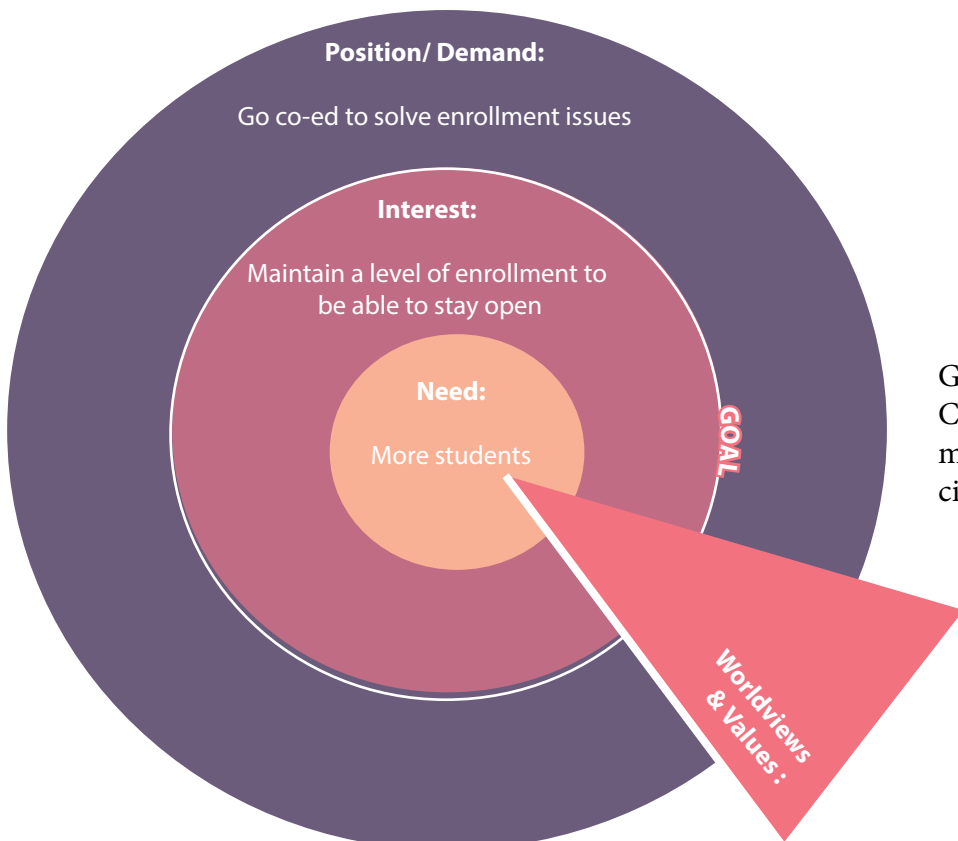
This tool values conflict as an opportunity for understanding. With analysis and some good will, parties in conflict can move beyond their publicly-stated positions in order to understand where a creative solution could meet the goals, interests, and needs of all the parties.

THE ALL GIRLS' SCHOOL



Goals: Continue to educate women leaders of all faiths who are capable of changing the world because they understand and value Catholic Social Teachings.

THE ALL BOYS' SCHOOL



Goals: Continue to educate mostly Catholic students to be faithful members of the Church and good citizens.

Analyzing our case with the Onion Model

The positions in the conflict were clear. The boys' school and the girls' school took opposite positions on the simple question, "Can the boys' school be allowed to admit girls in the next academic year?"

Regarding interests, both schools wanted to maintain enough enrollment to stay open. This can be treated as a zero-sum problem: There are only X students who will go to Catholic schools in this area. Either the girls' school gets them or the boys' school gets them. Instead, it could have been treated as a shared challenge that the two schools could have faced together.

The schools might have been able to find a way to collaborate on this goal, but only if they were willing to consider new strategies for sustaining enrollment. The schools would have had to explore ways to work collaboratively to attract more students to both schools.

There were possible ways to do this. For example, if one problem was that Catholic boys were opting for public school because they did not want to go to a single-sex school, the two schools could have collaborated to share resources and programming. Increasing co-curricular activities offered (e.g., theater or band or some athletic teams like swimming) and teaching some smaller classes together would make the single-sex schools more like a public school. This could have benefitted both schools. The girls' school could also have helped the boys' school reach a more racially diverse group of potential students, thereby expanding their overall applicant pool.

When we look at goals, we discover why it was so hard for the schools to even explore these types of win-win outcomes. While both schools were founded to educate students in a Catholic context

and they shared some values, each school saw the purpose of a Catholic education differently.

