Psychological Dynamics of Insight: Relevance to International Negotiation

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Introduction

In this chapter we examine the development of the Insight approach to conflict resolution and how it can be applied to the practice of international negotiation. The Insight approach to conflict (Picard and Melchin 2007; Melchin and Picard 2008; Sargent et al. 2011; Picard and Jull 2012; Price 2013) views conflict resolution as a communicative learning process through which parties gain greater understanding or insight into the cares and threats that motivate both the self and the other and which in turn fuel the conflict or create obstacles to a collaborative decision-making or negotiation process. Central to the Insight approach is an awareness of how the parties' perceptions are influenced by the interpretive framework the parties develop for making sense of the conflict or negotiation interaction. Cognitive filters operate to selectively screen out information that is incompatible with the operating assumptions on which the parties construct their own definition of the interaction, while information that confirms this working hypothesis is selectively identified, coded, and retrieved

to orient subsequent decisions or actions. Parties may often be unaware of the psychological processes by which they attribute intentions or motivations to the other and how these attributions in turn influence each party's evaluation of the other's actions or responses, often resulting in miscommunication or misunderstanding which may inhibit the possibilities for more constructive dialogue or negotiation. The Insight approach assists the parties become more reflexively aware of how these processes of meaning-making influence the way they frame the interaction and orient their responses to the other. This in turn reduces the risk of miscommunication and attribution errors and opens up the possibility for more collaborative decision-making and more integrative negotiation outcomes.

Decision-Makers as Historically Situated, Purposive Actors

The Insight approach was first developed by Picard and Melchin (2007, Melchin and Picard 2008), in an attempt to generate a clearer understanding of the process that sometimes takes place in a negotiation or mediation context, when one or more parties experience a shift in perspective that enables them to orient towards the other in different ways, thus opening up the space for more collaborative efforts at resolving the conflict. Melchin and Picard observed that conflict

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was often most difficult to resolve when either side believed that what deeply mattered to them—their cares—was threatened by what mattered to the other party. Following the work of philosophers Bernard Lonergan (Morelli and Morelli 1997) and Charles Taylor (1985), the concept of "cares" in the Insight approach is understood to involve more than just the pursuit of our material interests or needs. Cares also include our value-based expectations of others and our sensitivity to the manner in which others might view us (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). Our cares, therefore, are not just concerned with ourselves but also involve us in judgements of others, and the ways in which how we view the world are valued or respected by others. Issues of identity and value are thus often involved in mediation or negotiation processes, even in contexts which otherwise seem to be predominantly distributive in nature (Sargent et al. 2011).

A central claim within the Insight approach is the idea of the social nature of the self (Melchin and Picard 2008; Sargent et al. 2011). The parties in any negotiation situation are not just self-referential actors whose goals, strategy, and tactics are predominantly self-generated, but need to be seen as historically situated social actors, whose perceptions, values, and motivational structures are significantly influenced by the sets of social, cultural, political, and historical affiliations they are embedded in (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008: 45–46). As social actors, we live our lives in networks of relationships that are meaningful to us and from which we generate much of our sense of social identity (Melchin and Picard 2008; Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner 1987; Fiske 2004; Sargent et al. 2011). Consequently, our actions have an impact on others, even when they are directed to the pursuit of our own ends. Likewise, their actions, perceptions, and beliefs have an impact on us, even if they are not directed towards us (Sargent et al. 2011). As Niebuhr puts it, we are responsive as well as purposive actors (Niebuhr 1963). Our actions take place in a social and political context in which we are forced to take into account the responses of others and the conditions in the environment towards which we direct our actions. Part of the way in which we act on our

environment is to try to shape the ways in which others respond to us (Goffman 1967). As purposive actors, therefore, we are constantly engaged in a process of trying to develop interpretive frameworks through which we can make sense of the factors that influence our present condition, precisely because this is the only way we can anticipate and seek to orient the future.

At the same time, our encounters with others in the present are necessarily influenced by our memories of prior encounters with others in the past. Consequently we carry our pasts with us into the present, and they provide us with habits of mind, response patterns, and interpretive frameworks, through which we seek to make sense of the present and to assimilate information about present conditions with our memories of past events (Niebuhr 1963; Melchin and Picard 2008). As Niebuhr puts it, the past is always with us as part of our present (1963). Our sense of ourselves as historically situated actors implies that we carry with us traces of our past encounters with others. And these traces, or subjective historical experiences, are likely to have some influence on the ways in which we respond to other negotiation situations we may encounter.

