WORDS OF CONFLICT, WORDS OF WAR

How the Language We Use in Political Processes Sparks Fighting

Fathali Moghaddam and Rom Harré, Editors

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PRAEGER

AN IMPRINT OF ABC-CLIO, LLC
Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Words of conflict, words of war : how the language we use in political processes sparks fighting / Fathali Moghaddam and Rom Harré, [editors].
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-313-37676-4 (hardcopy : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-313-37677-1 (ebook)
1. Communication in politics. 2. Language and languages—Political aspects. I. Moghaddam, Fathali M. II. Harré, Rom.
JA85.W67 2010
320.01′4—dc22 2010004044

ISBN: 978-0-313-37676-4
EISBN: 978-0-313-37677-1

14 13 12 11 10 1 2 3 4 5

This book is also available on the World Wide Web as an eBook.
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Praeger
An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC

ABC-CLIO, LLC
130 Cremona Drive, P.O. Box 1911
Santa Barbara, California 93116-1911

This book is printed on acid-free paper ∞

Manufactured in the United States of America

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Words, Conflicts, and Political Processes

Fathali M. Moghaddam and Rom Harré

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad marked Israel's 60th anniversary by calling the Jewish state a "stinking corpse" that will soon disappear.

"Those who think they can revive the stinking corpse of the usurping and fake Israeli regime by throwing a birthday part are seriously mistaken," Ahmadinejad said to IRNA, Iran's official news agency.

Christian Broadcasting Network report

I cannot believe this is happening in America—it shows everything is possible if you work hard. It's a very happy moment.

A resident of Maryland, originally from West Africa, reacting to the inauguration ceremony for President Barack Obama (Tierney 2009)

QUEEN:
Do not for ever with they vailèd lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou knowest 'tis common. All that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET:
Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN:
If it be so,
Why seems it do particular with thee?

HAMLET:
"Seems," madam? Nay, it is. I know not "seems."

Shakespeare, Hamlet, I.2.70–77

The engagement of people in the political process, in ways that interest psychologists, comprises two major issues. First, how are visions of the future of a social group—be it a family, club, nation-state, or international community—devised, critically assessed, and adopted or rejected as defining "policy"? Second, and more closely tied to the lives of members of political communities, is the question of how such policies are to be implemented. Here we are in the domain of social psychology. Sometimes policies are implemented by force, sometimes by the conventional powers of a bureaucracy, and sometimes by persuasion. But how does the legitimacy of a state apparatus or the force of the persuasion serve to engender commitment in the target so that it might lead to action? How can people be brought to accept a distribution of rights and duties within which to frame their actions—rights and duties that, when distributed, will bring about the implementation of the policies of those who claim to be concerned with the fate of the political institution in focus? Leaving aside the use of force as the basis for the implementation of policy, we find that the means are discursive, that is, linguistic and symbolic. To investigate this aspect of the psychology of the political process, we need to make use of *positioning theory* and its analytical methods to bring to light the cognitive processes by which rights and duties are defined and distributed among the relevant population, which may be the whole body of citizenry.

There would be no political domain in human affairs if there were not incipient conflict and disagreement with whatever is or has been proposed for the future of the community. Where the free expression of opinion is permitted, there is almost always a near-perfect balance between the two sides on almost any question. Elections, and so the future plans for the society, are actually decided by a very small moiety of the population, the "floating voters." Politics and diversity of opinion march together. But diversity of opinion readily escalates into conflict. The political process can therefore be looked on as a form of conflict resolution or, at least, as suspension or transformation.

The focus of the contributions to this volume is the narratives people use to position both themselves and others in the course of political processes that influence conflict and peace, from the level of international conflicts (e.g., the Middle East), to the societal level of national politics (e.g., presidential elections and conflicts between rival groups), to the micro level of interpersonal conflicts (e.g., within a family). Our goal is to gather new ideas for better understanding and, in some cases, for ultimately resolving conflicts by applying positioning analysis to political processes.

Positioning theory is about how people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others. Often, positioning has direct moral implications, such as some person or group being located as "trusted" or "distrusted," "with us" or "against us," "to be saved" or "to be wiped out." At the heart of all conflicts is the form of words people use to position themselves and "the enemy" with respect to rights, demands placed on others, and demands placed on them by others (Moghaddam et al. 2000). It is with words that we ascribe rights and claim them for ourselves and place duties on others. These may be as mundane as the rights and duties that shape the micropolitics of a family, or as grandiose as those claimed by imperialists or ethnic cleaners in the name of God or expediency or even science.

Consider the words quoted at the start of this chapter. The first statement is by the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and is part of his well-publicized attacks on Israel. The statement by Ahmadinejad is tied to the tragic conflict that continues to dominate the lives of people in the Near and Middle East, as well as political processes among Iran, the United States, and Arab states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. As explored in chapter 10, "mutual positioning" by President Ahmadinejad (in office 2005–present) and President George W. Bush (2000–2008) enabled extremist factions in both Iran and the United States to better mobilize their political supporters in their respective countries, as well as at the international level.

The second quotation is from a resident of Maryland who came from West Africa. In celebrating the inauguration of President Barack Obama, this individual reaffirms the American Dream: "It shows everything is possible if you work hard." Thus, the success of President Obama, as the first African American to climb to the most powerful office in the states, is used to position *everyone* in America as being in an open society where "everything is possible"—but only "if you work hard." Conversely, the person who fails to succeed is positioned as not having fulfilled the duty to work hard, thus endorsing the self-help ideology celebrated in the United States. Thus, the success of Obama becomes an indication of the legitimacy of the sociopolitical order in the United States.

The third quotation is from Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, in which the hero has to maneuver extremely carefully because of his precarious situation. His uncle has murdered the former king, Hamlet's father; married his mother; and become the new king. Hamlet refuses to cast aside his mourning clothes and outward signs of grieving, but he must be careful, because if he challenges his uncle openly, he will be killed without having taken revenge for his father's murder. Throughout the play, Hamlet debates how and when to take action, anguishing over each different position he might take so as to be sure he properly revenges his murdered father. Hamlet's goal is not a political revolution; he seeks personal revenge rather than a change in the social order. Indeed, the quality of his revenge depends on the preservation of that very social order in which his act of revenge makes sense.

The case of Hamlet leads into two important contributions of positioning theory for better understanding: on the one hand, the intrapersonal processes associated with the macropolitical order and, on the other hand, the maintenance of the social order.

INTRAPOSITIONING IN THE POLITICAL DOMAIN

Could a person take up a position with respect to himself or herself? That is, could I have rights and duties *to myself*? Two cases suggest themselves for analysis.

The first is that of the floating voter. This person, beloved of psychologists, instead of answering a questionnaire with a firm yes or no, Democrat or Republican, for or against, offers "I don't know; I haven't yet made up my mind" as an answer. Somewhere between now and polling day, the floating voter will reach the shore of certainty, but which shore is not known even to that very person prior to the moment of decision.

How are duties and rights at work in this context? Both sides of this person's internal debating self are sure that they have a right to vote; otherwise, the internal debate is pointless. Shall I vote for Josef Vissarionovich Stalin or not? But there is only one candidate! How about duties? There is a kind of logical constraint on our floating voter, for he or she must vote one way or the other, or else the voting paper or machine entry will be void. If there are many candidates for the one seat, the same principle applies. Only one person can be elected, so the floating voter must, in the end, choose one. So the duty to vote, which democracies enjoy, must go along with a duty to choose.

If I position myself as a floating voter, that makes me a voter of a sort, and so it entails that I have accepted the duty to vote. But do I have a duty to vote Conservative or Labour, Communist or New Russia? It seems to us that, even if I have made up my mind to vote Green, I can have no duty to vote that way, though I may have my reasons even if they are so degenerate as to be the result of the flip of a coin. Of course, one might say that this is just a special case of the duty to choose, but that is hardly a duty if it is a necessary condition for voting, since the duty pertains to the vote itself and not to the conditions that make that vote possible.

The second case is that of the strategic voter. This person gets into a different debate with herself: a debate about whether there is a duty to vote for a candidate that is *not* the strategic voter's first choice—the one there seems to be a prima facie duty to vote for. The strategic voter believes that she has a prior duty to ensure that one of the other candidates does *not* get elected. The strategic voter knows that she has a right to vote for whomsoever she cares to. But when it comes to duties, particularly if she thinks her preferred candidate has little chance of winning the contest, she turns her vote to least disliked of the remain candidates. This strategy can have a profound effect on the outcome of votes in particular constituencies, but also sometimes even in the overall result of a national election.

"I'm not really in favor of Barack Obama, but I would do anything to stop Sarah Palin from being only a heartbeat away from the Presidency." Here we have a nice case of meta-positioning—positioning oneself as having a higher duty than the first-order duty of supporting the candidate one believes would be the best in office.

From the point of view of positioning theory, we are tracking the shifting views that people in certain situations find themselves in when they believe that not only do they have a *right* to vote—the hard-won universal suffrage—but also a *duty* to vote. Australian politics might be an interesting case for the study of intrapolitical positioning, since everyone is obliged by law to vote in elections there. There is no such vote as an abstention, so the question of the right to vote never arises, since the moral order of elections is describable in terms of duties alone. Of course, the right to engage in strategic voting is still available in Australia.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

The most significant and persisting problem in the social psychology of the political arena is that of understanding the origin, maintenance, and repair of social order. Without some form of social order, no political life at all is possible. Thomas Hobbes's famous observation of what a human world without social order would be like runs as follows: "The life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." There would be only a war of man against man, and, as we would now add, woman against woman. Hobbes's solution is also a sketch of one way that a social order might be instituted and maintained: by a tacit agreement to install an authoritarian ruler who, by force if necessary, will ensure that social order is maintained, and for Hobbes this meant above all the security of the person.

However, this is not the only way to solve the practical problem of social order. Perhaps social psychologists could use their knowledge of how local, small-scale forms of order are created, maintained, and repaired to suggest a more general theory of the psychological basis of social order on a grander scale (see the discussion of the "psychological social contract" in Moghaddam 2008). Here, we enter into the political process as we ordinarily understand it—the management of the affairs of institutions as large as nations and as small as hospitals and schools.

It is for this reason that positioning theory, as an analysis of the psychological processes involved in the management of institutions by discursive means, could show why some political processes are stable and successful, while others collapse. Small-scale order depends on the assignment and acceptance, perhaps after initial resistance and negotiation, of a distribution of rights and duties, actual and supererogatory. Underlying this process is the tacit knowledge or belief that the potential members of the nascent institution have about the powers, capacities, and vulnerabilities of each other.

It is noteworthy that Marx and Engels saw this point as fundamental to a morally just political order when they declared that the state should demand something from each according to his ability and give something to each according to his need. Unfortunately for their noble ideal, it turned out that the distribution of positions fell into the hands of authoritarian bureaucrats who brooked no negotiation of the assignment of rights and duties. Positioning theory emphasizes that these assignments can be consensual—indeed, for a stable regime, they must be.

THE WIDER ROLE OF POSITIONING THEORY IN POLITICAL PROCESSES

Sometimes, of course, it is necessary to intensify conflicts in the interest of some greater good. Positioning theory is germane to understanding this process as well. In so doing, we shall add an innovative, fresh perspective on how better to understand and explain political processes that impact on conflict. This new perspective allows us to better contribute to conflict resolution through highlighting and assessing the story lines used in political processes. Thus enlightened, we might reach a better understanding of the flow of moral attributions in political narratives associated with conflict.

Some of the chapters in this volume focus on the discourse of people who enjoy high positions and are directly involved in international conflict situations, such as powerful politicians. Other chapters focus on people who are lower in the power hierarchy but who are still part of the growing bureaucracy that mediates between "lawmakers" (in government, in organizations, and elsewhere) and citizens. Of equal importance in the practical affairs of life with the grand themes of international politics and cultural rivalries is the smaller-scale positioning such as the discursive procedures by which candidates for office, high and low, are selected.

This volume fills an important gap in psychological, microsociological, linguistic, and political science literature on political processes and conflict. This gap is not filled by the traditional literature on political behavior (e.g., Ascher 2005; Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, and Preston 2004; Jost 2004; Kuklinski, 2001, 2002; Post and George 2004; Sears and Jervis 2003; Shephard 2006), which includes new series of volumes on political psychology (e.g., the *Advances in Political Psychology* series published by Elsevier in 2004). Although the available literature is in some respects insightful, our discussion fills an important gap in conflict studies by focusing on *narratives and political processes* through the application of positioning analysis—that is, how rights and duties are distributed among the actors in the course of complex discursive interactions, sometimes personal, sometimes in the newspapers and television media.

Moreover, in this exploration of conflict situations, we pay particular attention to variations in the forms that political representation takes ("democracy" can take many different forms) and the bureaucracies that mediate the acts of lawmakers with the everyday lives of citizens. We believe that such bureaucracies are of fundamental importance in political processes impacting on conflict and deserve far more attention from researchers.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, BUREAUCRACY, AND CONFLICT

Received wisdom tells us that democratic societies do not go to war against one another, and democracies are more inclined to resolve conflicts through peaceful means. However, these broad generalizations brush over various complications, such as the complexity of democracy itself. It is commonplace to point to the huge variety of meanings of the word *democracy* as currently used. It can mean government *for* the people, as in an idealized communist regime, or government *by* the people, as in an idealized liberal democracy. On the whole, the root ideas in Western democratic states include:

- A majority of the people must ultimately approve the laws.
- Every unit within a hierarchy of "beings" that together make up the state must enjoy autonomy in its own affairs. Thus, artificial persons, such as corporations and universities, must have the same freedom within the law as do the citizens of a mature democracy.

There are obviously all sorts of stresses and implicit and explicit conflicts within a social formation that tries to abide by these two principles. However, close-to-ideal forms of the marriage of the two principles have existed, such as what can be found in academia, and, despite efforts to destroy them in the name of rational administration, they still do. Positioning analyses will enable us to explore the irony of the conflict between bureaucracy as a necessary counter to totalitarianism and bureaucracy as a threat to democratic freedom.

One such example is the University of Oxford. It consists of an assemblage of self-governing colleges that admit and teach their students independently. However, members of the colleges are also members of the university. As such, they do sometimes combine for various purposes in the University Congregation, an assembly of all the members of the university. In that logically but not administratively superordinate institution, each member of the congregation has a vote on all matters pertaining to the collective institution. Positioning conflicts can occur whenever the rights and duties claimed by members of the subordinate institutions come into conflict with the management ideas and ambitions of the superordinate institution. Since their interests are different, conflict is inevitable, though the very same human beings are constitutive of both.