As the country was moving in a conservative direction under the Reagan administration, so too was the Church. The boys' school at that time had adopted some of that more conservative impetus. They were focused on educating Catholic students to be good members of the Church and good citizens. The girls' school, on the other hand, was deeply committed to sustaining the liberalizing impulse of Vatican II. The school was more outwardly focused on educating young women (regardless of faith) to be leaders who promoted social justice and nonviolence. The boys' school leaders saw Catholic education as a ministry to the Church while the girls' school leaders saw Catholic education as a mission of the church to the world.

Why would it be so difficult to manage these differing interests? Because they were expressions of deeply held values and worldviews. Another issue of this journal series will focus on worldview and value conflicts. For now, we will observe that the administrations of the two schools each felt their way of "being a Catholic school" was worth defending. When parties are defending their worldviews, they are defending their identities. Identity-based conflicts are among the most difficult to transform.

Identity-based conflicts cannot be resolved in a few meetings under a tight timeline. To address these issues and find a win-win outcome would have taken different approaches for engaging the parties. It would have taken longer. And, it would have required all of the parties to adapt or change. In other words, this was a problem that needed a sustained process of conflict transformation or peacebuilding not a simple conflict resolution response.

The boys' school leaders saw Catholic education as a ministry to the Church while the girls' school leaders saw Catholic education as a mission of the church to the world.

REFLECTING ON PEACEBUILDING PRACTICE

By the end of the 20th Century, even large organizations such as the United Nations were starting to accept the idea that private citizens and civil society organizations could (and should) be involved in resisting violence and bringing sustainable peace to their communities. However a widely shared theory or consensus about how this could be done was lacking.

Different organizations were promoting their own approaches, but no one really knew what worked and what did not. In 1999, the CDA Collaborative Learning Projects launched the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP) to fill this knowledge gap.

RPP worked with hundreds of agencies and individuals to conduct 26 peacebuilding case studies throughout the world. Their goal was to glean lessons applicable across conflict contexts and develop user-friendly toolkits to improve peacebuilding practice.

The [CDA website](#) is a rich source of evidence-based publications that focus on promoting “a future where communities and nations demonstrate resilience, drive their own development, and resolve conflicts without resorting to armed violence.” The findings of the RPP project were reported in *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Anderson, Olson, and Doughty, 2003).

The RPP project is an example of grounded theory development that builds theory from observation. It also exemplifies the theory-action-reflection model of good reflective peacebuilding.

Using the 26 case studies, the team working on the project asked, “what does effective peace practice look like?” They defined effectiveness in two ways.

They looked at program effectiveness, which asks, “whether a specific activity (for example, peace education, a dialogue workshop, advocacy, or an

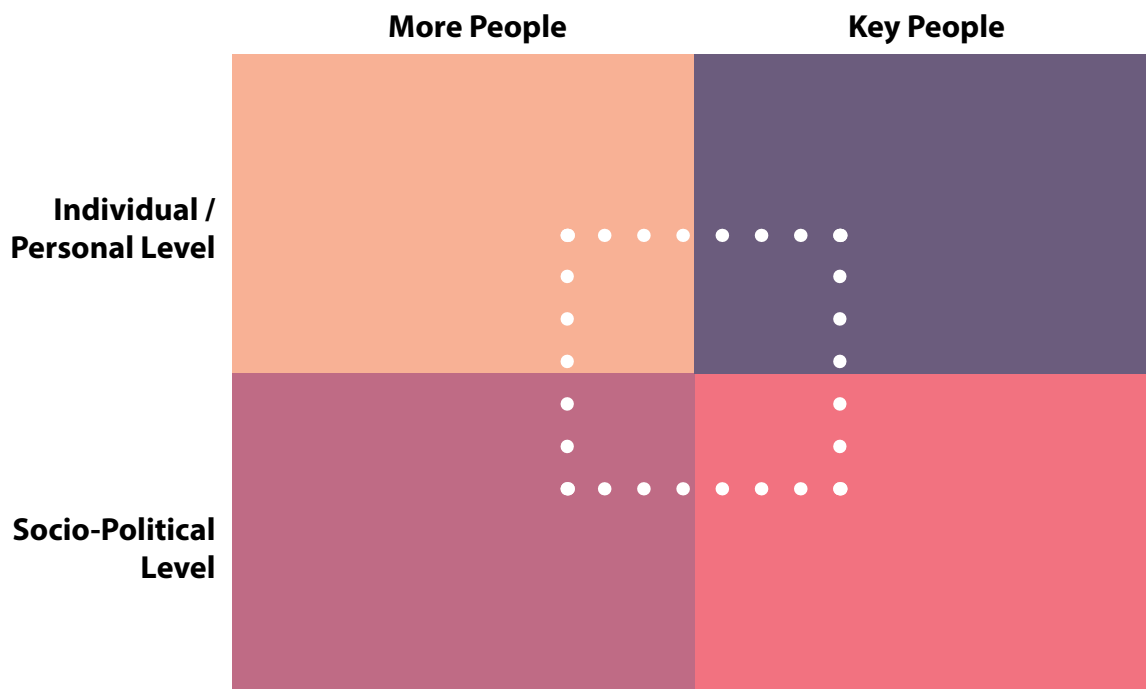
international accompaniment effort) is achieving its intended goals” (14). But a collection of programs – even if they are individually effective – does not necessarily bring peace at a community or societal level.