As such we can never fully bracket the memory of past encounters, even when we are engaged in a negotiation process that is more concerned with reshaping the conditions of the future. Any purposive, goal-directed action tends to have a reflexive or two-sided quality to it (Niebuhr 1963; Argyris et al. 1985; Sargent et al. 2011). On the one hand the action looks forward, prospectively, towards a future it seeks to modify in some respect in accordance with the actor's conscious intention or purposes. In this sense the actor has to coordinate his or her intended actions with an image of this imagined future already operative in the decision-making process. Yet the vision of the future that organizes the actor's decision-making process is also contingent on the manner in which the social actor is able to make historical sense of the present and to identify the causal factors that are likely to influence the conditions of this imagined but not yet experienced future.

Looked at from a standpoint of methodological individualism, the goal-directed action appears as

the product of an internal cognitive process whereby the actor isolates the salient features of the situation or problem towards which the action is directed, sets objectives, and then selects among the available means to attain the pre-set objectives, based on the information available to the actor at the time. Seen from this linear or "intentionalist" perspective, it is the actor's purposes or interests which set the action in motion and drive the selection of means from among the available repertoire of action responses open to the actor. Moreover, the success or effectiveness of the action can be measured by reference to how closely the observable effects generated by the action correspond with the predetermined goals of the actor.

Looked at from an interactional or systems theory perspective, however, a rather different picture emerges (Watzlawick and Weakland 1977; Schon 1983; Argyris et al. 1985; Turner 1988; Senge 2006; Sargent et al. 2011). No longer viewed in linear causal terms as the product of a conscious deliberative choice with no prior history, the decision comes to be seen as part of an ongoing sequence of action, feedback, and response patterns, often involving interactions between differently situated social actors, in which each actor seeks to make sense of its environment as well as to act purposively on it (Niebuhr 1963; Schon 1983; Argyris et al. 1985; Senge 2006; Sargent et al. 2011). Seen from this reflexive or "action science" perspective, the information gathering or hypothesis formation stage of the act is not separable from the performative dimension of the act (Schon 1983; Argyris et al. 1985). Rather, the two are connected in a form of circular causality, in which the response generated by the act on the part of those towards whom the action was directed provides the actor with informational feedback with which to reflectively determine whether the definition of the situation that generated the action was operationally valid or not. Every purposive action thus has a hypothetical or experimental quality to it, in which it is the product of a working hypothesis about conditions in the actor's environment and, at the same time, seeks to test this very hypothesis at one and the same time (Schon 1983; Argyris et al. 1985).

Cognition and action are thus integrally related, not conceptually distinct. Not only are our actions generated by preexisting hypotheses about the objective conditions operating in our environment or what we believe to be the motivations or beliefs of other actors, but through the response elicited by our actions, we obtain useful information that enables us to verify or to modify the operating assumptions on which our previous actions were based (Schon 1983; Argyris et al. 1985; Senge 2006; Sargent et al. 2011).

This reflexive action science perspective supports Fiske's contention that cognition is an inherently social process that involves taking into account the actual, implied, or imagined presence of others (Fiske 2004). In many negotiation situations, the participants need to be conscious not only of how their actions are likely to be perceived and responded to by the other parties at the table, but also of how their actions and responses are likely to be perceived by other audiences whose ongoing support may be critical to the success of the negotiations (Pruitt and Carnevale 1993; Aquilar and Galluccio 2008).

The implied presence of others may be structured into the negotiating process itself, for example, where a negotiating team is given a predetermined negotiating mandate that limits the options they can explore or where any decision reached in negotiation needs to be ratified by an external body. But the imagined presence of others may also be felt in other situations in which negotiators have to manage the tension between "ingroup" and "between-group" negotiations (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008: 81–82; Galluccio 2011; Pruitt and Carnevale 1993; Walton and McKersie 1965). Unofficial "back channel" negotiations, for example, often involve a delicate balance between signaling a degree of openness to more dialogue with an adversary and, at the same time, being able to deny that any such dialogue is taking place. Thus, the imagined presence of others may exert a strong influence on the parties' behavior in negotiations, and even on their communication styles, as participants may decide to sacrifice transparency in communication for more opaque forms of communication that are open to different interpretations by different intended audiences.

Once again, this requires us to view the participants as situated historical actors, whose behavior is influenced by their concern not only with what gains they seek to achieve at the bargaining table but also how their actions can be interpreted by others (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Pruitt and Kim 2004). Too much willingness to enter into dialogue, or to make concessions in negotiation, carries a risk that this could be perceived by a domestic audience, or other imagined audiences, as a sign of weakness or lack of commitment to the collectivity's goals. The avoidance of such "image threats" (Pruitt and Kim 2004) may cause negotiators to maintain a strongly positional bargaining stance, even where negotiation theory would suggest that willingness to explore more collaborative options could result in a better deal for all parties involved (Pruitt and Carnevale 1993; Mitchell 1999).

