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SECTION I

DIRECT VIOLENCE

Introduction by Richard V. Wagner

Violence derives from conflict, but conflict does not inevitably result in violence. Conflict can often be constructive. Only under certain extreme conditions does conflict ultimately result in violence. Conflict, defined as "perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties'… current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously" (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994, p. 5), can be dealt with in a variety of ways, including cooperative problem solving, yielding by one of the parties, and inaction, as well as various nonviolent contentious tactics such as ingratiation, persuasive arguing, and threats. Alternatively, the conflict can be handled by violence.

There are certain preconditions for a violent response to conflict: (a) that a party care more about its own interests than about the interests of the other, a basic principle of the dual concern model of conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1979), and (b) that a party believe it will be successful if it acts violently in pursuit of its goals. In addition, there are factors which increase the probability that conflict will result in violence, among them the perception that nonviolent means will be ineffective, that violence will have few negative

repercussions for the aggressor, and that violence will prevent the adversary from gaining an advantage if it were to initiate violence first. Furthermore, there are certain contextual factors that predispose a party to act violently, including social norms that condone violence and the availability of means (e.g., weapons) of executing a violent act.

In this first section, we consider direct violence, the most obvious, overt form of violence, perpetrated by one or more disputants directly upon those with whom they are in conflict. In our introductory chapter, we distinguished between direct violence and the structural violence that is built into the social, political, and economic institutions of a society. Direct violence requires no intervening social structures for the violence to occur. It is the violence we read and hear about daily. It is parents fighting, one spouse battering the other or their children; it is children beating up other children in school or gangs attacking customers at a gay bar; it is ethnic cleansing, it is terrorism, it is war.

Direct violence and structural violence (which is the subject of the succeeding section of this volume) are highly interdependent. The existence of structural violence, such as unequal distribution of resources or a corrupt political system, inevitably produces conflict, and often direct violence. People who live in substandard conditions and see themselves as unable to satisfy their needs in the face of a political system that they cannot otherwise influence, may resort to direct violence to address their needs. Often the process is circular: structural violence leading an oppressed group to direct violence, which in turn leads to further oppression to curb the direct violence. For example, if the political establishment feels threatened by the people protesting substandard living conditions, they may respond with further oppression to curb the direct violence.

There are three themes that appear in the majority of the chapters in this section: our ability to generalize from one level of analysis and one type of violence to another; the critical role that protecting one's identity plays in promoting violence; and the cultural values that influence violent action.

GENERALIZATION

In the introductory chapter, we stated that "peace psychology seeks to develop theories and practices aimed at the prevention and mitigation of destructive conflict, violence, domination, oppression, and exploitation." The authors of the chapters in this section engage in this process by presenting concepts and examples pertaining to violence in a variety of settings and at different levels of analysis, from the interpersonal to the international. It would be valuable to know to what extent the principles applied in one setting can be profitably generalized to other settings. Can we, for example, generalize from bullying on the playground to bullying in sub-Saharan Africa, or from anti-gay/lesbian hate crimes to ethnic cleansing?

Levinger and Rubin (1994) provide a helpful typology and set of principles that can guide us through the process of generalization. They suggest that all conflicts have some features in common, such as their derivation from perceived divergence of interests and the presence of a mixture of motives. However, in the case of the number of parties in the conflict and the number of issues involved, we should generalize with caution. When a conflict is between two people, determining the parties' interests may be quite simple;

when the conflict is among nations, their interests may be quite complex and, further, may involve a number of constituencies, each with its own interrelated set of interests. It would, therefore, be extremely inappropriate to take a model developed from analyses of domestic disputes and apply it uncritically to international disputes.

IDENTITY

A second theme you will find in a number of the articles is the central role identity plays in conflict and violence. Abrahams, for example, notes that low self-esteem and self-efficacy are associated with wife batterers, and Staub asserts that one group devalues another in order to strengthen its own identity. Three chapters use social identity theory and its successors to explain conflict and violence: Murphy argues that social identity leads to bias in favor of one's own group, which in the case of gender is a background factor in anti-gay/lesbian violence; Niens and Cairns use self-categorization theory and relative deprivation theory as explanatory components for intrastate violence; and Druckman uses social identity and self-categorization theory to explain ways in which nationalistic sentiments can lead to war.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The third theme incorporated in most of these chapters is that cultural norms provide the background for violence. Cultural norms and values are evident throughout: gender role expectations in the case of intimate violence, homophobia in anti-gay/lesbian violence, cultural devaluation and an "ideal of antagonism" in genocide, nationalistic sentiments in interstate conflict, and political and moral values in the use of weapons of mass

destruction. Clearly, peace psychologists must understand the dynamics of conflict in a wide variety of contexts, from the interpersonal to the international levels of analysis.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS ON DIRECT VIOLENCE

We begin this section focussing on conflict and violence at the most basic social level of analysis—two-person intimate relationships. In the first chapter, Naomi Abrahams argues that the major underlying issue in domestic violence is dominance and control. She describes various psychological factors involved—attitudes, behavior, and social learning—and then moves up a level of analysis to consider domestic violence in the context of family systems theory.

Bianca Cody Murphy analyzes anti-gay/lesbian violence in the United States. Many of the explanations she reviews, such as the authoritarian personality, frustration and scapegoating, and social identity theory, derive from earlier psychological analyses of racial and anti-semitic violence in the community. She includes an attitudinal analysis of the development of homophobic views and behavior. Then, like Abrahams, she steps beyond purely psychological analyses with a description of political and feminist perspectives on anti-gay/lesbian violence and proposes legal, cultural, and educational responses to such hate crimes.

Moving beyond the community, ethnic violence is the focal theme in Ulrike Niens and Ed Cairns' analysis of intrastate violence and Ervin Staub's examination of genocide and mass killing. Niens and Cairns describe how relative deprivation, social identity, and self-categorization theories help explain intrastate conflict and then they apply their

analysis to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Staub uses a variety of constructs in his analysis of genocide, from individual processes such as just-world thinking, bystander apathy, and scapegoating to societal variables like traditions of obedience, unhealed group trauma, and an "ideology of antagonism."

Interstate conflict is addressed in Daniel Druckman's chapter on nationalism and war, and in Lucian Conway, Peter Suedfeld, and Philip Tetlock's chapter on how integrative complexity may influence, or be influenced by political decisions that lead to war and peace. Druckman considers basic needs underlying nationalist sentiments and discusses our understanding of how nationalist images may lead to war. He is acutely aware of the problems of levels of analysis, asking whether we understand how people transfer their sentiments from small membership groups to larger, national entities. Conway, Suedfeld, and Tetlock review the literature on integrative complexity, that is, the degree to which people understand multiple perspectives on a particular problem and are able to integrate those perspectives coherently. They list a variety of political contexts in which low integrative complexity has been associated with a drastic deterioration in interstate relations, and note the uncertainty about the role of low integrative complexity: is it a symptom or a cause of worsening relations?

Finally, Michael Britton's chapter on nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons of mass destruction discusses weaponry in the context of the massive mutual fear that developed during the Cold War. He asks how long it will be before there is universal recognition that weapons of mass destruction will ultimately make war obsolete.

I conclude this introduction with a caveat. Many of the articles acknowledge that

psychological analysis provides only a part—perhaps a small part—of the explanation of direct violence. Niens and Cairns, for example, see psychology as "modest but critical" and recognize political, economic, and religious bases of intergroup violence. Similarly, Murphy acknowledges the importance of political explanations of anti-gay/lesbian violence. Small or large, psychology's contributions to understanding the bases of direct violence are relevant—as are all potential explanations—and therefore should be understood and further developed to the greatest extent possible.