On a far larger scale, another example is the United States, where states' rights exist alongside and independent of the federal institutions. Switzerland represents another example, with its so-called double democracy, in which small cantons can exert significant national influence through their local votes. A similar evolution of subordinate and superordinate institutions seems to be emerging in the European Union, as has been exemplified in the discursive flux around the ratification of the EU Constitution.

Seemingly at the apex of the political process are bodies such as the Communist Politburo, the U.S. Congress, the Reichstag in the Germany of the 1930s, the British Parliament, and so on. These institutions are generally small in scale in relation to the population for which they have the right to make laws and regulations, including in the crucial domains of war and peace. What mediates the acts of the lawmakers, with their seemingly omnipotent power, to whatever shapes the lives of the citizens? The intermediary we shall call generically "the bureaucracy."

Positioning issues arise at every level of the political process associated with conflict. Memoirs of people involved in even the most totalitarian political formations, such as the Communist regime under Stalin, reveal how much conflict "resolution" depended on the distribution and redistribution of rights and duties among the dictator's henchmen. Conflict resolution in parliamentary systems involves complex networks of positioning acts, influenced by the structure of institutions such as the political parties (in such things as the selection of candidates), the dynamics of government and opposition groupings, the processes within the parliamentary institution as a whole, the lobbyists, and so on. A crucial part of the apparatus of the state is the bureaucracy, through which the decisions of the governing bodies of states are implemented. There are "positioning" issues—satirized on television, in *Yes Minister* and *Saturday Night Live*, for example—between the members of the bureaucracy and both the politicians above them and those for whom the bureaucracy performs its managerial functions.

These topics have been researched and written about by numerous authors of great distinction since antiquity. However, we believe that there is another approach to exploring conflict through the social psychology of the myriad interactions that constitute the political process at all its levels, both horizontally and vertically. We will be drawing on the vast range of sociological studies of political institutions and conflict, but our focus will be on the discursive procedures by which rights and duties are allocated, ascribed, claimed, disputed, fought over, and so on in the course of actual real-time conflict situations, insofar as records of them can be obtained. All this is going on within a complex struggle between the inhabitants of the offices in the gray buildings of the government and the marble halls of the legislative bodies themselves. It would be naïve to see all conflict as undesirable or morally wrong and in need of resolution. Conflict exacerbation, for example, between the left and the right in the political landscape of a democracy, is essential to the working of the process by which governments are selected by the people.

THE PROMISE OF POSITIONING THEORY FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Positioning theory began to interest social psychologists and others in the 1980s. The idea that the range of social behaviors open to people differed depending on how they were categorized was put to good use by authors such as Carol Gilligan (1982) and Bronwyn Davies (1989). Gilligan argued that, in many social situations, men and women adopted different ways of deciding moral issues, although later research showed that the differences she proposed are also present within gender groups (see Moghaddam 2005, ch. 17). Rather than focusing on differences across gender in how people reason, Davies showed how girls and boys were positioned differently from one another with respect to the rights and duties they were severally assigned.

The systematic development of the theory and its widespread application in research began in the 1990s in the study of the moment-by-moment genesis of local moral orders of rights and duties.

Recently the theory has been extended in four directions.

1. The fine structure of the discursive process by which people are positioned and position themselves has been opened up.
2. The question of the authenticity of presumed positions has been pursued, particularly as it is one of the issues that can be raised by someone refusing to acknowledge a claim to a right, or by someone refusing to accept a duty.
3. How far are positions local? Other cultures differ from ours in many ways, but always to some extent in the moral systems that are taken for granted. This raises the question of whether there are any transcultural or universally acknowledged positions.
4. What biographical and characterological evidence is implicit or sometimes explicit in the positioning of individuals?

THE STRUCTURE OF POSITIONING DISCOURSES

Recent positioning studies have revealed how a *positioning act*—an act by which someone has been positioned by others or has positioned himself or herself—has two distinct phases. The first phase involves the attribution of qualities of character, intellect, or temperament, sometimes supported by biographical reports on the past behavior of the person in question. In the second phase ("positioning" in the original sense of Davies and Harré 1990), the person being positioned is assigned or refused a cluster of rights and duties to perform certain kinds of acts, thus constraining what someone, so positioned, can rightly do and say. Both phases presume the existence of a local moral order, a cluster of collectively located beliefs about what it is right and good to do and say. Of course, the same principle applies to those who position themselves (cf. Harré, Moghaddam, Pilkerton Cairnie, Rothbart, and Sabat 2009 on the self-positioning of Arthur Miller under interrogation).

This distinction between positioning phases is useful in that, oftentimes, phase 1 is the ground of phase 2. Or to put this more discursively, the discursive procedure by which a person is positioned as having (or not having) certain rights and duties is initiated and grounded or justified by an act of positioning as in phase 1—that is, as competent/incompetent, trustworthy/untrustworthy, and so on with respect to performing the type of act in question.

In phase 1, the attribution of personal qualities can be examined according to two different sets of criteria.

1. Is the attribution true? Does this person have these attributes? Is he arrogant and overbearing? Is she excitable? And so on. Bearing in mind how context-sensitive traits of character and personality actually are, the context in which the subsequent positioning is undertaken gives certain plausibility to the relevance of the traits so attributed.
2. However, the question remains of the relevance of these attributes to the activities to which the positioning is germane. This involves presumptive valuation of personal characteristics in relation to these activities. Thus, being bossy can be the relevant personality trait when someone is positioned as having the right to issue orders during a natural disaster, while at PTA or neighborhood meetings, it may be the relevant trait on which someone is refused the right to manage some project, with a judgment that "He is not a good team player."

In phase 2, assignments to positions—that is, assignments of rights and duties to a person—depend on prior phase 1 evaluative descriptions of that person. Drawing on personality psychology is not enough, since the key question relevant to local assignments to positions is what someone who tends to display this or that character trait in such and such social and material contexts is likely to *do*. Even shorn of the confusions of naïve trait theories ("The Big Five," for example), positioning theory emphasizes process and the dynamics of social engagements.

Presumed intentions may also be relevant to position assignments, be it of duties or rights. For example, someone may be assigned a duty just because the person handing out the jobs believes that the assignee is keen to do the task.

POSITIONING DISPUTES

How do we analyze the debate when someone insists on the right to smoke in an Irish pub and meets the response that it might be all right in

Spain, but there is no such right in *this* culture? Or when someone defending the right to impose inhumane treatment on prisoners of war by citing the needs of national security meets this response: there is no such right anywhere in *any* culture.

The authenticity of a phase 1 positioning act can reasonably refer to matters of fact, though the relevance of the alleged personal attributes may come into question. There are also matters of fact that are germane to phase 2 positioning. Positioning analyses have generally taken for granted that such-and-such a position actually exists in a certain social and material context—that is, the people who inhabit that context do take a certain repertoire of rights and duties for granted. That one has a duty to feed one's children hardly needs explicit formulation, and we generally take it to be true that such a duty exists in the moral order of any culture. Though, in any particular social and historical context, there are rights that are taken for granted, and the issue of the existence of rights comes into question explicitly more often than does the existence of duties. Modern states usually have a Bill of Rights in some form that gives legal status to rights, but none that we know of has a corresponding Bill of Duties. In modern times, the emphasis on the assertion of rights has overshadowed the presumptive demands of duties (Finkel and Moghaddam 2004).

We will follow Austin's (1962) example (and that of Thomas Hobbes [1651]) in the discussions of liberty by eschewing any attempt to give a positive account of the authenticity of a position. We will, however, catalogue some ways a position might be thought to be inauthentic. The question of the authenticity of positions is often the root of disputes, in which one of the parties denies someone a right on the grounds that there is no such right, or refuses a duty on the grounds that there is no such duty.

In real life, arguments over the legitimacy of positioning acts are not symmetrical between reminders, demands, or assignments of rights and duties. An individual claims a right, and an authority denies it. An authority assigns a duty, and an individual refuses it.

The Conflict Resolution Program at Georgetown University and other such programs not only develop techniques for analysis of conflicts and the identification of their source but also provide training for facilitators. These are people who come into a situation of conflict and work with the disputants to reach some kind of resolution.

However, there are some occasions of dispute when one of the parties is clearly in the wrong, even perhaps obeying an impulse and a strategy that the best moral intuitions declare to be evil. For example, in 1941 there was a conflict situation between Great Britain and Germany. There can be no doubt that the Nazi regime and its policies were evil, and the British, for all their faults, were on the side of the angels. It would have been morally wrong to facilitate a resolution of that dispute short of the destruction of the Nazi regime and its engines of mass destruction.

A Debate about Rights

A "rights" dispute may begin with a simple denial of a claim.

- "I have a right to . . ."
- "You do *not* have a right to . . ."

To back up the denial of the right, there seems to be more than one level of generality. The denial of the existence of the putative right in question may be based on something culturally specific or in some other way local. In the old days, women were denied the right to education, for example; that is, the right to an education existed, but women did not qualify to exercise it. People who are drunk do not have the right to drive a car; again, there is a right to drive a car when licensed, but drunkards do not qualify to exercise it.

When women demanded the right to an education, this demand was based on a matter of fact—that women were intellectually the equal of men. No one has yet succeeded in gaining the right to drive a car when drunk; the factual claims concerning the dangers of drunk driving are not likely to be shown to be mistaken. In these and other cases, the right exists, but some people are denied it on purportedly factual grounds. Individuals may be denied the exercise of a right because they are not worthy, not authorized, not physically capable of the task required, and so on.

However, there are other cases when someone may demand a right, but it is refused on the ground that the right *does not exist*. The "pro-life/pro-choice" confrontation can be looked at as a debate as to whether the right to terminate a pregnancy artificially exists. The decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to permit abortions could be thought of as the creation of such a right. The challenge to this decision is deep—it denies the very possibility of a legal decision, claiming that there is no such right to be allowed.

The actual debate tends to be pretty shrill and irrational, but the issue ultimately turns on moral principles that were robustly formulated by Immanuel Kant (1785). In the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, he advises us that, to be truly moral, we must be ready to will that the maxim on which we are acting should be a universal moral law. In the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative, he declares that no one can be treated as a means only. In the Kingdom of Ends, everyone is of equal worth, so no one may be disposed of for the advantage of anyone else, whatever that advantage might be. To make an exception for myself violates the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative. Similarly, when someone claims that they have a right to smoke in a public place, those who challenge that right might base their refusal to concede the right on this deep moral point. The fact that others can be injured by someone's pursuit of pleasure means that the action in question violates the Categorical Imperative.

Can there be denials of a right that simply come down to unique features of the individual who claimed the right? Running over some examples that might support this, it seems to us that in each case, the personal idiosyncrasy that might support the denial of a prima facie right appears on analysis to depend on tacit reference to types. You do not have a right to reprimand this disobedient child because you are a visitor to the house. Why? There is no such right for a visitor.

A Debate about Duties

A "duties" dispute may begin with a simple refusal to accept the duty in question.

- "You have a duty to . . ."
- "I do *not* have a duty to . . ."

How would one back up a refusal of a duty? The same levels of generality emerge in reflection on examples as in the rights cases.

At the highest level of generality, obligatory on all human beings, one might defend one's refusal to accept a military duty by declaring that *no one* has a duty to sacrifice his or her life for an unjust ruler. Kantian support might be sought through the principle of the Kingdom of Ends—that people should never be treated as means only. By treating the people as means to unjust ends, the ruler has contradicted the Categorical Imperative.

At a more culturally local level, one might argue that one does not have a duty to umpire a cricket match because *people like me* do not have such a duty. It may be that "I have never seen a cricket match before; only those who know the rules are qualified to umpire." Or it may be "because my injuries have confined me to a wheelchair, and so I am physically incapacitated from undertaking the task." Here the duty argument and the rights argument diverge. I do not think that the physical attributes of a person preclude their having rights, though it may make exercising some rights difficult or impossible. However, it is quite clear that physical disabilities do excuse someone from duties—illness, blindness, and so on may be sufficient for such an excuse.

Considering these claims and counterclaims in the light of the alleged globalization of culture, where would we expect to find positions that are regarded as universally authentic and so demanding on all people everywhere, at all times, regardless of culture? Kant certainly thought that the mark of humanity was the power of reason. Though that power did not specify any particular positions, he based his moral philosophy on a generic idea of duty—to treat everyone, including oneself, as an end, as a being of non-negotiable moral value. Immoral acts, Kant believed, involved contradictions. "I cannot refuse the duty to give to charity since it cannot be ruled out that at some time in the future, I may fall on hard times and may need to have recourse to charity myself. I cannot, therefore, rationally will that no one, including myself, should give to charity." Whatever one may think of the coherence of the argument, its purport is clear enough.

This discussion is an elaboration of the idea that, while there are conversations which presume the occupation of positions by the actors, that is, *first-order positioning*, there are also conversations about the positions so presumed. The act by which someone is positioned—assigned a duty or conceded a right—can also be taken to depend on the rights and duties of a higher-level moral order. This is *second-order positioning*. The initial debate in the discussions of the question of the authenticity of a position, raised in this section, can be looked upon as a filling out of the idea of second-order positioning, a conversation about whether the assignment of duties or the claim to rights is legitimate or appropriate for that person. However, the conversation may go on to involve *third-order positioning*. This a discussion of the very existence of the duties and rights presumed in the lower-order discussions. At this level, we encounter the question of whether there are philosophical arguments that sustain the presumptions of the second-order discussants as to the authenticity of positions being assigned or conceded.

However local a moral order may be, the strongest case for the legitimacy of second-order positioning of someone to have the right or duty to position others is that this second-order position depends on some aspect of a universal moral order. It is at this point that I believe recourse must be made beyond anthropological observations about how this or that tribe manages its moral life and further toward transcendental considerations of the requirements that sustain the very existence of persons.

Holiday's (1988) argument for the universality of certain moral principles turns on a defining characteristic of personhood, namely, the capacity to use language. Whatever first- and second-order positioning is going on in an encounter, short or long term, these principles must inform the positioning and cannot be omitted from the framing of a local moral order. In Wittgenstein's terminology, they are *hinges* on which all else must turn.

Here again, patterns of facilitation will differ depending on the level at which the conflict is approached. If the denial of a duty is based on factual claims, facilitation will surely depend on investigation of the veracity of the claims made by the one refusing the duty. However, can there be facilitation at the higher level? It seems not—ways of dealing with conflicts at this level can only be a matter of philosophical debate, such as attempts to persuade the bad hats to give up their evil practices like ethnic cleansing, torturing people to elicit confessions, and so on. If these attempts fail, then the facilitator can only withdraw or volunteer to serve on the side of the righteous.