Feelings as Carriers of Values

Related to this issue of the reflexive nature of social action is the idea of feelings as carriers of values. A key theme of the Insight approach is that emotions or feelings are not separable from the parties' cares or values. Rather, feelings operate as carriers of values, such that the emotion is often triggered by the experience of threat to the parties' cares, whether this operates at the level of material interests and patterns of expected cooperation or goes more deeply still to the values associated with the parties' personal or social identities (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Melchin and Picard 2008). As Melchin and Picard (2008) put it, the particular value or care at stake may not always be apparent on the surface of the conflict, but the feeling triggered by the care or value often is and provides an indicator of the importance of the care or value to the parties concerned.

Often the experience of threat to our cares or values in negotiation may be triggered by memories of past events. As indicated above, the sense of the past that we carry with us as social actors into the present is not so much concerned with objective historical facts, but rather with affec-tive responses associated with memories of past events. We experience the emotion attached to the memories more directly than we may be aware of the value attached to the feeling. But the value is embedded in the feeling and orients the ways in which we unconsciously make sense of the situation that triggered the past memory (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Melchin and Picard 2008).

Melchin and Picard state that feelings do their work as carriers of value in several ways. First, the emotion associated with the past memory connects the present with the past in a way that may color the actor's attitude towards the present (2008). The experience of past conflict is often associated with feelings of anger, hurt, fear, blame, disappointment, or loss, and these power-ful emotions can influence the parties' behavior in significant ways (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Melchin and Picard 2008; Pruitt and Kim 2004). Pruitt and Kim suggest that feelings of anger and blame can often result in escalated retaliatory spirals, as one party seeks to punish the other for past injustices or perceived wrongs, leading the other to adopt a defensive response, which further inhibits the capacity for collaborative negotiation. Feelings attached to memories from past encounters between the parties may not only cause the parties to stay entrenched in their positions but also distort or adjust their motivational goals in unhelpful or unproductive ways (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Fisher and Shapiro 2005; Melchin and Picard 2008; Pruitt and Kim 2004).

Second, feelings do their work as carriers of values by being inscribed within wider structures of symbolic meaning that not only influence the parties' attitudes towards their pasts but also how they imagine or structure the future. As Melchin and Picard observe, our values may be grounded in past associations, but their impact is not limited to interpreting these past events. "These pasts situate us within particular interpretations of the present, that lead to specific expectations about the future" (Melchin and Picard 2008: 86). In this sense, how we respond emotionally towards others is not just a function of our past encounters with them, but is also influenced by feeling-laden value narratives that we may not

even be consciously aware of and that we project onto our future encounters with others (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Melchin and Picard 2008).

This phenomena is operative in all our inter-subjective relations with others but is perhaps most evident in the context of cross-cultural encounters, when there is a greater risk that participants may misread each other's intentions, motivations, or communication signals (Galluccio 2011). How we present an image of ourselves in our interactions with others and how we expect others to respond to us (Goffman 1967) may be coded differently in different social and cultural contexts. If a participant in a communicative exchange is unaware of the symbolic or emotional resonances unconsciously embedded in their own message, they risk generating responses that may be very different from their intentions (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). As Watzlawick et al. (1967) point out, all messages operate at least two levels, the level of content and the level of affect, or relationship. What a message communicates to its recipient about how they are perceived by the sender may have as much influence on the recipient's response as the direct content of the message. Yet experience suggests we are often ill-equipped at decoding others' emotional communications or in predicting others' emotional responses to our own messages (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Jervis 1976). In the context of international negotiations when the parties do not necessarily share a relationship of trust or common cultural values, the risks of miscommunication or misreading the emotional messages attached to other's communications is obviously high (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008: 47–50).

The manner in which the emotional side of the brain exercises an influence on the cognitive processes of reasoning and evaluation is becoming more clearly understood as a result of recent advances in neuroscience research as Aquilar and Galluccio (2008) have extensively talked about in their seminal book. According to Antonio Damasio (1994; in Aquilar and Galluccio 2008), the emotional part of the brain does not function separately from those parts of the brain associated with logical reasoning, but is functionally connected through complex neural networks that link both parts of the brain together. Research subjects who suffered injury to those parts of the brain that are associated with the processing of emotions and feelings, but not to that part of the brain that involved reasoning capacity, were discovered to be unable to function successfully in many situations involving practical decision tasks or choices. Damasio theorizes that emotions provided somatic markers which assist in the decision process by associating choices with the recall of emotional responses grounded in past experiences (1994; in Aquilar and Galluccio 2008: 60). The inability to tap into the emotional somatic markers provided by these past experiences interfered with the decision process, such that the subject was unable to connect the analysis of potential future outcomes with past feelings of pleasure, pain, anxiety, or fear. The inability to make use of these feelings associated with past memories to frame the choice and select among options left research subjects often trapped in an endless cycle of weighing options without ever being able to arrive at a decision (Damasio 1994; in Aquilar and Galluccio 2008: 60).