The RPP team therefore also examined the idea of peace writ large. Effectiveness here means asking how programmatic “efforts have, or have not, supported the ending of violence or the achievement of justice” (14).

The dual focus on programmatic effectiveness and peace writ large yielded the “RPP Model” or “RPP Matrix” which has become the most influential of the many diagrams from *Confronting War*. The model is derived from the project leaders’ conclusion that “as RPP looked at the many peace programs in operation, it became clear that in spite of the great variety of activities, all of them can be mapped in a simple matrix” illustrated in this diagram. (48).

This diagram helps us focus on whether those working to build peace with justice are focusing on working with key people – leaders and influencers – or working with many people – the larger community or society. And, whichever group is the focus, are they trying to change attitudes and behaviors or are they trying to change policies and systems? “The dotted lines between the quadrants of the matrix reflect the fact that borders between these approaches and levels are more fluid than closed boxes would suggest” (50).

For our purposes, this model is interesting because it went from being a descriptive model – what are people doing to build peace – to being used by practitioners as a planning model – what could they be doing in this situation to achieve peace writ large? By 2004, the RPP findings were being used to educate would-be peacebuilders about how to do their work more effectively by thinking through a design process.



With the RPP Model, you can start in any quadrant depending on the context and the nature of the conflict. Getting to “peace writ large” requires coordinated action in **all** of the quadrants. You can’t build peace by doing the same thing over and over again. You have to change your strategies in response to changes in the conflict.

★ Values & Assumptions

The process behind the creation of the RPP Model tells us a lot about its values and assumptions. This is not a model developed based on abstract theories. Instead, RPP was developed through the study of what works in real life. The research that created the RPP Model led peacebuilders to the following assumptions:

- Every conflict is different and peacebuilders should start from their own location in relation to the conflict.
- Different individuals or groups will start working to transform conflict focusing on different quadrants of the model and that is a good thing because “peace writ large” requires changes in all of these areas.
- It is crucial that those paying for peacebuilding and those implementing peacebuilding not make the mistake of doing the same projects over and over again.

The RPP Model changed the way many people think about addressing deep-rooted and complex conflicts by reinforcing the ideas that everyone needs to be involved (as is shown in the Lederach Pyramid), actions are effective when they match the context (as is shown in the Curle Model), and different kinds of changes are needed to transform conflict.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this model has changed peacebuilding practice and the ways that donors and funders think about the work.

Analyzing our case with the RPP Matrix

Taking the RPP Model to the case we are using, allows us to ask both what was done and what could have been done.

When thinking about the school case, what level did the parties focus on?

The meetings convened by the Archdiocese involved “key people” and were carefully designed to keep the “more people” in the dark about what was going on. And, everyone in the meetings – including the representatives from the girls’ school accepted the key people strategy.

The boys’ school and the Archdiocesan officials focused on key people because they wanted a quick decision. The representatives of the various girls’ school in the meetings accepted that focus out of fear that opening the conversation to more people might lead to a loss of confidence in their ability to thrive and continue providing quality education to their students. Different motivations led to the same restricted conversation.

How did they think change would happen?

To complicate things further, within the key people context, the focus of the problem was not clear. Were the parties there to discuss how all of the schools could thrive? Or were they there to discuss how to manage the impact of the boys’ school going coed? Were they there to address systemic problems of gender, race, and class disparity in the Catholic high school system? Or were they there to persuade others to change their minds and hearts, and thus change their stance in relation to the proposal to allow the boys’ school to admit girls?

Everyone was focusing on changing hearts and minds. The boys’ school leadership wanted the leaders of the girls’ schools to not make a fuss about their decision. The girls’ school leaders wanted the boys’ school leaders to change their decision. The Archdiocese – well it was never clear what they wanted other than to have no conflict. This lack of clarity on their part led the girls’ school

representatives to suspect that there was some backroom collusion going on between the boys’ school and the diocesan leadership. Perhaps there was, or perhaps the outcome that emerged was the inevitable product of the key people approach and the limited focus of the conversation.