THE PERMANENCE OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES

The question of the authenticity of a position could be raised perhaps on the suspicion that someone was simply inventing a position in the phase 2 sense. Unless challenged, the innovator could be using these invented rights and duties in developing some discursive assignments of duties and rights, usually to her or his own advantage. The people around may be recruited to this position simply by uncritically accepting its authenticity. "I'm in charge around here—so it's your job to clean the bathroom."

Allied with this is the question of the legitimacy of the occupation of a position. How would the claim that such-and-such a position exists and someone, say the speaker, occupies it *as of right* be justified? How does someone establish that he or she has the right to act as negotiator, or leader, or whatever it might be? The question of a right to claim or exercise rights, and a duty to undertake duties—*meta-positioning*—is important. However, in this volume, we will focus on the authenticity question.

A position might be declared "inauthentic" insofar as it is taken to be fabricated or fraudulent or even imaginary. The rights and duties that comprise positions must, it seems, derive their authority from their longevity as the foundations of a culture, or even of all cultures. Thomas Hobbes thought that a condition for any civil society to exist at all would be that the people fulfilled their duty to hand over some of their power to the ruler.

There cannot be wholly ephemeral rights and duties. Positions are ephemeral, but the duties they invoke and the rights they recognize must have some trans-situational standing. Why is this so? Human beings certainly seem to depend on the relative permanence of social relations, be they comradely or hostile. But there can be short-term alliances and flashes of temper. Life does not consist of permanent friendships and lasting hostilities. How do the longer-term rights and duties that comprise the ephemeral positions of a social flux exist?

It would hardly be disputed that some positions have disappeared from the social world, while new ones have appeared. We do not mean duties and rights as declared in laws and constitutions. These are excluded from the domain of positioning theory. Accepting a *fatwa* as authenticating a duty to kill an infidel is not a positioning act. This is Islamic law, the *Sharia*. Nor would the acceptance of the duty to kill himself by Brutus or any other disgraced Roman be rightly assimilated to an act of positioning. This was the custom of the Roman nobility, a defining demand for one who aspired to patrician status. However, when Caesar said, "*Et tu, Brute*," he was positioning Brutus as one who had failed in the duty of friendship. In the famous speech at Caesar's funeral, Marc Antony begins with a powerful positioning act—"I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him"—and continues by ironically positioning Brutus as having neither the right nor the duty to murder Caesar, as he declares, "Brutus is an honorable man."

Outdated positions would be another category of the inauthentic. For example, a man is no longer expected to raise his hat to a lady. A duty has vanished from the local moral order. By the same token, positions that have yet to appear are not yet authentic, even if we were to have some inkling as to what they might be.

PRACTICES

In trying to work out some suggestion as to how the tacit rights and duties form the relatively stable moral background to ordinary acts of positioning, the concept of *practice* suggests itself. During the twentieth century, a great many influential authors made use of this concept. However, the concept was not used in a coherent or uniform way. Nevertheless, some guidance in the matter of finding a way for expressing normatively constrained uniformities in people's actions can be found in this literature.

Clearly, the orderliness of speech and action must be maintained by something. Cognitive psychologists have offered a wide spectrum of metaphors, some more convincing than others. For example, people are supposed to be following rules when acting and speaking in an orderly manner. The concept of a *norm*, a very mysterious entity indeed, crops up in sociology. Better perhaps is the notion of *habitus*, proposed by Bourdieu (1977).

Recently Wittgenstein's (1979) concept of a *hinge* has attracted a good deal of attention (see Moyal-Sharrock 2004). Hinges are covert, cognitive objects, the status of which is yet to be determined, but they may sustain the plausibility of a discourse. What is their role? According to Moyal-Sharrock (2004), it is regulative rather than normative. That is, hinges do not express an ideal that an actor may or may not achieve; rather, they express the regular form of a pattern of thought and/or action that is achieved without effort or nagging doubts as to its propriety. However, some hinges are clearly normative, such as those we have discerned in the discursive expression of Kant's Categorical Imperative.

Wittgenstein said, "This is what I do," in terminating a regress of recourse to rules in explaining how a practice goes and why it is the way it is. This sounds as if whatever kind of determination or declaration this remark refers to is regulative rather than normative—but compare this with what he might have answered: "This is what I *think* I should do" or "should have done." If what I do, in this sense, is normative, then it seems that to do something else would be to violate something moral, namely, my integrity or something like it. In a way, I must have a duty to continue to do whatever it is that I do, not least because it is one of the foundations for our interactions.

Wittgenstein's notion of a hinge seems particularly appropriate to our concerns. He introduces the concept as follows: "That is to say the questions we raise and our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempted from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn" (Wittgenstein 1979, 341). Hinges do not come up for assessment as true or false statements. Taken for granted, they enable discourses, the propositions of which can be so assessed. Wittgenstein's examples include "I have two hands," which serves as a hinge for a great deal of everyday practices. Going to my clarinet teacher, I do not have to preface the lesson with this remark, which she then might feel the need to verify.

Perhaps a local moral order could be treated as a cluster of Wittgensteinian hinges? Taking this tack would open up the growing literature on hinges as a resource for developing positioning theory (see Moyal-Sharrock 2004). From its inception, positioning theory took for granted that, in every locale, one would expect to find an indefinite range of local moral orders. They might be distributed between factions, or they might be a manifold of resources that any one group lived by. How the underlying rights and duties existed was not discussed. Probably the general presumption was that they existed as parts of the systems of beliefs with which people interpreted and managed their lives.

The content of positions, as taken-for-granted features of local moral orders and playing the role of Wittgensteinian hinges, enabling moral discourses, might be able to be expressed in words by a conflict analyst.

An expression of the content of a hinge, "H," that sustains a practice, "P," in words, "W," can appear in two distinctive moods, imperative or indicative. The first, "W1," could be something like a rule that might be functionally identical to the hinge it expresses—that is, "Do this." The second, "W2," could appear in a tentative description of that hinge—that is, "This is a rule."

W1, as a verbal expression of H, could be used as an instruction, as a reminder of a convention or rule of etiquette, and for many other norm-enforcing purposes in training sessions or in protests and reprimands. In all these situations, W1 is subject to assessment in terms of felicity conditions (Austin 1962): Is it appropriate, approved, legal, and so on?

As a tentative description of H, W2 might appear in an ethnography, a social services or police report, an item in a social psychology research paper, and so forth. In all these situations, W2 is subject to assessment in terms of truth conditions. Is it true or false? Is it accurate?

On both kinds of discursive occasions, H, the ground of the practice, becomes visible and so a possible topic for discussion. What cognitive status do hinges have when they are implicit in practices? For example, what is the ontological status of a habit when we refer to it as part of the explanation of a practice, which is cited as the source of a position? When hinges are expressed discursively, they do have cognitive status, as expressions of thoughts, decisions, beliefs, and the like, and ultimately in positioning acts. But what is expressed may exist in *an individual* only as a certain distribution of weights in a neural net.

If hinges are the grounding of practices, and practices are constrained by the positions practitioners can occupy or refuse, then hinges are conceptually linked to positions.

CREATING AND SUSTAINING POLITICAL CONFLICT

So far, the framing of positioning in the context of the *resolution* of conflict—particularly political conflict, the topic of these essays—has been taken for granted. The thrust of a great many studies of the psychology and sociology of conflicts is toward ameliorating or bringing conflicts to an end. By the use of some procedure, such as the overt presentation of the positioning acts that underlie the legitimation of a dispute, practitioners of conflict resolution hope that the conflict will cease as the psychological and sociological conditions for its emergence and sustenance dissolve. After an election, political conflict may be transformed into political cooperation, an example being the relationship between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton during and after the long drawn-out electoral contest of 2008 (see chapter 6).

However, this concentration of resources on this side of the topic is hardly scientifically or even practically defensible. It is just as important to be able to *create and sustain* conflicts as it is to *resolve* them, particularly from the point of view of power minorities (Moghaddam 2008). It is simply not true that the moral high ground belongs to those who seek peace by whatever means. Sometimes it belongs to those who wish to foment and prolong conflicts. Sometimes the person actively promoting a positioning move may need to establish that the position into which he or she wishes to induct the others to turn them into an opposition is authentic.

Let us begin with some commonplace examples in which the authenticity of the position is taken for granted. Preparing to go out onto the field of play, a football team is subjected to a discourse designed to work them up emotionally and particularly to stir up hatred of the other team. Positive team spirit is not enough—it must be supported by the negative positioning of the opposition. Just imagine the reception for this remark: "Gee, they look like nice guys. Maybe they *deserve* to win!" According to our coach, they have no such right, and it is our duty to validate this fact by achieving a resounding victory. In football, no one challenges the authenticity of the position, "Our opponents do not have the right to win."

Suppose the CEO of the Ajax Motor Company, which is falling on hard times because of the brilliant engineering and sales pitches of the Hector

Car Corporation, is addressing his senior executives. What sort of line must be taken? Surely he must do his best to position the Hector crowd as unworthy of holding their market position. Satirized by Kurt Vonnegut in *Breakfast of Champions*, the creation and maintenance of attitudes and practices of conflict that are appropriate to the situation is just as common as the "psyching up" of the team by the coach. The very idea of capitalism as a social arrangement requiring a competitive dynamics depends upon it. No one would have the temerity to throw doubt on the authenticity of the position into which the others are shifted, unless or until a merger is on the table.

For a third case, consider going about setting a "just war" in motion. A conflict situation must be created, and the conflict, once entered into, must be sustained. The moral high ground must be seized, and the enemy must be positioned as morally base and hence deprived of rights and duties to act in any way. The narrative is always "Good eventually triumphs over Evil." Of course, this is a truism, since victory is the acid test of goodness. The losers might have been winners, so they have to find reasons outside their moral standing to account for the loss. It might have been treachery within, a popular story line. And there are other plausible exculpatory tales, as well. The authenticity of the positions can be queried, though it is dangerous to do so from within one of the parties.

Positioning theorists ought not to neglect this aspect of their domain of interest. In a perfect case, there would be symmetry between the stories told by the protagonists of each side, as they define and allocate positions for their rivals. In the recent version of the age-long conflict between Islam and Christianity, President George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden offered almost perfectly symmetrical accounts of the positions of al-Qaida and the U.S. administration vis-à-vis each other.

CRISTIANOS Y MOROS

Each summer, along the Mediterranean coast of Spain, the long conflict between Islamic and Christian Spain is played out anew. Just as in the times of El Cid and *Los Reyes Católicos*, the Moors lose yet again. With George W. Bush cast as Richard the Lionheart and Saddam Hussein as Saladin, we have just played *Cristianos y Moros* for real yet again. The Crusader rhetoric positions the other side as deficient in rights and duties, while contrariwise the speaker's side has these as of right. Each side claims to have duties vis-à-vis the other as of right. In the Middle Ages, the Christian kings believed they had the right to call on their subjects to carry out their duty to venture to the Holy Land to free Jerusalem. Each side genuinely and honestly believes that they have the warrant of God to declare the other side to be an "axis of evil."

The two stages of mutual and contradictory positioning are well provided for. Each side is evil in the judgment of the other, so the second stage of positioning occurs smoothly, namely, the denial of rights and duties to the others and the arrogating of the *same generic rights and duties* to themselves.

The duty to impose "democracy" by forcible "regime change" is exactly symmetrical to the duty to impose the Sharia and the rule of Allah by *jihad*. In what way is a theocracy inferior to a democracy? Such a question probes the presuppositions of the leaders of the "war on terror," while the obverse question, "In what way is a democracy inferior to a theocracy?" probes the presuppositions of the architects of jihad and the fatwas that go with it. Answers to the meta-question as to which of these questions should be presumed to trump the other raises a new aspect of positioning and its authorization.

This could be called the "vicar principle." The pope is the "vicar of God," God's representative on Earth and among the people. The prime minister of the United Kingdom is the "vicar of the electorate" and the people's representative in the councils of state. The advocate of either side, as a "vicar," is positioned relative to a powerful authorizing agency—God (Allah) or "the people." Shifting between the relevant discourses leads to the strangeness of references to "the Iraqi people," as if they were *a single* authorizing agent, while internecine conflict escalates. The pattern of discursive oppositions was more clearly visible during the Crusades, since both sides declared themselves to be vicars of the Divine Being.

OUTLINE OF THIS VOLUME

This volume is organized in two main parts: The chapters in part 1 deal with micropolitics and personal positioning, and those in part 2 focus on political parties and factions.

Part One: Micropolitics and Personal Positioning

The political domain appears as a kind of microcosm in the positioning practices of a school. In chapter 2, Lars-Erik Nilsson and Eva Wennås Brante analyze the discursive practices in a small institution within which work practices and demands are regulated. The distribution of rights and duties among the teachers in a high school are continuously being negotiated and renegotiated, though there are some "sticking" points. Nilsson and Brante introduce a novel conceptual distinction between "time guardians" and "time thieves" to lay out the structure of the demands by some on the aid of others. In the course of positioning members of the school staff, the key issue is whether and in what circumstances someone has the right to refuse to help out in certain situations. The time guardian has the right to say no.

Within any political order, there must always be an inner core of people who form the heart of the executive branch of government, whether it be the Cabinet or the Politburo or the Council of Elders. This core group is linked in complex ways with the civil service and administration through which executive decisions reach the level of individual human action. Tracey Pilkerton Cairnie in chapter 3 analyses the discursive processes by which the social psychological relation of "loyalty" was fostered within the administration of the former president George W. Bush. The positioning theory connection is direct. A loyal subordinate will be ready to fulfill the duties demanded as of right by the president. How the positioning foundation of this dynamic is established and challenged is the focus of her chapter. Pilkerton Cairnie tracks the transformation of positioning practices as the president came to adopt a religious rhetoric, from the standpoint of which he used the traditional conventions of loyalty in the executive branch to make demands that some could not meet. She also shows how the demand for the face-saving formula of resigning "to spend more time with my family" was unacceptable to some of those who queried the traditional moral order in the executive branch.

In chapter 4, Anna Olaison's analysis of the discourses institutional caregivers use to decide on the level of need of help from the welfare services is based on the identification of story lines. She brings out three major story lines with which people express their concern, which she and her colleagues analyzed in depth. Interviews with care managers were structured by the positioning moves that took place. Should the elderly people in question have the home care available from the welfare services? The value of a positioning theory approach showed how medical matters played a secondary role to social psychological ones. The three story lines are clearly differentiated:

1. Home care is an intrusion into family life.
2. Home care can complement what the family can provide.
3. Everyone has a right to home care.

The pole positions, so to speak, are clear: Everyone has a right to privacy, and everyone has a right to home care. Neither can serve as a master template for the social services. The most complex story line, social psychologically, is the intermediate one, in which the elderly preposition themselves as competent in general. In addition, this kind of analysis can reveal the dynamics of relationships between members of the same family, as one sees home help as a complement and the other sees it as a burden. Concepts of "the family" also differ and tie in with different story lines as well.