The implications of this research on the ways in which feelings as somatic markers impact on the decision process are clear. Emotions associated with past experiences and deeply held cares often do have an influence on the parties' behavior and are likely to impact on the manner in which parties make decisions or respond to the actions or gestures of others in the negotiation process (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Fisher and Shapiro 2005; Melchin and Picard 2008). Skilled negotiators therefore need to have training on the ways in which feelings operate as carriers of values within the negotiation process. As we have seen, this often occurs unconsciously, without the parties themselves being aware of this. Cognitive theorists refer to this behavioral tendency in terms of the availability heuristic, when parties tend to exaggerate similarities between present events and past situations, interpreting ambiguous information in terms of what is most strongly remembered about past events (Fiske 2004: 137; Stein 2005; Tversky and Kahneman 1974). Melchin and Picard (2008) observe that when

parties become more aware of the impact of their feeling-laden value narratives on the way they frame the conflict or negotiation situation, they may be more able to separate or "de-link" the negative emotions associated with memories of past events from the negotiation task they confront in the present. Along similar lines, Aquilar and Galluccio (2008) emphasize the need for negotiators to become more skilled in registering and responding to the emotional communication dynamic that takes place within negotiation.

Perceptions and Cognitive Schema

The title of Damasio's book, *Descartes' Error*, draws attention to the ways in which we are perhaps unconsciously programmed in Western culture to distinguish between the affective and the rational, between "mind" and "body," with mind in the driver's seat, so to speak, while the feelings are given a secondary role in any instrumentally rational decision-making process. In a similar fashion, the treatment of perception and cognition as distinct psychological processes, with perception associated with the body's sensory receptors, while cognition is associated with the mind, tends to obscure the ways in which unconscious associations and cognitive biases may also influence the process of perception by selectively focusing the attention of the observer on certain aspects of the perceptual field (Barry 1997: 37, 51–56; Fiske 2004: 81–85; Dowd and Miller 2011: 76–78).

What has been called the "halo effect," for example, has to do with judging or evaluating a person, place, or event, by reference to a single trait or experience (Thorndike 1920). A politician may be considered as trustworthy or competent, for example, by viewers watching a televised debate, based on the visual and oral impression made on the voters watching, through their tone of voice, physical stance, or degree of eye contact made with the audience by looking directly into the camera. Failure to talk directly to the other candidates or not looking directly at the camera may be perceived by viewers watching as an indication that the candidate is uncomfortable with

the political positions they espouse and thus less competent or electable as a candidate. The visual or oral impression made on the observers through the candidate's demeanor may operate to offset the impression made by the substance of the candidate's presentation, a phenomenon that is also familiar to trial lawyers in preparing their witness for a jury trial. The decision to allow the accused to testify in a criminal trial, for example, may be influenced by the lawyer's view of the impression likely to be made on the jury or the judge by the witness's demeanor if they take the stand. A verdict of guilt or innocence could thus be influenced by the visual impression made on the observers by a witness's demeanor in the courtroom (Efran 1974).

The halo effect operates through a process of unconscious association, whereby the sensory data observed, the tone of voice, or visual demeanor of the candidate or witness is then associated in the viewer's mind with value judgements of likeability or unlikeability, of trustworthiness or untrustworthiness, or of confidence or lack of confidence that the viewer associates with the behavior observed. In this sense, the value judgement, or the valence, associated with the behavior observed is not inscribed in the sensory information itself, but is attributed to the behavior as a result of the observer's own preexisting expectations.

It might be, for example, that the politician's failure to speak directly to the camera when engaged in a debate with others is due to a lack of media experience. Likewise, a witness's failure to answer questions directly on the witness stand, or to look the jury or the cross-examining lawyer in the eye, may have more to do with cultural habits on the part of the witness, in which looking another person directly in the eye may be perceived as a sign of disrespect or challenge, especially if the other person is a person of authority. But the cultural meaning attached to the witness' behavior is likely to be misinterpreted by the observers, who rely on their own cultural assumptions in interpreting the behavior.

The example illustrates the ways in which heuristics and cognitive schema may influence the perception or decision-making process (Pruitt

and Carnevale 1993; Vertzberger 1990). Heuristics can be thought of as sets of mental inference rules that are relied on to organize and interpret information. A heuristic enables the observer to process information more rapidly, by picking out salient features of the information obtained and assimilating it with information already available to the observer (Pruitt and Carnevale 1993; Stein 2005; Tversky and Kahneman 1974). As Pruitt and Carnevale put it (1993), as social actors we are cognitive misers, who are always in receipt of more information from our environment that we can cognitively process. So we rely on heuristics as informational shortcuts to speed up the information processing capacity of the brain and enable us to make judgments or inferences about other people's observed behavior (Fiske 2004; Fiske and Taylor 1991; Stein 2005; Tversky and Kahneman 1974).