From the perspective of the girls’ school, the systemic issues were important and should have been on the table. But addressing those issues would have required a more complete examination of the Catholic educational system, and the people with the power to convene the encounters and control the agendas had no interest in having that conversation. So, a whole set of issues was probably not going to be addressed using this key people/changing hearts and minds approach.

What could have been done differently?

As with the Pyramid Model, the RPP Model directs attention to the unused option of expanding the conflict as a strategy for eventually addressing the sources of the problem rather than just looking at the presenting issue. This idea that you can get to peace with justice by making the conflict worse (bigger, messier, and more public), before you try to reach agreement was not understood by the leaders of the girls’ schools. This harkens back to the Curle model and the need to mobilize and educate the parties in order to intensify the conflict or at least make it more transparent before you start negotiating.

In hindsight, it is apparent that to get the issues of race, class, gender, and systemic disparities in the Catholic educational system into the discussion, the girls’ schools needed to find a way to bring more people into the discussion. There are several ways they could have done that. They could have done this by expanding the range of key people at the table, for example, insisting that the Archbishop get involved. Or they could have opened the problem up to more people by mobilizing parents, teachers, alumnae, students, and the wider community.

The pathway to a more people approach could also have gone through another set of key people – the media. Well placed investigative media stories could have been used to reframe the conflict. This is not

just about one school going coed it is about making decisions for one school that will result in a de-facto racial re-segregation of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. This is not just about supporting the survival of one school it is about creating a situation that will result in a reduction in the number of options for girls to enroll in single-sex high schools when the evidence shows that girls thrive in single sex schools. Those public stories, accompanied by direct mobilization of the students enrolled in the girls' schools and their families, might have changed the outcome... or not.

Would it have worked?

The reality was that while tensions around race, class, and gender disparities in the schools existed, few people at that time saw them as a conflict that needed to be addressed through direct confrontation. Even the leaders at the girls' school that Jayne worked for saw the problem, but thought that the way to address it was to create and sustain a school that modeled an alternative approach to Catholic education. They did not see their role as leading a movement within the Catholic school system. Which points to another important factor in actually mobilizing for peace with justice: To achieve that goal, we probably have to start by changing ourselves. In this case, the leaders of the girls' schools would have needed to see themselves as movement leaders and not just educators.

When thinking about the “woulda, coulda, shoulda” of this case, Jayne does not think her school could have made this identity change quickly enough to prevent the outcome. Some school administrators might have been willing to do what was needed, but it would have been very hard (probably impossible) to convince the Board members and the leaders of the religious order running the school to go along with that shift in strategy. Furthermore, it is hard to make that kind of change in the space of a few months. So, time was not on the side of the girls' school.

The Conflict Tree is another heuristic device that receives attention in conflict analysis manuals. Jayne has written a blog post on the tool. She suggests that a *banyan* tree model elicits some thought provoking questions. For more information, visit jayneseminaredocherty.wordpress.com



Which model speaks to you?

The models you gravitate toward speak to how your brain is wired. Are you someone who likes to look at the big picture before delving into detail work? Or do you need to understand smaller pieces before considering things holistically?

We chose to explore this set of heuristic devices because of the pertinent questions they raise. While it might be tempting to use just one tool to describe a conflict situation, our suggestion is to try using the whole toolbox *with other people* in order to reach deeper understandings.

What are your assumptions and values?

Take a few minutes to think about your assumptions and values in your peacebuilding work. What motivated you to read through this journal? Why are you interested in conflict analysis for taking action and fostering justice? Is it your faith? Your convictions? Your personal history? A combination? Something else entirely?

Can you easily fan those elements out to respond to questions such as “What do I value? What guides my decisions?” For some people that might be an easy task. For others, it could feel like a challenging set of questions. It goes without saying that each person is motivated by a variety of factors. This can lead to interesting situations as a group gathers to work together.

When we get into so-called echo chambers where everyone thinks like us, we are inevitably missing out on important information and understandings. “Differences are the only source of learning we have” (Broom 4). If we can recognize that, our conflict analysis will be more nuanced and the actions we create based on that analysis have a better chance of responding to the root of the issue. “In the future, some of the most interesting ideas about [conflict] transformation may emerge out of the tensions between competing traditions of thought” (Ryan, p. 306-7).

CONCLUSION

We tried to weave a story of conflict through this publication to illustrate how using a variety of conflict analysis tools leads to better thinking. Even thirty years after this conflict unfolded, conducting a conflict analysis led the authors to new understandings.