In most of the studies we have included in this volume, the processes of positioning and prepositioning are positively directed to laying claim, successfully, to a position—that is, to certain rights or duties, which are then taken up as frames for a strip of life narrative. Steven R. Sabat in chapter 5 focuses on micro-level positioning processes that are linked to story lines emanating from macro-level processes. He shows how two competing story lines, reflected in a *biomedical voice* and competing *psychosocial*, pervade the everyday lives of those labeled as Alzheimer's disease sufferers. While the political struggles he explores take place at the everyday level of "patient care," these "micro" processes are intimately related to the macro political rivalries of pharmaceutical companies, political parties, and other major players at the national and international levels.

In the next chapter, William Costanza shows how Barack Obama, in his student days, divested himself of a position that others were keen to ascribe to him. Overtly, his success as a speaker in the anti-apartheid movement suggests that he has, and *accepts* that he has, a duty to make such speeches. However, in the stretch of dialogue analyzed in this chapter, Costanza shows Obama explicitly divesting himself of this apparent duty by declaring himself unable to continue this way of acting because he lacks an essential prepositioning attribute: a sincere belief in the efficacy of his actions. "I'm going to leave the preaching to you," he declares to the person who admiringly crowns him with a position. The positioning exchanges become very personal as each accuses the other of naïveté. Costanza points out that the underlying dynamic of this exchange is Obama's search for a robust sense of identity, which he is not content to create from the role of political orator, however successful.

Political power rests, in the end, on the acknowledgment that some person or group has the "right to rule," however this right has been acquired. In many political systems, the right to rule is established only after it has been determined who has the right to be a *candidate* for the right to rule. And this must be a matter of making use of the procedure by which this primary right is established, by someone being positioned by himself or herself in the minds of others as having that right. Rom Harré and Mark Rossetti in chapter 7 analyze the debates between senators Clinton and Obama, in which each then running candidate makes use of various discursive tactics to claim the position of "right to be a candidate for the right to rule."

Both senators make use of autobiographical material in their prepositioning moves. These tend to show that the speaker has the appropriate attitudes—for example, compassion for the unfortunate—and that each has the knowledge, skill, and integrity necessary to achieve the amelioration of the condition of many of those who are in need of help. Religious affiliations and their moral imperatives play a part in the moves by both candidates. Clinton tends to adopt a "noblesse oblige" standpoint in declaring her lifelong caring, while Obama subtly combines an "I am just one of you" declaration with the performance style of highly educated person, in prepositioning himself as having the superior ability and motivation, hence the superior claim to the right to rule, and hence to the *right to be a candidate* for the right to rule.

The debates are made more interesting in that each candidate is also a loyal member of the Democratic Party, and, whatever else that implies, it certainly calls for a member of that party as the next president. So neither candidate can denigrate the other in such a way as to render him or her unfit for the highest office. Both must be worthy, but one more so.

This study also includes a short section about the prepositioning of the Republican candidate for vice president, Governor Sarah Palin, chosen as the running mate for Senator John McCain. Her claims to the right to the post in debate with Senator Joe Biden are equivocal. On the one hand, as a "hockey mom," she claims the right to represent the ordinary domestic folk; on the other hand, as an outdoor girl and killer of bears, she claims to represent another constituency: men who hunt.

The emergence of Palin on the national stage highlighted an ideological and cultural rift in contemporary America, and in chapter 8, Lionel J. Boxer highlights a similar rift in the Canadian context by exploring the story lines produced by supporters and opponents of the Canadian Officer Training Corps (COTC). Historically the "two solitudes" in Canada have been assumed to be the Anglophones and Francophones, but Boxer reveals the "ghettoization" of ideological and cultural groups: those who see COTC as a means to strengthen aggressive and warlike tendencies in society, and those who see it as a means to nurture responsible and effective leadership for the future of a stronger Canada, capable of defending its national borders and interests. This discussion forms a bridge to the chapters in the second part of this book, dealing with larger-scale social and cultural processes.

Part Two: Political Parties and Factions

Large-scale political processes, alliances, and conflicts can hinge on the positioning adopted by individual people as they engage in political processes at the level of communities and even of states. In chapter 9, Ciarán Benson tracks the extraordinary and influential career of a very well-known Northern-Irish politician, the Reverend Ian Paisley. It is not too much to say that the eventual settling of the Irish question into a democratic form of government in which the Protestant and Catholic communities are sharing power was made possible by the public self-positioning of Paisley. In his long career, his political activity was dominated by two complementary positions. First, Irish politicians, even when considered as separate from their armed wings, had no right to demand the incorporation of Northern Ireland into the Irish Republic. Second, he, Paisley, had the duty to oppose all efforts at a settlement that would advance this outcome, to speak and act against it. Positioned thus, and exploiting his charismatic skills as a preacher, he imposed his views on the Irish scene with the help of many willing adherents.

Benson endeavors to reveal the Paisley "endgame"—how he repositioned himself as the rightful heir to the post of first minister of the Province of Northern Island in collaboration with the Catholic politicians who were once anathema to him. The first step was to eliminate his main rivals for the Protestant cause, the Ulster Unionist Party. Benson goes in some detail into the revisionary semantics that were needed to make the next move, to make it possible to share power with "the enemy" but now prepositioned as something other, somewhere from which a complex of political rights and personal duties would bring them, magically changed by the power of rhetoric, into power-sharing with Paisley himself. Benson suggests that Paisley's self-repositioning move and the story line that convinced his supporters that he should be heard to be both sincere and truthful were perhaps the strategy of a man who saw the opportunity to make a final bid for the standing in the larger political world that he saw as his right.

Following the theme of the effect on the larger scale of political movements and processes that emerges from the analysis of Paisley's self-positionings, Margarita Konaev and Fathali M. Moghaddam show in chapter 10 how a "universal" thesis—that external threats to an institution, be it a university department or a grand alliance of nation-states, brings about internal coherence—provides an understanding of the rhetorical interactions between President George W. Bush and the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the positions they mutually defined for themselves and for each other.

This analysis of the interdependent relationship between the two presidents reveals three related story lines:

1. The external enemy is dangerous.
2. We are freedom-loving and open, but our enemy hates freedom and relies on violence.
3. I am a man of peace and speak for the people; you do not.

Each leader appropriated these story lines to displace in-group aggression onto the out-group target, and to more effectively mobilize in-group support and limit internal opposition. This study underlines commonalities in intergroup dynamics across these two societies, with their vast historical differences.

Turning to a yet larger scale to see positioning processes at work, in chapter 11, Cristina Jayme Montiel, Judith M. de Guzman, Charlie M. Inzon, and Brenda S. Batistiana set out to analyze the long-running conflict in Mindanao, a province of the Philippines, by the use of positioning theory and the abstraction of story lines. The focus of the research is on conversations about land, the dominant topic of story lines in the region.

Subsidiary story lines also exist, such as the idea of a "war of independence." Power must also be taken into account in studying the story lines dominating the discourses of the different groups: Christians, Muslims, and Lumads.

Three discourse forms are analyzed. The first is the official language of the Public Land Act; the second, conversations with the politico-military leaders of the armed factions; and the third, the public conversations that took place as Lumad farmers challenged the right to ownership of land claimed by a large corporation.

The Public Land Act positions Christians as having a superior right to ownership of larger amounts of land on the grounds of prepositioning them as more "civilized" than non-Christians. Only if the latter are as "advanced" as the former do they have equal land rights. The conversations with the leaders also turned on the positioning the various communities over land rights. Cutting across this story line was another that prepositioned those who had been in Mindanao first with superior land rights. The third study brought to light two very different story lines: social justice on the one hand and economic development on the other. By adopting the tactic of a spectacular public demonstration, a "long march," the Sumilao Farmers succeeded in changing the outcome in such a way that they were prepositioned as the ones with a superior right to the land than the corporation had. Here we see story lines and prepositionings ultimately and rhetorically determining the rights and duties of whole communities of people—politics in the large.

In the final chapter, Donald M. Taylor and his colleagues Julie Caouette, Esther Usborne, and Michael King explore the shared story lines, based on the usage of terms such as *empowerment* and *decolonization*, adopted by both Aboriginal peoples and the majority group in Canada. The shared story lines about past colonization and "collective guilt" on the part of majority-group Canadians would lead us to expect that the treatment of Aboriginal peoples would improve, but in practice there has not been much progress.

In the afterword, Naomi Lee examines some important themes emerging from this new collection of positioning theory studies, focusing on words, conflicts, and political processes.

CONCLUSION

In the following chapters, politics is a focus in that the positioning of the self and others as having certain rights and duties is an important form of resource allocation. While positions can be cited in the explanation of what people say and do, from close interpersonal encounters to an international scale, the rights and duties that comprise them are not fundamental.

Some people act in such a way as to take for granted their rights and duties as assigners of duties and ratifiers of rights, to themselves and others. How could these rights and duties be defended, in accordance with what moral order?

Looking at the way challenges to acts of positioning are handled reveals the role of deep moral principles—so deep that they need the subtle philosophical apparatus of Kant's Categorical Imperative to bring them to light.

From a psychologist's point of view, the cognitive status of these deep presumptions or "hinges" is problematic. As discursively expressed, they are clearly cognitive. In *rerum natura*, they may be no more than patterns in each individual brain, differing no doubt from person to person. This insight should reinforce from yet another direction the priority of the collective and social interrelations of human beings as the true site of cognitive processes. Hinges, like cultural carriers (Moghaddam 2002) and other collectively upheld phenomena, exist only in the ongoing practices of the community they help to define. We have come upon the need to consider whether there are hinges that must exist in the practices of every community that takes itself to be human. Insofar as the ultimate human capacity is the use of symbolic systems with which to think and act—in particular, language—the moral conditions for the possibility of language must be realized in each and every local moral order, at both the first and second level of positioning acts.

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Micropolitics and Personal Positioning

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2

"Do I Have to Say Yes?"

A Positioning Theory Perspective on Prioritizing and Dividing Work in School

Lars-Erik Nilsson and Eva Wennås Brante

Political life extends from the grand scale of the activities of national legislatures and executives down to the fine-grain management of the tasks that devolve upon individuals by reason of the decisions in the higher councils of the state. In this chapter, we show how time management is negotiated using the analytical framework of positioning theory. In this analysis, we show how rights and duties concerned with the management of time lead to two reciprocal and interesting social categories: *time guardians* and *time thieves*.

MONICA: Aren't you coming until now? Your class is making an awful noise.
JENNY: Sorry, had to take care of Lisa. Can you let the class in and start them up? Lisa has knocked out a tooth during break. My lesson plan is on my table.

The above exchange could have taken place in any school. An unforeseen work task has emerged due to a knocked-out tooth, and the situation has to be handled. Since this was an unplanned incident, those involved now have to find an acceptable solution. Quick decisions have to be made.

How the teachers account for the situation enables us to visualize some of the ways work in school is organized. How do teachers make decisions to prioritize between tasks? How do they deal with continuous interruptions in work? How do they manage when they suddenly have to take over someone else's work? What consequences will this interruption have for Jenny? What consequences will the new work task have for Monica, when covering for her colleague? What rights and what duties do they both have? These are questions we will attempt to answer as we look at the positions that are made available in the moment-by-moment assignments of rights and duties to carry on for both the formal and informal tasks of the school process.

There are diverse ways to approach these kinds of situations when conducting scientific studies. One might assume that the situations occur due to people's different qualities and thereby choose to study what kind of teacher is most likely to have to carry out certain work tasks. One can regard the issue as a structural problem and ponder over in what school environments or in what kind of school organizations these situations will arise. One might study this as an everyday problem, the sort of situation that might occur in any home or work environment. Then one may concentrate on how the distribution of work is accomplished in accounts. One can also look at how solutions are prioritized and handled directly in the work situation and how the conditions of accepting or denying different solutions are looked upon.

In each situation, it may be fruitful to look at how positions are made available through the discursive practices of coping. It is important to bear in mind that positioning is the end product of a sequence of steps, which begins with the claim that the persons being positioned as having certain rights and duties have or lack relevant attributes. This essential first step on which the strength of a successful assignment of rights and duties depends is the essential *prepositioning stage*.

Seen from the positioning theory perspective, the exchange above shows how teachers take up and assign different positions through the utterances they make. Monica prepositions Jenny's pupils as disturbing, behaving contrary to the duties incumbent on pupils. She also points out a possible reason for the disturbance by positioning Jenny as a teacher who fails to fulfill her duty of being on time. One gets a presentiment that being on time is an important matter in school settings. It is a duty, at least for a teacher. Monica tries to point out a causal relation that builds on a pre-understanding of which rights and duties exist in a school and for whom they may be available. Pupils are not allowed to be a disturbance, and responsible teachers must avoid causing a disturbance by being late for class.

Jenny shows by her actions that there are alternative ways to support a categorization of someone as a responsible person. As a responsible teacher, Jenny has the right to prioritize among work tasks in order to help Lisa with her tooth. Furthermore, Jenny shows an extra portion of responsibility by interrupting the tooth-helping and dashing off to ask Monica for help with the class. By doing so, Jenny prepositions Monica as a helpful teacher who therefore has a duty to stand in for a colleague. To stand in for someone implies accepting the position as a helpful person, with the rights and duties that ensue such a position. Once the prepositioning as helpful is accepted, it is no longer possible to refuse to stand in for someone.

It would also be possible to look for structural explanations as to how Monica, Jenny, and Jenny's pupils act, regarding the disturbance as a problem because it is situated in a school with a school's set of organization, resources, and special goals. We might say that Jenny's pupils disturb the peace because they are pupils, that is, located at a certain place in the web of patterns of behavior and local conventions that define the school as an institution. Or we might say that Monica's demand for peace and order, and Jenny's priorities and request for help, happen because these are fixed elements within the role of teachers.

The point of departure for this study is that prepositioning attributes of persons and their behavior—such as "punctual," "compassionate," "rigid," or "slack"—can tell us more about the rights and duties an individual has in a given work situation, compared with the demands of an individual's professional role as a teacher. Analyses of positions can thereby give us a better understanding of work conditions in a particular work setting.

POSITIONS, RIGHTS, AND DUTIES

Our standpoint for this chapter has been developed from an everyday situation in order to illustrate how analyses of interaction can add knowledge to social and psychological phenomena. In the above example of how a distribution of work is managed and synchronized in the workplace, Harré and van Langenhove (1999) would argue that it is possible to achieve detailed knowledge of such phenomena by studying actors' moral positions and the rights and duties that come with them through attention to the way a conversation develops. It is in the history of what actually is *said* that the social world is formed as an immediate reality within which people must act.