Heuristics do their work as mental inference rules and carriers of values not only at the level of the individual decision-maker but also at the level of the group. Research on in-group and out-group biases has identified several ways in which processes of group identification may have an impact on the perceptions of those who share the same group affiliations. In one study of students who had witnessed a college football game, researchers found that students who identified as Princeton supporters believed that the Dartmouth team had committed twice as many fouls on the Princeton team as the Princeton team had committed. But students who identified as Dartmouth supporters thought both teams had committed approximately the same number of infractions (Pruitt and Carnevale 1993). Selective perception thus appears to be influenced by group affiliation, a process that is reinforced, according to Pruitt and Carnevale, by selective memory and attributional distortions, in which the behavior of one group is often interpreted by members of another group in accordance with their preexisting expectations of the other group (1993). Information that is inconsistent with the prior expectations may often be ignored or explained away by temporary situational factors, without impacting on the stable characteristics of the in-group's perception of the "out-group" (Pruitt and Carnevale 1993; Stein 1996, 2005).

Another mechanism through which social actors function as cognitive misers (Fiske and Taylor 1991; Pruitt and Carnevale 1993) in processing information is through the use of cognitive schemas. Pruitt and Carnevale define schemas as "cognitive structures that contain information about aspects of a particular situation or a general class of situations," that enable social actors to construe or classify situations in a particular way (1993). For instance, a physician or paramedic arriving at the scene of a medical emergency will perform a triage analysis in order to determine what forms of medical intervention are immediately necessary for the patients requiring care. The triage analysis is intended to assist the medical professional in efficiently allocating limited medical resources, or time, by determining the priority of patients' treatments based on the severity of their condition. Likewise, a law firm, contacted by the family with a view to making a personal injury claim in response to the injuries suffered in a car crash, is likely to make what amounts to a legal triage analysis in the first interview with the clients, to determine what legal resources should be allocated to best address the clients' legal needs.

Cognitive schemas are often based on previous training and experience and facilitate information processing by enabling the decision-maker to concentrate attention on salient features of the environment in order to frame the decision problem and establish parameters for action or response. Stein suggests that people use schemas to organize their environment and develop "scripts" to make sense of people or events (2005). When the salient features of the presenting situation are compatible with the observers' preexisting schema or scripts for coding information, few problems are likely to arise for the decision-maker (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). The new information can be assimilated to the observer's previous experience, and a definition of the situation can be arrived at, objectives reviewed, and an assessment of the means to accomplish the desired goals determined on. But if the presenting situation contains features that are not fully compatible with the observer's preexisting experience or cognitive schema, then an

information processing and evaluation problem is likely to arise. The observer or decision-maker can try to address this information processing difficulty by adapting the preexisting schema to correspond with the new situation or by retrieving from memory another schema that might prove more useful in framing the situation or processing the new information (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). Frequently, however, the cognitive filtering and evaluation processes at work, especially those that operate tacitly, without the conscious awareness of the observer, may function to suppress or to parse the "dissonant" information or to shunt it to a cognitive siding, so to speak, where it may not interfere with the decision-framing or problem-solving process.

Argyris refers to this kind of tacit information selection and evaluation process as a paradoxical form of "skilled incompetence" (1986). The more the observer is successful in relying on familiar cognitive schema for framing new situations and sorting, filtering, and evaluating new information, the less reflective the observer is likely to be in examining their own internal inference rules for processing information or verifying whether their framing of the situation is necessarily valid or accurate. Frequently, cognitive biases enter into the problem framing and decision process, biases that may not be apparent to the decision-maker, even while apparent to an outside observer (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). When tacit assumptions and cognitive biases are unconsciously entrenched, the process may give rise to the phenomenon of the "self-fulfilling prophecy," as the observer selectively pays attention to new information that confirms the observer's prior expectations or framing of the situation while disregarding or filtering out information that does not conform (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Faure 2011; Jervis 1976; Merton 1996; Pruitt and Kim 2004).

The self-fulfilling prophecy works through a process of circular causality, in which new information generated in response to the action of the observer feeds back to confirm the premise on which the observer initially responded. According to Merton (1996), the self-fulfilling prophecy begins with a false definition of the situation,

which then elicits a certain form of behavior that then appears to "cause" the original prediction to come true. This then perpetuates what Merton refers to as a "reign of error" (1996: 185), since the holder of the false definition can then point to subsequent events as proof that he or she was right from the very beginning.