With the help of the heuristic devices, it is apparent that there were many missed opportunities for conflict transformation. If only those tools for thinking had been common knowledge then, the conversations and the outcome might have been totally different.

- With the stakeholder map, we would have considered who was involved, their relationships and who could be drawn in.
- With the help of the Dugan Model, we could have reframed our conversations around systemic injustices and the actual changes we could make at the sub-system level to counter those injustices.
- With the Curle Model, we would have known we were seeing the conflict move from the latent to the overt phase and too quickly to the problem solving phase. We might have better considered ways to balance power and alter awareness of the issues before problem solving.
- With the Onion Model, we could have developed more relational empathy for the leaders of the boys' school and that could have led to different options to consider.

- With the Pyramid, we could have better identified allies horizontally and vertically.
- With the RPP model, we could have been more strategic in thinking about who was in the room and how to change the focus from changing attitudes and behaviors to changing structures and systems.

With these tools and thoughtful analysis, we could have asked the decision-makers to slow down and hold off on a conclusion, allowing all sides to better plan ahead.

As a reminder, change doesn't happen overnight, or in three years. What is needed is a large number of people working assiduously and skillfully for progressive change, probably for many decades (Schutt 63).

We contend that this work to promote justice and peace must be well thought out. "If we take seriously the idea of sustainable peace and reconciliation in settings of protracted conflict, we must then take up the challenge of being deeply aware of the depth of animosity, anger, and suspicion present, while simultaneously creating the space for articulating a vision of what is desired" (Sampson & Lederach p. 55).

Conflict is an invitation to challenge unjust systems. Equipped with tools for analysis, peacebuilders can invite communities to ask deeper questions and find helpful responses.

POSTSCRIPT

Reflections from Jayne

I have reexamined this school case multiple times in the past 30 years, particularly when I've asked my students to keep a journal of their conflict stories. Each time I see something new. For example, the RPP model offered new insights since I had never applied it to this case. Even with models I had used before, I saw new factors in the conflict.

This post-hoc exercise can be emotionally challenging. We see opportunities we missed, places where we took actions that did not help the situation, and factors that we did not consider. I have done this exercise in the classroom many times in the past twenty years. More than once a student has shown up at my office in tears about what they did or what they failed to do in a conflict. And, those are only the ones who shared their regrets with me. I suspect others have felt the same but did not speak up. I have also had many regrets about the school situation.

It is important to remember that the purpose of the exercise is not to show us where we have failed in the past. It is to help us learn to do better analysis

and more effective peacebuilding in the future. Let me demonstrate that with a few observations about the school case.

I regret deeply that we, with our good intentions, may have harbored negative stereotypes of the predominantly African American girls' schools in the city. In the end, I think we did the right thing. We chose to close the school rather than draw students away from the city schools and create a new predominantly African American school in the suburbs. What I have taken forward into my life and my work is a heightened (not perfect, but better) ability to identify where good intentions may be covering over assumptions that need to be unpacked and dealt with in order for real transformation to take place.

I am saddened by the possibility that our justified but somewhat righteous indignation about gender inequities in the church and the creeping return of segregation in the school system may have blinded us to other options. My own girls' high school, that I attended as a student, merged nicely with a

boys' school. The new coed school has a hallway honoring the history of my alma mater and the alumni office does special outreach and events for the graduates of the girls' school. What would have happened if we had engaged in a frank conversation with the leaders of the boys' school about our core commitments to racial justice? Could we have blended the schools in a manner that would have kept our values alive? What I have taken into my work is a commitment to slow things down when I feel righteous anger so that I can better think outside of a limited array of options for action.

I wish we had been less cautious and tried mobilizing students, alumnae, and parents. But I also recognize that this might have just caused more harm in an already painful situation. It would have also required full support from the Board and the religious order, and I am not sure we had that. What I bring into my work from this experience is a commitment to transparency and inclusion when dealing with big problems.

I have also learned a lot in the past thirty years of

working with complex conflicts. I now know that getting a better outcome for all of the girls' schools that eventually closed, would have required a lot of time. Each school would have needed to manage complex internal negotiations. I call these "behind the table" negotiations, and I have written several papers and a small book that focus on this problem (Docherty 2005). Looking back from the vantage point of my experiences, I think that even if we had been smart enough to try different strategies, the odds of success were less than fifty percent given the time constraints and the power differences.

I cannot go back and repair things with the students, faculty, staff and graduates of the girls' school. In your own stories of conflict you might be able to apologize or make amends or invite others to try something different. If you are able to do that and choose that journey, acquiring some tools for communicating well and transforming conflicts might be a useful next step. Analysis is necessary for wise actions, but analysis alone does not give us the skills to implement new approaches to a conflict.

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