Harré and van Langenhove describe rights, duties, and obligations as a cluster of moral imperatives around a position. The assumption that teachers might have different rights and duties according to how they manage to position themselves opens up a new and fresh possibility of understanding how teachers' work conditions are framed. This understanding will be quite different from a structural account, which would accord primacy to permanent features such as economic resources, the social level of the area from which a school draws its pupils, and similar factors. If a teacher positions herself or himself as, let us say, having a duty always to be available for consultation, what rights does the teacher then think she or he has, and what duties do the pupils think the teacher has? In that way, positions may be consequential for how the work of a teacher is actually carried out, person-to-person, so to speak.

ACCOUNTING FOR PRIORITIZING AND DIVISION OF WORK

An important analytic issue concerns the intelligibility of the division of work and how people prioritize among their work tasks. There are a number of takes on the division of labor. Who gets to perform certain work?

One way to look at how such divisions are achieved, favored by Marx (1867), is through social stratification. In a theocratic society, division may be accomplished by hereditary castes, allowing only some groups of people access to certain work, say, as soldiers, and demanding that people born into other castes carry out other tasks, such as sweeping the streets. In Marx's case, he favored explanations of social stratification based on social class, derived from economic power and the ownership of the means of production. In such a perspective, what gets done and who has to do it are essentially questions of a power struggle between classes who have different relationships to the means of production. The reason that factories can be organized according to principles of scientific management and that people can be placed vertically and horizontally through the division of labor would, in this view, have little to do with the knowledge embedded in management principles but a lot to do with the ownership of factories. And it certainly has little to do with the day-to-day management of individual activities of ordinary people. To understand the division of labor between Jenny and Monica becomes, in Altvater and Huisken's (1971) terms, the effort to understand the economic structures that Jenny and Monica are determined by their social locus to reproduce and through which society is ordered.

Division of work, however, concerns more than a division of work tasks between professions and occupations. Who gets to decide what kind of work needs to be carried out, and who gets to define the amount of time that can be allotted to a particular task? How can we understand the social orderliness of such achievements? Taylor (1911) argued that this could be rigorously planned through a scientific management of work, putting structures in place that would allow workers to avoid deliberations and to concentrate on work. His solution represents what Polanyi (2008) refers to as *corporate order.* Order is achieved through structures that are not only permanent features of a moral order but are also actively influence action.

The interaction between Jenny and Monica, as we see it, is instead illustrative of what Polanyi refers to as a *spontaneous order.* By this, Polanyi does not mean that he does not consider society as ordered. He conceives of two different ways of achieving order: planned and spontaneous. Polanyi argues that, in complex social systems, the possibility to govern through organization and central planning disseminated through a chain of command is limited. Ordering instead appears to be dynamic, arising spontaneously. Ordering then does not rely on social facts that determine action. What is typical in a spontaneous order is that individual participants need to be able to achieve order through synchronizing their actions with others. According to positioning theory, this is achieved by discursive means.

We will argue that the division of labor, as well as the prioritization of work tasks, while being a dynamic enterprise, is less rigid than it may appear to be in Altvater and Huisken's view. However, it is also less spontaneous than what Polanyi offers at a first glance. In fact, what we hear Polanyi suggest is that people need to achieve order, such as order in their workplace, through accounting practices. Value traditions play an important role in accounting practices, and thus they are supportive of the maintenance of social order. As Shotter (1993) suggests, we rely on mostly tacit cultural traditions that can be used as vehicles of thought, transcending time and space. Drawing on these traditional values that are ubiquitous to any moral order, people need to constantly renegotiate issues of labor division as well as issues of the relative time made available for different types of work.

Put differently, people need to rely on cultural knowledge stored in categories that are culturally embedded. To be able to prioritize among tasks and divide tasks between them, people in a workplace need to be able to account for how time is allotted to different work tasks, relying on their indexical knowledge about such categories.

Let us for a moment pretend that Monica answers the almost unthinkable: "I don't have the time. I have to supervise a test in my own class." Monica takes up a position as somebody who guards her own planned use of time. How can she account for her action? Polanyi would argue that her ability to act independently could be viewed through different perspectives on freedom. In a liberal sense, emphasizing the individual's rights, her freedom should be limited only by the need to avoid conflict with other people's right to act. Ordering through this type of freedom, however, is of the kind that brings anomie. In a Hegelian sense, her freedom of choice could be seen as rational and supported by logical reasoning, scientific evidence, or professional standards.

Positioning theory affords another perspective on ordering. By saying, "I don't have the time," Monica would have rejected being positioned as one who has a duty to be helpful. Furthermore, she would have, as we will argue, taken up the position as a time guard. To see that happen is hardly likely, though, since every participant in a conversation comprehends an "ought" based on knowledge about the context for action. Education as a moral order would privilege the right to see to a child that is hurt before taking care of a class and would privilege giving support to a colleague over giving a test. Ordering in such a sense is conceived of as dependent on subject positions available in discourse. These vary with the rights and duties one might refer to, and vice versa, and to refuse to be helpful in a school when a child is hurt would mean taking up an untenable position. In most situations, however, how to prioritize and manage the division of labor is not as clear-cut.

TO ANALYZE SYNCHRONIZING TIME

Work consists of different tasks that are carried out for a particular time and in a particular place. But *why* are particular tasks being carried out, and why are they allowed to take a particular amount of time? The material we analyze in this chapter illustrates how employees make decisions about what assignments they will allow to take up time in their work. We will also argue that taking up positions is instrumental to decision making.

The material has originated from two projects. In both projects, conversations were audiotaped in natural working environments at formal meetings. The first set of recordings was collected at a working team's meetings at an upper secondary school. The second set was recorded in meetings held by support technicians who helped schools and teachers with the management and use of their computers. For the purposes of this chapter, all excerpts from transcripts are presented verbatim.

Accounting practices take up considerable time in talk at work. Different work tasks are developed, and people account for their management, that is, they make their work decisions intelligible and warrantable. In teacher work-team meetings, teachers present accounts concerning such matters as who has the right (duty) to order different tasks to be performed, the amount of time they can be allowed to take, and who is best fitted to perform them. Support technicians account for their rights and duties in a similar manner. The rights and duties allocated to different positions play an important role. In their meetings, the amount of time allocated to different tasks, as well as who has a right or a duty to decide about that, actually has to be accounted for.

In many perspectives, the answers to these questions are treated as if they were the effects of causal influences from structures. Resources are supposed to impose direct limitations. Rules in an organization are supposed to frame the possibility of action. Assumptions are accounted for about why work is or must be distributed in a particular way. We have chosen another perspective: to study how local rules are accounted for. Our research interest is in identifying positions, and the rights and duties associated with them, in order to illuminate how work is divided and prioritized. That makes it possible, for instance, to understand how individuals in one team can manage to have plenty of time for their tasks, while individuals in another team are flooded with work. We can also come to understand how it is possible for some individuals to avoid work, while others drown in it.

What actually does happen when a requirement of a task is rejected or accepted? The following conversation was audiotaped at one work group meeting at a comprehensive upper secondary school in 2003. Transcripts like this one have been used in order to study what the teachers do when they choose to disregard existing duties, though these are clearly defined in curriculum and other official documents. Here, it is used as an illustration. One example is when a teacher raises the question about remedial training for students. It is an obvious right that students can claim they are owed, but the teachers provide accounts to justify their claim that catering for that particular need as the fulfillment of a duty can be left aside. They guard their time and refer to the right to decide when the need occurs and also to the higher-order right to claim that they already have a full schedule.

The teachers have recently received a new collective agreement concerning working hours. The analysis of the conversation shows that the staff has not yet understood the meaning of the agreement. They are forced to discuss time and priorities of tasks. Previously, the time for performing a person's work was clearly defined, due to the identification of separate tasks. This has now been replaced by working hours per year. The teachers are aware that one of their duties is to keep after the students so that they do not fail; the question is how this activity should be organized, how much time it should be allowed to take, and whose time will be used for it. The mathematics teacher, Anna, who opens the discussion, is a new employee and emphasizes the difficulties of how the framework is going to be interpreted.

ANNA: How does the student extra support work? Do you take, or are there lessons to juggle with, do other teachers support or what is the extra support?
ULLA: Well, nobody knows that for sure. There is of course an organized support here and it is [name] that, she is supposed to assist [*inaudible*] so . . . surely there is a certain wish that she should not do it, but, here everyone has to set their own limits.
LARS: When we speak about this with time and things like that, previously we had a couple of hours left for support in our duty, and this doesn't exist anymore and you have to decide on your own now, do I have time to put ten extra hours on my students, I mean [*inaudible*] resources will not be available, but we are here to [*inaudible*] here you have to decide by yourself.

In the conversation, Anna raises the question about how the extra student support is organized in this particular comprehensive upper secondary school. The first question she asks is of a fundamental nature, since she is a new employee. Asking the question shows that she recognizes that there is the need for extra support for some students, a need teachers are obliged to meet. Her question opens up space for a negotiation about work tasks.

Ulla replies by acting as a time guardian; she points out that there is a special person who holds the extra support function, although that person is declared to be insufficient. By that, Ulla appears to mean that since the organization does not offer extra support in a structured way, it is up to each individual to decide by themselves; "everyone has to set their own limits."

Time-guarding is carried out as an individual act. Besides serving as a means to prioritize among work tasks, it also opens a possibility for people to take up other positions. Other teachers feel forced either to seem disinterested in the students or to find themselves positioned as bad colleagues if they take on too much—in this case, additional hours. In that respect, it appears to be a no-win situation. If you don't do the work, you are failing in your duty to the students, but if you do take on the extra work, you are failing in your duty to support the work practices of your colleagues.

Lars also takes up a position as a time guardian, but in a different way. He does it from a collective perspective, a staff perspective. He compares the working conditions before with those in the present—"previously we had a couple of hours left"—but almost at once he turns back to "here you have to decide by yourself." The duty to take on individual responsibility, whether this amounts to saying yes or no, is made relevant.

The conversation goes on, and in Lars's next statement, he suddenly positions himself as a time thief, relative to his colleagues, by pointing out the need students have for extra support: "the students' need are huge, I mean, there is no end to it." Saying no in such a situation suggests being not only disinterested but also insensitive when it comes to caring for students.

Every teacher is familiar with the fact that it is a part of his or her teaching mission to ensure that the students pass their exams, and Lars's utterance makes it very difficult to disregard that fact. The teachers are expected to work with the students in need of extra support, and their duties necessarily increase.

At this point, the story line takes a turn in which the group's position as teachers with knowledge about their teaching mission is being jeopardized. Ulla catches on to the statement about students' needs and gives an example, one where she positions herself as responsible; she has, without requiring payment for it, provided a limited amount of extra support in mathematics for some girls. However, her responsibilities, she declares, have limits: "I cannot accept more hours on a regular basis since my schedule already is full." The temporary support she has given is acceptable, but she guards her time and puts a clear limit by referring to her full schedule.

Lars returns to a staff perspective, speaking about how the distribution of hours was organized earlier, when there was a distinct framework and "one knew of course the conditions." Lars is giving arguments referring to rights and duties one could use as a way to guard one's time.

Ulla finishes the story line by guarding her time from an individual perspective; she says that "one has of course a rather calm conscience when one says that my schedule is full." Now the teachers have gathered themselves. They have drawn some mutual conclusions by having this conversation: there is a big need for extra support for students; and to avoid an overload in working hours, they have to be careful to not promise too much, to consider carefully what to do or not do and refer to their full schedule.

TIME THIEVES AND TIME GUARDIANS

Two positions have been distinguished in the data and serve here as metaphors for the rights and obligations that have to be taken into consideration when it comes to distribution of work tasks. We have chosen to name these positions *time guardians* and *time thieves*, and their roles are depicted in Table 2.1.

Time guardian is a position from which participants can resist or say no to more work, whereas time thief is a position from which participants can distribute or suggest new duties. Analyses made from a positioning-theory perspective often find their starting point in positions that are suggested by the participants, for example, being energetic, humorous, or overloaded with work, as the grounds for acts of positioning, but it can also come in positions that are derived from a story line's direction and contents. It is not, however, the position itself that is interesting; it is merely a subject position available in a particular discourse. The rights and obligations expressed are most important to people trying to bring meaning into different activities.

Within many theory systems, one is content with establishing that the resources are meager, that the rule system requires certain duties to be carried out, or that certain professions are available. Thereby, it is possible to explain how work is distributed and why certain duties are performed, while others are not. Positioning theory, by contrast, is interested in *how* these types of decisions are concluded and *how* individuals come to

Table 2.1
Rights and Obligations for Time Guardians and Time Thieves

	Time Guardian	Time Thief
Rights	Limit/question the number of duties in order to manage them	Talk about what the group's time/your time should be used for
Obligations	Justify why one permits oneself to deselect or add a duty	Justify your pretensions on others' or your own time

occupy the positions that give them rights and obligations to make these decisions.

The time guardian is often located in a situation where the time available simply is not enough, though the time guardian claims the time. We will give an example from another activity in order to show how duties are synchronized through participants' accounts.

The example below is from the beginning of a meeting where the obligation to give support to ITIS computers is elucidated (ITIS is the acronym for the government effort Information and Communications Technology [ICT] in School). This program also guarantees that participating teachers will have access to computers they can use as their own. A condition for the project was that these computers would be served by a special central support organization, not by local support teams. Even so, as Kasper's opening question points out, his local support team continues to receive questions and support these computers and their users. Kasper has a head position in the local support team and is often located in situations where he must report how his team has prioritized various tasks.

KASPER: How much of a burden are ITIS computers for you now?
PERCY: It has begun to be too much. I feel this bur—this pressure, actually. And the main reason is the connection to the Internet from home. It is a lot of stuff that they can't handle alone. And you know that it is particularly sensitive, especially when it comes to portable computers.

KASPER: Hmm.
PERCY: So repeatedly, at least, eh, once or twice a week, I have a client who comes with computers and says I can't connect to the Internet so we should perform a test for errors. I haven't turned them down . . . but that kind of events are . . .

KASPER: No.
PERCY: Then also come with applications, updating virus programs, why can't I do this or that. I mean from stupid questions to sophisticated questions.

KASPER: Okay.
PERCY: It is okay.

Positioning as a theoretical analysis often starts from an assumption regarding what a story line is about. Our assumption here is that the story line is about how the support team uses its time. Kasper's question can be seen as an obvious example of time-guarding. The support organization has lately entered a phase where the district leadership has become reluctant to allocate more money for support. At the same time, the number of computers and peripheral applications has increased and so has the number of users.