Psychotherapists have observed the effects of the self-fulfilling prophecy in the context of small group or family dynamics, for instance, when one member of the group feels themselves to be misunderstood or distrusted by other members of the group and responds by withdrawing from communication or interacts with other members of the group in mistrustful or hostile ways, thus generating a response that further proves the initial hypothesis that they do not like me (Watzlawick et al. 1967). Bateson's concept of the communicative "double bind" also involves group dynamics that operate in ways akin to the self-fulfilling prophecy. The double bind occurs where a person sending a message encodes within it two incongruent or contradictory instructions (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick and Weakland 1977; Watzlawick et al. 1967). A typical example might arise in the family situation indicated above, in which a parent instructs a youth who has been rude or aggressive to another family member to apologize while at the same insisting that the apology must be authentic. The purpose of demanding an apology from the perceived wrongdoer is to de-escalate the situation and reduce feelings of resentment caused by the rude behavior. But for the situation to de-escalate, the other family members must be convinced that the apology was sincerely meant. But how can this be determined if the apology was mandatory? Moreover, if the youth feels that the apology was forced and the reaction to his or her conduct was excessive, this may fuel feelings of resentment on the part of the "wrongdoer," leading to further violations of family norms in the future, in a self-reinforcing spiral.

These negative communicative dynamics do not just manifest themselves in small group settings but also apply to situations of international conflict or in the context of international negotiations. Actors who mistrust each other's

intentions tend to orient their behavior towards each other in ways that generate responses that confirm the initial hypothesis (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Jervis 1976; Pruitt and Kim 2004). Particularly where there has been a history of conflict between the parties, negotiators have to be wary of unintentionally framing any positions presented at the negotiation table in the form of a double bind. Parties who experience themselves caught in a double bind often have difficulty extricating themselves from its pathological effects without fulfilling the prior behavioral expectations of the other party (Watzlawick et al. 1967), a consequence very typical of both sides' thinking in situations of entrenched conflict (Faure 2011; Kelman 1987; Pruitt and Kim 2004; Stein 1996, 2005).

Bar-Tal (2000) examines these kinds of dynamics in his discussion of the psychological changes needed for reconciliation to take place following the termination of a protracted conflict. The minimum requirement for peace is a negotiated end to the conflict. But for peace to take root, there needs to be a change in the "conflict ethos" that has sustained the conflict for so long, especially in situations of intractable conflict that have lasted for more than one generation, so that a generation has come to maturity knowing no other reality but the conflict (Bar-Tal 2000). A conflict ethos consists of an amalgam of several interrelated elements, including a strong sense of group identity; willingness to make sacrifices or endure suffering for the sake of the group; a belief in the justness of the "cause"; a positive self-image, which operates to attribute positive traits to one's own group; and a corresponding negative image of the other, which functions to delegitimize the other side's conflict goals and to attribute negative traits to the "enemy" (Bar-Tal 1989, 2000; Pruitt and Kim 2004; Stein 2005).

According to Bar-Tal, these schemas of self and other constitute a psychological infrastructure which provides members of the conflict group with a coping mechanism to endure the strain and the costs of protracted conflict and the motivation to continue with the struggle (2000). In a study of the negotiation process that led to the signing of the Good Friday peace accords in Northern Ireland in 1998, Curran and Sebenius (2003) indicated that many of these psychological dynamics were present and functioned as inhibitors to the willingness of either side to trust the other or to move towards a negotiated settlement. One of the factors noted by the study's authors was what Pruitt and Kim (2004) refer to as the "mirror image" phenomenon, in which each side's negative image of the other as an implacable enemy intent on denying the group the possibility of ever achieving its legitimate conflict goals was almost a mirror image of the other side's view of the conflict (see also Kelman 1987; Faure 2011; Moore 1993). In the Northern Ireland context, both Unionists and Republicans adhered to strongly entrenched schemas of the self as a historically marginalized community, whose right to self-determination and historical connection with the territory in dispute was both materially and symbolically threatened by the claims of the other side (Curran and Sebenius 2003; Mitchell 1999). Both sides were thus used to framing the conflict in symbolic terms as a zero sum contest, in which recognition of one side's legitimate conflict goals could only be achieved at the expense of the other side's (Kelman 1987; O'Leary and McGarry 1996; Nic Craith 2002; Pruitt and Kim 2004). Processes of selective memory further reinforced both side's schemas of victimization by legitimizing or leaving out of memory instances in which the threatened group inflicts retaliatory violence on the other group (Curran and Sebenius 2003; Pruitt and Kim 2004).