Percy is the technician who first enters the conversation. His reply shows that this is a question he considers Kasper has the right to ask. Percy indicates that he personally is getting too much to do. How to manage and prioritize among support tasks has become an urgent question for Percy as an individual. Kasper's question, however, exclusively concerns their support of what he calls ITIS computers. Support of these computers appears as something that burdens the technicians and subsequently as something they need to account for. Attention has to be directed toward how much of a burden they cause when the time use in the organization is discussed. One can say that Percy in this stage accepts, but also takes up, Kasper's position as a time guardian. Both are focusing on the amount of time used, on the basis of the need to limit the time required for a specified task.

However, the need for time guardians is dependent on misuse of time. We suggest that the position of time guardian requires the corresponding position of time thief, and that there are two time thieves in the introductory story line: the incompetent teachers make demands that call for the support team to act, and demands are also made indirectly through the technology and decision about its implementation.

In his first statement, Percy maintains his position as time guardian but shows at the same time that he gives in to the time thieves' demands, helping with "stuff they cannot handle by themselves." One can say that Percy acts as a delegate on behalf of the time thieves, thereby legitimatizing their needs for help among his own priority of tasks. He does this by prepositioning the teachers as incompetent and bestowing upon them the right to his help. At the same time, Percy prepositions himself as a good support technician who wholeheartedly supports those depending on him, that is, takes up the duty to provide that help. The teachers by themselves cannot solve problems such as connecting to the Internet or carrying out virus checks. His claim is supported by the observation that they ask both stupid and sophisticated questions. By prepositioning the teachers as incompetent computer users and by referring to the technology, Percy can justify why he has not yet said no and why he must steal from the organization's time in order to give support to computers that actually should be dealt with by another support group.

There are, of course, structural factors that influence how time is distributed in the support organization. These factors influence the relationship between teachers and support technicians. In a position-theory analysis, such factors are of interest, but the focus lies on how they are accounted for. In the story line here, we can see how one credits the importance of structural factors, such as teacher competence in an organization, and how it is possible to lean on them when one accounts for and decides on the distribution of work.

This short extract is, of course, not enough to understand how time is synchronized and work distributed in the support organization. There were earlier meetings, there were conversations before the technicians sat down in this formal meeting, and this meeting continues. If one wants to understand why the questions are raised, earlier extracts would show that this question has been recurring in the conversations of the support organization. Despite that, the number of computers and attachments that have to be dealt with has more than doubled, while the number of support technicians has not increased. Their accounting practices and positioning moves keep the question about the priority and distribution of work always important.

One can understand why the technicians, despite this, give support to the teachers by studying the continued conversation. Kasper makes a point of the variation in the teachers' competence levels. Through prepositioning certain teachers as incompetent, he sanctions the demands they have made on his team. The technician, Alberto, sees this as a smaller problem. He has control over the impact that the ITIS computers have on support, partially because the competence among the teachers in his school is higher. But when the teachers need help, they also get it. The need for guarding his time does not seem so pressing to him.

A third representative, Gustav, presents an entirely different starting point. He has received a few requests for support on ITIS computers, but not to the extent that he finds it stealing time from other support work. When Kasper asks a rhetorical question as to whether they do not have problems with ITIS computers within their school, Gustav takes up a position as time guardian and claims that he has made it clear to his teachers that he does not have time to give such support.

GUSTAV: But I've sort of told them I don't have time for things like that.
KASPER: No, well, actually, as it were not in the ITIS concept.
GUSTAV: Hmm.
KASPER: So it was declared loud and clear that support was to be external.
GUSTAV: Hmm.
KASPER: So they have given it some thought and they have a phone support line.
GUSTAV: Yes, they have gotten telephone support. Think that is where they should turn.
KASPER: Yes.
GUSTAV: If there's anything . . .
KASPER: Yes the only problem is we haven't any.
ALBERTO: They are our schools.
KASPER: Network services were not included, so there we have to pitch in.
GUSTAV: No, no, then we must help out, then I mean they need to . . .
KASPER: Have to pitch in.
GUSTAV: At that school then, eh.

Kasper initiates a new story line, in which he refers to another structural condition that influences rights and obligations. He refers to what is formally called for, namely, that teachers should turn to a central support organization with their ITIS computer problems. The teachers have received a special telephone number to use if they have problems with these computers. So how shall one understand why Kasper begins to question Gustav's view on support, but not Percy's and Alberto's?

Here we will insert a story line from another transcript. This story line is about regular support. It is about not understanding that cables need to be checked, that the caps-lock may be activated, or the numeric keys toggled.

PERCY: Well, ehm, I thought more in line of kind of panic turn-outs. Like what, what, you know what happens. They are on the phone from S-school last week [*imitates*] "Ohhh my computer doesn't work." The usual, okay checked here and there. And there I have checked everything I could. I get there and it's only a patch cable hanging there and they told me it was connected. The other . . .
KASPER: [*sighs loudly*]

PERCY: The other like [*imitates*] "I can't get in with my password. Ah it doesn't work," says he. The password was a range of numbers. He used the numeric keyboard but sometimes it's not toggled. It's character error. It's that kind of panic turn-outs. They are necessary and done in passing but it's not only that. There, at S-school, they say Åke's computer is ready and it's the database I introduced him to for doing inventory . . .
KASPER: Had it been—had it been better if all errors were filtered through, through some . . .

PERCY: So we needn't deal with this.

Through these examples, Percy moves outside the issue of ITIS computers into how regular support is managed and why it may be impossible to say no under regular circumstances. The continued story line clearly shows how the positions of time guardian and time thief are dependent on each other. Percy does not start his account with why he chooses to deselect duties, but rather the reverse. Metaphors like "panic turn-outs" and claims about necessity suggest that these tasks are so important that they ought not to be deselected. Support technicians may guard their time, but it is their duty to provide support even when, as in case of the patch cable, the user should reasonably have been able to manage without support.

It is not the nature of the task that causes Kasper and Alberto to reject Gustav's attempt to justify guarding his time. They clarify that it is the local school district that has installed the network cards. Network services are not included in the support agreement with the state, but since it "is our schools" and our network cards, we have to use local support time to solve problems when users ask for help. Kasper positions himself through this story line as a time stealer and brings forward arguments for why the type of support tasks that have been discussed ought to, at least to some extent, fall on the support team. The final rounds can be seen as if the group agrees about this interpretation.

Time-guarding and time theft reappeared in the support team's conversations about different work tasks. When the participants report what tasks are performed, or are intended to be performed, the members have the right to deselect and to allocate tasks, limit existing tasks, or extend them. They are, however, linked to the obligation to report why one wants to use time in a certain way.

This review clearly shows how dynamic this process is, how the understanding for using time shifts, and how dependent it is on rights and obligations, which are embedded in the positions different participants try to occupy.

POSITIONS GIVE POWER TO SET LIMITS

Polanyi (2008) argued that, in complex activities, planned action has little success. Instead, people spontaneously coordinate their actions. Foucault (2000) often refers to power as something that exists in a field between different actors. In his view, power is productive. It contributes to how different activities are developed. The positioning theory analysis of our examples gives us a picture of how teachers and support technicians go about synchronizing their duties and deciding how much time these are allowed to take. It may seem irrelevant to call professionals thieves and guardians, but on the basis of this analysis we want to assert that time guardians and time thieves are necessary positions in workplaces where work is discretionary and shaped by the professionals themselves. Through guarding and stealing, they set the boundaries for their work. And deciding on how to prioritize among tasks is an important question for professionals who have to handle a flexible work schedule.

Our examples illustrate how guarding and stealing time fulfill an important function, by making our everyday work, even our existence, manageable. If, in Foucault's sense, power is productive, we can see how successful guarding and stealing of time produces a division of labor and different ways of prioritizing work.

Positioning analysis illustrates how rewarding it is to scrutinize the way rights and duties are allocated and drawn upon in discourse. We argue that it is an advantage in examining what takes place during meetings in a workplace, and thereby gives the dynamic in the profession an importance. Positioning theory can contribute to that information. It approaches the individual in a micro perspective through the positions the individuals claim, are allocated to, or allocate others to. There are, of course, positionings that are malignant, and sometimes they can be difficult for the individual to get rid of. It would prove very interesting to examine how they arise.

Positioning theory has a broad application in revealing the dynamics of the fine grain of political activity. It is possible to use it to study relationships between teachers and students, parental contacts, grade conferences, and so on, as the daily processes of an education system.

A criticism that often is aligned against studies of activities is that they give too small a contribution to the understanding of society in general, of the conditions for the teaching profession, for example, or for the students' learning in school. How can we understand positioning as something more than a dynamic process where conflicts have a crucial importance? Essentially, positions exist within the same field as identities, classes, or professions. The person who occupies or is allocated a position can be put through the same including or enclosing processes.

One central assumption in positioning theory is that different positions give actors different rights and obligations, but also that different actors have various levels of access to positions. It is naturally of central importance for a teacher whether he or she can occupy the position as a time guardian and thereby get the opportunity to decide tasks' scope. If the access to such a position is undermined through legislation, organizations' formulations, or management—which undermines the arguments a time guardian can refer to—it can have significant consequences for a collective just as for an individual. Positioning theory analyses contribute in this way to an understanding of the conditions for the teaching profession.

What has been revealed in these examples is the machinery of the bureaucratic process, the form that micropolitical activities can take. The political process finally reaches its foundation, so to speak, in just the kind of negotiations between time guardians and time thieves that we have examined in this discussion.

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3

A Positioning Theory Analysis of Language and Conflict in Political Processes

Tracey Pilkerton Cairnie

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL PROCESSES COLLIDE WITH THE LANGUAGE OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS?

Not since Watergate has there been so much conflict within a presidential administration as that of President George W. Bush over the long-standing practice of political appointees serving at the pleasure of the President. The President is the final arbiter of all matters concerning his political appointees—whether they are serving his pleasure or fulfilling the duties of their office or both. As the head of the Executive Branch and as the leader of his political party, the President sets the political agenda. He selects his political appointees to help fulfill this agenda. In turn, the political appointees must take an oath to uphold the duties of their office and defend the Constitution. But what happens when the means mandated by the President for appointees to fulfill his political agenda fall outside the normal and customarily recognized boundaries of the Constitution?

This chapter utilizes positioning theory to analyze the roots of conflicts between the Office of the President and his political appointees charged with carrying out the President's agenda. Much of the conflict within the Bush administration arose from the positioning and counterpositioning of appointees as having certain moral rights, duties, and obligations in carrying out the business of government on the one hand, and the business of politics on the other. Conflicts escalated around the use and interpretation of the terms *loyalty*, *executive privilege*, *constitutional*, and *secrecy.* Although the Bush administration has ended, many conflicts from that

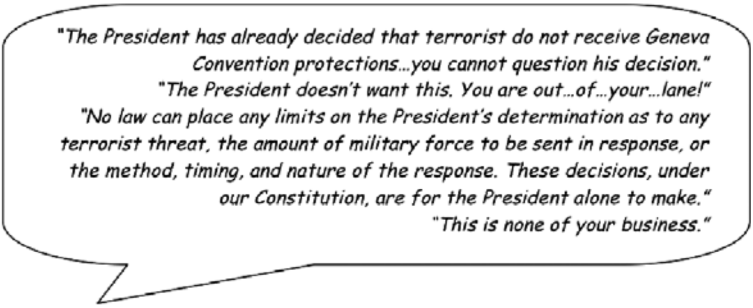

Figure 3.1

administration continue to unfold, as former appointees and executive officials are now engaged in their struggle for legitimacy: a validation of political pressures that were brought to bear on appointees, set against the appointees' efforts to resist that very pressure while trying to stay within the constitutional boundaries.

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

A manifest conflict is "a situation in which at least two actors, or their representatives, try to pursue their *perceptions* of mutually incompatible goals by undermining, directly or indirectly, the goal-seeking capability of one another" (Sandole and van der Merwe 1995, 6). The basic structure of conflict consists of three interrelated components:

1. A situation of incompatible goals
2. A range of psychological conditions experienced by the parties involved
3. A set of related behaviors used to achieve the disputed goals (Mitchell 1981)

One's perspective regarding conflict is oftentimes viewed in a realistic modality or a constructionist modality, or some variation between those two.

While conflict situations take place in the "real world," issues can vary widely, with actants holding different views as to the actual issues in the conflict—views can differ even among members within the same group.

> Subjective elements creep into even such a basic process as the parties defining what the conflict is about. Misperceptions and confusions, particularly about the goals [and motivations] of the adversary, can often lead to widely differing views about the issues at stake. [And then there is] the purely tactical question of [how] to present the conflict situation in the most favorable light to outsiders and followers in one's own party. The former is likely to occur when conflicts arise

involving a number of interconnected issues, which the [actants] regard in different order of importance; or when the conflict extends over a long period of time and the issues alter as time goes on. (Mitchell 1981, 35–48)

A number of the conflicts referenced in this chapter involve subjective elements emanating from a lack of information for grounding one's perception of the unfolding events and/or situations. For that reason, this chapter focuses primarily on conflict as a social construction that emerges from interactions within a strip of life from a stream of ongoing activity that is unfolding within a larger interactive episode (Goffman 1974). The attacks on New York City and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, created a new social framework, dubbed by President Bush as the "War on Terror." It is within this framework that a number of ongoing activities involving the business of government started to collide with the business of politics.

By constitutional mandate, the President of the United States is the head of the Executive Branch; he or she has the right to select Cabinet secretaries, agency heads, and others on the basis of their support for pursuing the President's agenda. So what led to the perceptions of mutually incompatible goals between those administration officials setting and implementing President Bush's agenda and his political appointees who run the business of government?

Perception is "the process of using the senses to acquire information about the surrounding environment or situation" (Encarta Online World Dictionary). This is part of the cognitive process for "meaning making." Chris Argyris, a recognized organizational theorist, opines that "people live in a world of self-generating beliefs that remain largely untested" (Ross et al. 1994, 242). These self-generating beliefs occur "almost instantaneously after seeing or hearing someone else speak or act"(p. 242). People integrate new observations and information within an existing set of assumptions that are frequently based on individuals' past experiences, values, and beliefs. These assumptions often "prompt people to take action that has only minimal relationship to what was originally spoken or observed" (p. 242). When this "dynamic happens within a social or organizational setting, an environment for conflict is created that easily escalates" (p. 242).

POSITIONING THEORY: A METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYSIS

The space between observation and action is one place where the seeds of conflict are planted and grow—the place of past experiences, values, and beliefs. Positioning theory provides a method for analyzing the cognitive process that occurs within this local moral domain of people's beliefs and practices and the meaning discerned for the actions being taken by an individual and those around them. Positioning theory follows the discursive practice of the actants. The theory can be depicted as a triad of interconnecting aspects of interpersonal encounters:

1. The positioning of self and others with moral rights, duties, and obligations
2. The evolving story lines
3. The speech acts

which are the social or illocutionary force of people's actions (Harré and Moghaddam 2003).

Positioning is a two-phase procedure. In the first phase, an act of prepositioning occurs, whereby the character and/or competence of the one who is being positioned, or is positioning himself or herself, is established. This prepositioning might be taken for granted if the attributes of the character are known or presumed. When character attributions are not taken for granted, the "character work" might become explicit within the dialogue, with actants establishing and/or resisting character attributions. On the basis of the prepositioning, rights and duties are assigned, deleted, withdrawn, taken up, and so on (Harré et al. 2009, 7–16).

THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT: POSITIONING OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES

The conflicts occurring within the Executive Branch are rooted within the meaning ascribed to the character trait *loyalty* and the positioning and counterpositioning of actants with a first-order *duty.*

The Constitution of the United States explicitly prepositions the President as the head of the Executive Branch. Article II assigns the President the right to:

- "executive power,"
- nominate and appoint Officers of the United States, and
- "require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices."

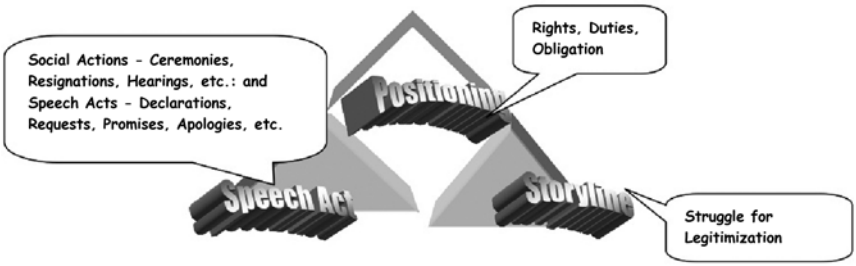

Figure 3.2

One can argue that positioning is typically a correlating relationship. When one is positioned as having a right, someone else is assigned the correlating duty and vice versa (Finkel and Moghaddam 2004; Harré and Moghaddam 2003). Political appointees are nominated and appointed with the correlating duty to "serve" the President. Political appointees are assigned the duties to:

- "formulat[e], advocat[e], and direct Administration policies and programs . . . all within the political framework of the President,"
- "work with their staff to identify the problems, describe the solutions . . . evaluate the successes, and determine the new or modified program directions," and
- "serve at the pleasure of the President or other appointing official" (Office of Personnel Management website).

This last duty creates a presumptive right to the President and other appointing officials to "dismiss" appointees, or ask them to "resign," when they cease serving their pleasure.

Under the United States Code, "an individual, except the President, elected or appointed to an office of honor or profit in the civil service or uniformed services, shall take an oath of office." The oath is a form of speech act that, once uttered, assigns the individual the duty of "defender" of the Constitution and a duty to "faithfully" discharge the duties of that office. The oath states:

> I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God. (5 USC §3331)

The Constitution also requires the President to take an oath or affirmation prior to entering "on the Execution of his Office":

> I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. (Article II, Section 1)

The Oath of Office occurs as a ceremony on Inauguration Day; a powerful social act recognized around the world. Once uttered, the President becomes the new head of the United States, head of the Executive Branch, and commander in chief of the armed forces. The utterance positions the President with the explicit duty to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution." The Constitution further positions the President with the explicit duty to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed" (Article II, Section 2) and positions all citizens (including political appointees) with a presumed right for protection under the law.

The constitutional rights and duties of the President presume a position as final arbiter of all matters concerning whether his or her political appointees are carrying out their duties for fulfilling the President's political agenda within the boundaries of the Constitution and the framework of laws that flow from it. Political appointees have both an assigned duty "to serve" the President and sworn duties "to discharge" the duties of their office and to support and defend the Constitution. What happens when the duty to discharge one's office conflicts with the duty to support the Constitution? Which duty takes precedence? More importantly, what rules govern the process and judgment of the President in deciding, as sole arbiter, which duty should take precedence?

THE PRISM OF 9/11

The attacks on 9/11 provided the Bush administration with a rationale for shifting the normal and customarily recognized practices of business within government institutions toward new practices that would define the new social framework for the War on Terror. "Almost without discussion, it is agreed that a new kind of enemy required a new kind of tactic" (Mayer 2008, 34).

As shifts occur, actants might be positioned or counterpositioned in a multitude of ways, depending upon who is doing the positioning, who is doing the observing, how social actions/speech acts are being used and are recognized, and what sort of story line is evolving within that strip of life. Actions might also be interpreted in more than one way, again depending upon which position is being recognized in relationship to the sort of story line that is unfolding.

Post-9/11, the two main story lines focused on the struggle for legitimacy for the normal and customarily recognized practices of appointees to carry out the duties of their office and to support and defend the Constitution and the President's need for new tactics to fulfill his agenda in the War on Terror.

THE BUSINESS OF POLITICS: POSITIONING OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Political appointees are prepositioned as "political" by their title. This presumes a position of "loyalty," not only to the President and his other appointed officials but also to the President's party—in this case, the Republican Party. A President's political agenda is naturally perceived as advancing the policies and goals of the party. In the United States, the

President can be from the minority party. Part of President Bush's political agenda included expanding the Republican majority and its values within all levels of government.

The Republican Party is commonly associated with conservative values—but even within the party, there are many different types of conservatives: social conservatives, fiscal conservatives, "neoconservatives," moderate conservatives, theo-conservatives (the "religious right"), "paleo-conservatives," "neo-libertarian conservatives," and so on. During Bush's initial campaign for office in 2000, he introduced a new benchmark for Republicans and for the American voter: the "compassionate conservative," one who is "compassionate and decent" (Bacon 2009).

In President-elect Bush's acceptance speech on December 13, 2000, he declared:

> I have faith that with God's help, we as a nation will move forward together as one nation, indivisible. And together we will create an America . . . that is united in our diversity and our shared American values that are larger than race or party. I was not elected to serve one party, but to serve one nation. The President of the United States is the President of every single American, of every race and every background.

This speech was a complex network of prepositioning and positioning. He is positioning all Americans with the duty to act as one. The correlating right to decide how Americans should act, and therefore how America as a nation will act, is assigned to the President as leader of the nation. His reference to his "faith in God's help" presumes a positioning of obligation.

The positioning of rights and duties are discerned in the President's discursive practices: "I pray I be as good a messenger of his will as possible" (Woodward 2004). "My faith frees me. . . . Frees me to make decisions others might not like. Frees me to do the right thing, even though it will not poll well. Frees me to enjoy life and not worry about what comes next" (Greenwald 2007, 69). Here, President Bush is positioning himself with the duty to serve God's will and positioning God with the right to define that will. The traditional moral values and social issues (larger than race or party) are based upon those held by the President as a "self-defined" evangelical Christian. Since all Americans are one, all Americans are being positioned as having a duty to engender the evangelical moral values and social issues delivered by God's messenger, the President.

What happens when appointees push back against this positioning as they begin to see how it conflicts with their duty to support and defend the Constitution while trying faithfully to discharge their duty to office?

Beliefs influence how an actant positions self and others with moral rights, duties, and obligations. In the words of conservative economist Bruce Bartlett, who served under presidents Reagan and George H. W. Bush:

> This is why [Bush] dispenses with people who confront him with inconvenient facts. He truly believes he's on a mission from God. Absolute faith like that overwhelms a need for analysis. His whole thinking about faith is to believe things for which there is no empirical evidence. (Greenwald 2007, 83)

President Bush's belief system seemingly positions political appointees with a first order of duty to serve the President's political (ergo religious) pleasure and a lesser duty to their office and the Constitution. Absolute faith requires an unquestioning loyalty. Actants who engage in inquiry are positioned as lacking faith, which presumes a character trait of disloyalty. Disloyal actants are in violation of their first-order duty to serve the President without question. And so goes the unofficial unstated logic of the Bush administration and its loyal followers.

The administration's prepositioning of "loyalty"—as defined by the Bush administration—is a shift from the normal and customarily recognized practice of appointees in fulfilling their assigned duty to serve. "It'll just be a lot of people reading from a script that says, 'I love the President.' Where exactly does that fit in the grand American Ideal of free and honest inquiry?" (Suskind 2004, 270).

Paul O'Neill, head of the Treasury Department, and other political appointees resisted the President's definition of *loyalty.* In their view, the new interpretation is

> a false kind of loyalty, loyalty to a person and whatever they say or do. That's the opposite of real loyalty, which is loyalty based on inquiry, and telling someone what you really think and feel—your best estimation of the truth instead of what they want to hear. (Suskind 2004, 326)

As we will see below, this second-order positioning by political appointees as having a duty to inquire could result in a withdrawal of "duty."

CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN, EPA ADMINISTRATOR

Christine Todd Whitman, head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) between 2001 and 2003, routinely asked in executive meetings "if there were any facts to support [the Administration's] case." Her pursuit of objective information and evaluation was blocked and met with accusations of disloyalty (Greenwald 2007, 84). In her discourse, Whitman positioned herself with a first-order duty to her office by inquiring into the validity of data. The EPA has an explicit duty to protect human health and the environment. The Bush administration resisted Whitman's positioning, however, by counterpositioning her as being disloyal and violating her first-order duty to serve the President.

By way of example, on September 18, 2001, barely a week after 9/11, the EPA announced that the air in New York, still heavy with smoke and all manner of noxious fumes and particulates, was "safe to breathe." Two years later, the Office of the Inspector General (IG) of EPA found that the "White House had convinced EPA to add reassuring statements and delete cautionary ones" in its September 2001 Ground Zero report on air quality. The IG found that there was insufficient data and analysis to conclude that the air in New York City was safe to breathe. In fact, such data were not available until June 2002 (Heilprin 2003).

In December 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Oversight and Government Reform issued a report entitled *Political Interference with Climate Change Science under the Bush Administration*. This report constituted a positioning of a first-order duty to office.

Whitman resigned from her position in 2003, officially so she could "spend more time with her family." She later stated she resigned because of "[Vice President Dick] Cheney's insistence on easing air pollution controls, not the personal reason cited" (*Washington Post*, June 27, 2007). Her resignation was a speech act that is socially recognized as a withdrawal of one's assigned duty. Whitman engaged in resisting the administration's positioning of a first-order duty to serve the pleasure of the President, which, in this situation, she perceived was in direct conflict with her positioning of herself with a first-order duty to her office. The escalation of conflict in the pursuit of perceived mutually incompatible goals frequently ends with one of the actants engaging in the withdrawal or deletion of the assigned duty to serve.

THE BUSINESS OF POLITICS AS POLITICS

Loyalty under the Bush administration involved more than loyalty to the President on policy issues. It entailed loyalty to the Republican Party's agenda. Karl Rove, the chief political strategist and advisor under the Bush administration, positioned himself with the right to call on party members to implement the goal of establishing a permanent Republican majority (Iglesias and Seay 2008, 8). Party members and appointees are assigned the correlating duty to serve in pursuit of this goal.

One could argue that the Republican Party was responding to an external threat—terrorism—which led to their pursuit for internal cohesion among the party's faithful. The "intergroup relations" involved the assigned duty to serve and support strong, aggressive leadership to combat terrorism—in this case, President Bush and his policies (Moghaddam 2008).

MODERATE INCUMBENTS

As mentioned earlier, there is an explicit first-order duty to office assigned to all political appointees and elected officials when they take their oath of office. Up until the Bush administration, there was a normal and customary practice to support party members who were running as incumbents, regardless of the strength of their "conservative" character trait. This changed during the primaries in 2005, when a number of moderate conservatives found themselves being challenged by the religious right wing of the Republican Party. Moderates were being prepositioned as disloyal by the party for supporting policies counter to the President's traditional moral values and social issues. These moderates were negatively characterized as "Republican in name only" (RINO).

The act of challenging an incumbent in the primary is a deletion of an incumbent's right to represent the party. The action of deletion was executed despite any predictions of the incumbents winning reelection against the opposition party. Deletion of the assigned right to run unopposed served to banish the actant from the party.

The moderate incumbents resisted their positioning as "disloyal" by counterpositioning themselves as having a first-order sworn duty to office, with a prepositioning of themselves as reasonable and rational. Constituents are thus positioned with the correlating right to reasonable and rational representation. Incumbents who lost in the primary called a press conference (social action) to publicly denounce (speech act) the new party candidate, engaging in a struggle for legitimacy (story line). For example, Gary Reese of the Virginia House of Delegates stated in November 2005:

> I have always believed that you wanted your representatives to be reasonable and rational, and to work together to make and keep our schools the best; to solve the transportation crisis; to work for public safety and not to arm our students in school, and, yes, for limited, efficient government, not government that intrudes into the most important decisions a family has to make. . . . The Republic Party, my party, has been taken over by extremists.

In the unfolding story line of the religious right as "extremist," the new highly conservative Republican candidates are depicted as actants who are irrational—seeking to destroy the social systems. The incumbents positioned themselves as defenders of their constituents' right to reasonable and rational representation and went so far as to call upon their party's constituents to cast their ballots for the Democratic challenger. This discursive practice positioned the Democratic challenger as a "friend" who shares their moral and social values and the "extremist" Republican challenger as a "foe" who seeks to destroy them. The Republican Party suffered heavy losses in the 2005 elections.

THE BUSINESS OF POLITICS WITHIN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The Hatch Act (1939) prohibits government employees from engaging in any "activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or a partisan group." The Act positions citizens and civilian employees as having the right to protection from "pernicious political activities." The correlating duty is assigned to "all civilian employees (including political appointees) in the Executive Branch of the federal government, except the President and the vice president." Political appointees are explicitly positioned with the duty to:

- "not use their official authority or influence to interfere with an election or affect the results thereof"
- "not engage in political activity while on duty, in a government office, wearing an official uniform, or using a government vehicle" (Office of Special Council 2005)

The interpretation of the Hatch Act under the Bush administration depended upon how an actant was positioned and by whom, how this positioning was recognized, and the context or story line in which an actant was placed.

DR. RICHARD CARMONA, SURGEON GENERAL

Richard H. Carmona was nominated and appointed to the post of surgeon general under President Bush in 2002. The surgeon general serves as the preeminent public health educator for the American public. He or she is commonly recognized as a scientific expert, educator, and advisor on public health issues. Carmona positioned himself with a duty to "engender debate on [the politically controversial] issues [of embryonic stem cell research, emergency contraception, and the effectiveness of abstinence-only sex education] to make sure the American public, our elected officials, and our appointed officials are all knowledgeable of the science" (Rovner 2007). His positioning presumes a character trait of the administration and public as "students" and "consumers" who have a correlating right to "scientific facts."