The study by Curran and Sebenius focused on the strategy of the mediator (former Democratic majority house leader in the United States Senate, George Mitchell, and his team) to foster a "willing coalition of the center" against the extremists on either side, who tended to dominate the dialogue and suppress more moderate voices on either side who were in favor of power sharing and cooperation (2003). Blocking coalitions of extremists had effectively prevented all previous attempts to arrive at a negotiated end to the conflict (Curran and Sebenius 2003; Mitchell 1999).

Complicating the process of building a coalition of moderates on both sides was that various

positions on either side of the conflict tended to be framed in terms of radically incompatible views of the future (Curran and Sebenius 2003). For those political parties associated with the Unionist cause, the vision of the future that informed their negotiating positions was based on maintaining the political union with Britain, as part of an industrialized, modern, democratic English-speaking political community that was also part of the European Community. This vision of the future encompassed both economic and security concerns and at the same time important symbolic dimensions (MacDonagh 1983; Nic Craith 2002). For many of those associated with the Catholic or Republican cause, the vision of the future remained linked to a vision of a United Ireland, which had been a goal pursued by the leaders of the Home Rule struggle against British colonial rule in the nineteenth century and echoes of which remained imbued in memories of the civil war that followed the partition of Ireland following negotiations with the British government that led to the creation of the Irish Free State in 1921 (Curran and Sebenius 2003; Keogh and Haltzel 1993; MacDonagh 1983).

On both sides of the conflict, therefore, and for moderates no less than for extremists, the vision of the future could not easily be disconnected from memories of the past. This was rather chillingly illustrated by a slogan shouted at a rally in 1973, which was used as a title for another study of the negotiation process, "To hell with the future, let's get on with the past." (Curran and Sebenius 2003: 122). This suggests that the ghosts of the past still cast a shadow over the negotiation process and influenced not only the goals and strategies of those political parties directly participating in the negotiations but also the mind-sets of those who were witnesses to the negotiation process and whose continued support remains necessary for any negotiated peace to be sustainable (Keogh and Haltzel 1993; MacDonagh 1983; Mitchell 1999).

Consequently, it may not always be possible or easy for the participants in any international negotiation to separate their vision of the future from their remembered experience of the past. As Melchin and Picard (2008) observe, feeling-laden value narratives from past experiences influence the ways in which parties and their constituencies are able to engage in dialogue with each other in the present and imagine the future. At the same time, viewing the parties as historically situated actors whose attitudes and values are necessarily shaped by their remembered experience of past encounters with others is not to imply that the future is always in thrall to that past in any predetermined way. Rather, what we argue is that in any negotiation situation, particularly one which holds the potential for differently structuring the relationship between the parties, what is under negotiation is not just the conditions of that future relationship to which the various parties around the bargaining table may be committed, to a greater or a lesser degree. At the same time, the very process of seeking to realize a differently imagined future through negotiation involves, however indirectly, an attempt at reconfiguring the parties' preexisting relation with their own pasts. And this process of renegotiating the participants' own relationship with their pasts may be one of the most complex and least understood psychological dynamics of the negotiation process (Bar-Tal 2000).

Conclusion: Implications for Insight

In this chapter, we have tried to show how the Insight approach to conflict resolution helps focus attention on many of the underlying psychological dynamics that may impact on the interaction between the parties in the negotiation process. The Insight approach focuses on the parties becoming more reflexively self-aware of how the interpretive frameworks or scripts (Stein 2005) they use for understanding the conflict or negotiation situation operate to constrain their horizons for action. When parties are "certain" about the attitudes or intentions of the other, they consciously or unconsciously organize their own response to the other party in ways that reflect this degree of certainty. Feelings triggered by processes of selective memory reinforce this tendency and make it hard for parties to shift their horizons or to explore different trajectories for

action that are not already pre-scripted in terms of their prior sets of beliefs about the other. For this reason, the Insight approach places emphasis on negotiation less as a structured bargaining process through which parties arrived at solutions to jointly defined problems and more as a communicative learning process through which parties can discover more about self, the other, and the cares and threats that underlay the parties' respective negotiating positions. Gaining insights into what motivates the other or what threats to cares underlay the other's bargaining positions may help parties become more uncertain about each other's intentions and to explore horizons for action that might have been formerly closed to them.

The Insight approach is based on four principles, all of which are applicable to the preceding discussion concerning psychological dimensions of the negotiation process. First, the parties to any conflict or negotiation are historically situated social actors, whose attitudes and values, perceptions, and motivations are shaped by their group affiliations, which in turn are likely to feed back into the parties' goals and strategies in the negotiation process. As such the parties at the negotiation table are not simply rational decision-makers concerned with maximizing their subjective utility under conditions of uncertainty. As representatives of collective group interests, the negotiating parties often have to be concerned with maintaining group solidarity and at the same time engaging in negotiations with other parties. This process of engaging communicatively on two fronts, with different audiences, at one and the same time, creates risks of miscommunication or miscalibration of intentions. Parties may be forced to shift their negotiation standpoint as a result of pressure from domestic political constituencies while at the same time trying to reassure other negotiating partners that they remain committed to a collaborative process. In this context, managing the political climate in which the negotiation takes place may often be as important to the success of the negotiations as the terms actually agreed on by the parties.

Second, as historically situated actors, the parties' motivations are shaped not just by their own interests but also by their belief structures or values (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). As Insight theorists put it, our cares extend beyond the self (Melchin and Picard 2008). Normative considerations often enter into the negotiation process, especially where there has been a history of conflict or rivalry between the parties. As indicated above, the negotiations leading up to the signing of the Good Friday peace accords in Northern Ireland in 1998 were significantly influenced by memories of past grievances, on both sides of the conflict, often stretching back decades or even centuries. Negotiating parties thus have to be very circumspect in dealing with the past. On the one hand, failure to acknowledge emotions triggered by memories of past grievances may be a factor which inhibits one or more of the parties from entering into negotiation or reaching agreement with former adversaries (Mitchell 1999). On the other hand, too much attention given to memories of past grievances may prevent the parties from moving beyond this past reality to create the conditions for a new relationship that is not based on memories of past conflict. The past thus still imposes its grip on the present, even where negotiators seek to navigate their way around it.

Third, it follows from the preceding point that negotiators do not just act as instrumentally rational calculators, as suggested by economic theory, but also as political actors who need to be conscious of the symbolic dimensions of the negotiation process. Symbolic issues often have great emotional significance for the parties. Emotions act as carriers of values; and values are what drive the parties' emotional attachment to the conflict (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Melchin and Picard 2008). Again negotiators have to be aware of this psychological dynamic. Symbolic gestures of recognition may be significant in modifying party attitudes and opening up space for parties to engage in collaborative negotiations. Lack of symbolic recognition often results in hardening of negotiating positions, making parties less willing to make concessions or to enter into collaborative negotiations. How parties extend symbolic recognition to each other's interests in the negotiation process also affects

negotiation dynamics. Again, this is not simply an instrumental calculus. Symbolic gestures of recognition have to be meaningful for the parties; otherwise, they are likely to have little effect in shifting party attitudes.

Fourth, awareness of these psychological dynamics is important in helping negotiating parties navigate this unknown psychological terrain successfully (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008: 83). The ways in which feelings act as carriers of value, or memories of past encounters continue to influence our ways of making sense of the present, often operate unconsciously, without the parties being consciously aware of this. Schemas and heuristics function as cognitive shortcuts, enabling us to process information more rapidly and to make rapid assessments of the conditions in the environment towards which our purposive actions are directed. These are not isolated instances of deviations from a norm of rationality, but practical strategies decision-makers adopt in trying to manage all the various sources of information available to them (Vertzberger 1990). We rarely have access to perfect information or time to evaluate all the information that is available. Instead, we selectively parse the available sources of information, discounting or discarding that which we cannot make use of. Perhaps the most famous literary example of such information parsing strategies is that of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, who claimed to neither know nor care whether the sun revolved around the earth, or the earth around the sun, because he did not have room in his cranial storage capacity to store such—to him—useless information. For Holmes it was more useful to have a comprehensive knowledge of the different soils of London, or the ways in which different occupations could be discerned from slight traces on a person's clothing, than to have a detailed knowledge of the solar system. So he discounted, or in his case discarded, all information that he considered to be irrelevant to his profession, that of catching criminals and solving fictional mysteries.

In Holmes' case we are confident as readers that he will not "misread" others or overlook anything of importance in solving the mystery he is presented with. But for most practical decision-making tasks in the real world, we can never be sure of this. Frequently, we are not even aware that we may be ignoring relevant information that could help us to solve problems or to reach an agreement. On the contrary, the cognitive tools we rely on for making sense of other's intentions or behavior towards us, our schemas of self and other, often mislead us into thinking that what we believe to be true about the situation we confront, or about the other's intentions, is in fact the truth. Yet this space between representation and reality, how the world appears to the consciousness of an observer, and how it really is can often provide the space in which negotiators can find room for collaborative negotiated settlements. For this gap to open up and new horizons for decision-making to emerge, the parties first have to become less certain about their own presuppositions and more aware of how their own frame of reference may in fact inhibit the search for more integrative solutions to the problems that led them to the negotiating table in the first place. It is this self-reflective aspect of the decision-making process that the Insight approach to conflict resolution was developed to address (see Chap. 16; Aquilar and Galluccio 2008, 2011; Melchin and Picard 2008; Price 2013).

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