"You don't want Republican or Democratic scientific information. You want real scientific information" (Rovner 2007). This is a positioning of a first-order duty to office, which is in direct conflict with President Bush's positioning of political appointees with a first-order duty to serve his moral and political agenda.

Carmona pursued his ultimate goal "of a citizenry who could achieve informed consent on these complex issues" (Rovner 2007). He further recognized that his pursuit was incompatible with the President's. He positioned the citizen's right to scientific facts as taking precedence over the President's right to set a political agenda that appears to be at the expense of science and the objective measures that it brings to the debate. "There was already a policy in place that did not want to hear about the science but wanted to just preach abstinence, which I felt was scientifically incorrect," Carmona said (*Washington Post*, July 11, 2007).

The administration resisted Carmona's counterpositioning by asserting a first-order duty to serve the President's pleasure, telling the surgeon general, "This will be a political document or you are not going to release it." Carmona continued to assert his duty to office and positioned himself as loyal to science. He refused to release the document in question because he "would not put the political rhetoric into that document that they wanted," which, he said, "would tarnish the office of the surgeon general when our colleagues saw us taking a political stand" (Rosen 2007). The administration then engaged in the "deletion" of Carmona's assigned duty to serve by not reappointing him as surgeon general in President Bush's second term.

SOCIAL ACTION AND SPEECH ACTS (WITHDRAWAL/DELETION OF ASSIGNED RIGHTS/DUTIES)

Political appointees whose assigned duty was "withdrawn" or "deleted" based on the conflict of first-order duty later engaged in a public telling of their struggle for legitimacy and validation. The public telling included the use of press conferences, talk shows, press interviews, congressional hearings or testimony, journal articles, and biographical works.

In his testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Governmental Reform, Carmona publicly charged the Bush administration with an unprecedented level of political interference in his work as the nation's doctor, compromising his ability to deliver the best available public health science to Americans. A testimony is a social action that follows a ceremonial procedure and is recognized by members within the society. Carmona utilized this social action as part of his discursive practice in resisting the positioning by the administration of a first-order duty to serve the political agenda and asserting the public's right to hear scientific facts. In Carmona's words:

> The reality is that the nation's doctor has been marginalized . . . with supervisors who are [loyalist] political appointees with partisan agendas. Anything that doesn't fit into the political appointee's ideological, theological, or political agenda is ignored, marginalized, or simply buried. (Rosen 2007)

Carmona positioned his tenure as surgeon general as a victim to political agendas, a violation to his oath of office. He positioned his supervisors as villains promoting propaganda. The plot is about the struggle for truth. Carmona's testimony gained legitimacy when two former surgeons general, C. Everett Koop (1982–1989, in the Reagan administration) and David Satcher (1998–2002, in the Clinton administration), testified that they "never had seen Washington D.C. so partisan or a new Surgeon

General so politically challenged and marginalized" as Carmona (Rosen 2007).

The unfolding story line of the Bush administration engaging in partisan activities and political marginalization continued to escalate, with both sides engaging in the formal withdrawal or deletion of rights and duties as a method for pursuing perceived mutually incompatible goals.

JOHN DILULIO, FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

John J. Dilulio Jr., the director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives under President Bush, resigned in August 2001, barely 18 months into Bush's first term. He positioned the White House as engaging in partisan activity to the extent it hindered the President's duty to execute the business of government.

> There is no precedent in any modern White House for what is going on in this one: a complete lack of a policy apparatus. What you've got is everything—and I mean everything—being run by the political arm. It's the reign of the Mayberry Machiavellis. (Suskind 2004, 170–71)

PAUL O'NEILL, U.S. SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

The "lack of a policy apparatus" within the Bush administration hindered political appointees' ability to "know the mind of the President—making it difficult [for them] to carry out his mandates" (Suskind 2006, 226). This statement is a presumptive positioning of the President with a duty to engage with political appointees in policy discussions.

Upon hearing the State of the Union address, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill exploded when he realized it contained flawed data, provided by a midlevel analyst from another office who was not authorized to interpret the data. "How could the White House staff decide to do things like this and not even consult with people in the government who know what's true or not?" he exclaimed. "Who the hell is in charge here? This is complete bullshit!" (Suskind 2004, 108–9). In this discourse, O'Neill is positioning the administration as intentionally interfering with his duty to be consulted on matters of his office. He is further positioning the President as not executing his responsibility as chief executive to seek opinions from the secretary of the treasury on fiscal matters falling within the authority of his office. This strip of life is part of the unfolding story line of the shift from the normal and customarily recognized practice of engaging in inquiry with their political appointees, who are assigned a duty of office, to a lack of policy apparatus and a government being run by the political arm.

Vice President Dick Cheney called O'Neill and said, "The President has decided to make some changes in the economic team. And you're part of the change. . . . The President thinks you should say you decided to return to private life." O'Neill accepted the President's right to withdraw his duty to serve, but he did not accept the proposed manner in which to present that withdrawal. He responded:

> You know, Dick, this is fine. The President is entitled to have people around him who he wants around him. . . . I will submit a letter, indicating my intention to resign. . . . [But] I'm not willing to say I want to return to private life because I'm too old to begin telling lies now. . . . I'm perfectly okay with people knowing the truth that the President wants to make a change. That's his prerogative. (Suskind 2004, 309–10)

EIGHT U.S. ATTORNEYS

During the Bush administration, eight U.S. attorneys were asked to resign from office prior to the end of their terms. Each was told the administration "was heading in a new direction." These requests for resignations from U.S. attorneys were atypical because such requests were customarily reserved for persons who either violated their sworn duty to office or were not executing the goals of the President. In November 2001, all U.S. attorneys were explicitly informed that the number-one goal of the President was "to identify, apprehend, and prosecute terrorists," a goal that each of the eight believed they were faithfully executing.

"What's going on here?" asked David Iglesias, U.S. attorney for the District of New Mexico. "I've received no warning. I was not aware of any problem. If I had been aware of a problem, I would have fixed it" (Iglesias and Seay 2008, 6).

Iglesias resisted the implied positioning of him as having failed to execute his duty. He also counterpositioned himself with an assigned right to be informed of a problem with his performance; that is, he assigned the administration a correlating duty to inform. This positioned political appointees with a first-order right that took precedence over the President's right to dismiss, ask for a resignation, or not reappoint political appointees at his pleasure. The administration resisted Iglesias's counterpositioning by not responding. Of course, the lack of information or response is in itself a form of positioning: Political appointees serve as objects within a broader political strategy; one typically does not engage in discourse with objects.

Several of the eight attorneys met jointly in an attempt to make sense of the unfolding events. They found one common experience. Each had been positioned by an elected or appointed official with a first-order political duty to serve the party. This political duty came in the form of a request to interfere, provide information, or influence investigations involving political opponents in upcoming elections. Each of the eight resisted the positioning by counterpositioning themselves with the first-order duty to office—to support and defend the laws under the Constitution. Moreover, the requests were not recognized as a right because they clearly violated the Hatch Act. As Iglesias recalled: "I stopped [the senior official] and told him that I was sure that he wasn't asking me . . . to reveal information about an ongoing investigation or lobby me on one, because we both knew that would be improper" (Iglesias and Seay 2008, 135).

By calling for their resignations, the administration repositioned the U.S. attorneys as having a first-order duty to serve the requests made by elected and official appointees. Iglesias and others engaged in the public telling of this perceived violation of their first-order duty to office, saying that one of the "most important tenets of a U.S. attorney's office" is to never "mix politics with prosecutions." "I think Americans need to have full confidence that their federal prosecutors are above politics," Iglesias said (p. 135). He thus counterpositions the U.S. attorneys with the first-order duty to office over the duty to politics. At the same time, he positions the American public with the correlating right for fair and impartial justice. Iglesias and the other attorneys further position the President and elected officials as violating their duty to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed" (p. 135).

VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD "DICK" CHENEY

Past experiences, values, and beliefs influence the moral positioning of rights, duties, and obligations. Vice President Cheney had a long history of working within the Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and George H. W. Bush administrations. In 1989, he wrote about his view of Congress as "a collective, deliberative body" that tended to "slow down decisions" and "subject them to compromise." The presidency, by contrast,

> was designed as a one-person office to ensure that it would be ready for action. Its major characteristics, in the language of *Federalist No. 70*, are to be "decision, activity, secrecy and dispatch." By reason of size and diffuse responsibility, Congress was prone to reckless leaks and feckless changes of heart. In a dangerous world, therefore, a president sometimes had to defy congressional demands for information and legislative attempts to restrict his use of power. "On the scale of risks, [Cheney said,] I am more concerned about depriving the President of his ability to act than I am about Congress's alleged inability to respond." (Gellman 2008, 97–98)

Cheney thereby positions the President with the ultimate moral authority for assigning and deleting rights, duties, and obligations in order to act quickly in a dangerous world. This belief is evident in Cheney's discursive practice in the days and years following the 9/11 attacks.

Just one week after the attacks, the vice president engaged in a discursive procedure that explicitly shifted the way the business of government was to be conducted under the Bush administration. In an interview with Tim Russert on *Meet the Press*, he declared:

> We'll have to work through, sort of, the dark side, if you will. We've got to spend time in the shadows in the intelligence world. A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion, using sources and methods that are available to our intelligence agencies if we are to be successful. That's the world these folks operate in. And, uh, so it's going to be vital for us to use any means at our disposal basically, to achieve our objectives.

In Cheney's utterance, political appointees are positioned with a duty to engage in the new practice by going along quietly. One could argue that this is another example of intergroup dynamics, where an external threat leads to internal cohesion, with Cheney positioning political appointees with the duty to support strong aggressive leadership (Moghaddam 2008). The ability to counterposition Cheney's assignment of rights and duties is constrained through the use of secrecy and "executive privilege."

> With fewer people privy to actual decisions, tighter confidentiality could be preserved, reducing leaks. Swift decisions—either preempting detailed deliberation or ignoring it—could move immediately to implementation speeding the pace of execution and emphasizing the how's rather than the more complex why's. (Suskind 2006, 226)

The rhetoric adopted by the Bush administration mirrored the rhetoric of the terrorists. Terrorist recruits worked in "small, tightly knit groups" in order to safeguard information, and even family and friends were kept in the dark about the "secret world they had entered." The use of categorical thinking by both the Bush administration and the terrorists—"It's us versus them"—served to strengthen the belief that the ends justify the means (Moghaddam 2006, 98).

The administration positioned the President with the right to make unilateral decisions without the opinions of those sworn by their duty to office to do so. Attempts by the political appointees to resist this positioning were met with comments such as these:

- "The President has already decided that terrorists do not receive Geneva Convention protections. . . . You cannot question his decision." (Rosen 2007)
- "The President doesn't want this. You are out . . . of . . . your . . . lane!" (Gellman 2008, 134)
- "No law can place any limits on the President's determination as to any terrorist threat, the amount of military force to be sent in response, or the method, timing,

and nature of the response. These decisions, under our Constitution, are for the President alone to make." (Gellman 2008, 136)

- "This is none of your business." (Suskind 2006, 277)
- "I'm not going to tell you whether there is or isn't such a program. But if there were such a program, you'd better go tell your little friends at the FBI and CIA to keep their mouths shut." (*Washington Post*, October 19, 2008)

Conflicts continued to escalate as actants struggled in their pursuit for legitimacy. The tactic of secrecy and executive privilege had political appointees sitting in meetings

> unable to say what they knew. They huddled in hallways after meetings, and demurred that "I'm not at liberty to say." Uncertain about the security clearances of old colleagues they found it best to be safe and say as little as possible. (Lichtblau 2008, 47)

Political appointees and their staff found it increasingly difficult to carry out the business of government: "I do not know what to tell him because I cannot bring myself to say that the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] no longer feels compelled to obey the law" (Lichtblau 2008, 47).

Matthew Waxman, a special assistant on the National Security Council, recalled:

> What was incredible was how momentous a decision this is, to say we're in a state of war with Al Qaeda, because it set us on a course not only for our international response, but also in our domestic constitutional relations. You'd expect that the cabinet would have met, and that different options would have developed, and they would have debated the pros and cons, and that allies would have been consulted. But there was little or no detailed deliberation about long-term consequences. (Mayer 2008, 34)

The above statement is reflective of the normal and customarily recognized positioning of rights and duties of the President and his political appointees under the framework of the Constitution. The President, as the head of the Executive Branch is being positioned as not fulfilling the duty of his office as chief executive. His new policies and practices are perceived as hindering political appointees' ability to uphold their sworn duty to support and defend the Constitution.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Department of Justice (DOJ) refused to certify the legality of a domestic surveillance program but acknowledged the President's right to exercise his power, declaring, "The President is free to overrule me if he wants," and "The President can also ignore the law and act extra legally" (Bamford 2008, 279, 282). In these statements, Jack Goldsmith, the head of the Office of Legal Counsel, asserted his first-order duty to office, while also recognizing the President's right to overrule. However, he denies the positioning of a first-order duty to serve when the pleasure of the President is in violation of the laws of the Constitution. Goldsmith prepositions loyalty to the law over loyalty to the President, thus positioning the President with the first-order duty "to faithfully execute the laws."

Cheney attempted to resist DOJ's positioning of the President by repositioning the President's with the first-order right to "defy legislative attempts to restrict his use of power," but DOJ again resisted the positioning of duty and counterpositioned the President's advisors as lacking the subject-matter knowledge relating to the duties of the heads of government agencies. In the following discourse, James Comey, the deputy U.S. attorney general, rejects the administration's positioning of the right to engage in secrecy and other tactics that defy the laws under the Constitution and asserts the legitimacy of inquiry and analysis as the normal and customarily recognized practices in the business of government:

CHENEY: How can you possibly be reversing course on something of this importance after all this time?
COMEY: I will accept for purposes of discussion that it is as valuable as you say it is. That only makes this more painful. It doesn't change the analysis. If I can't find a lawful basis for something, your telling me you really, really need to do it doesn't help me.
CHENEY: Others see if differently.
COMEY: The analysis is flawed, in fact, facially flawed. No lawyer reading that could reasonably rely on it.
ADDINGTON: Well, I am a lawyer and I did.
COMEY: No *good* lawyer . . . (Gellman 2008, 295–98)

When the administration attempted to withdraw DOJ's assigned duty to certify all presidential directives by reassigning this duty to the White House counsel, Comey submitted a formal letter of resignation, withdrawing his assign duty to serve the President.

I don't care about politics. I don't care about expediency. I don't care about friendship. I care about doing the right thing. And I would never be part of something that I believe to be fundamentally wrong. . . . I and the Department of Justice have been asked to be part of something that is fundamentally wrong. . . . We have been unable to right that wrong. . . . Therefore, with a heavy heart and undiminished love of my country and my Department, I resign . . . effective immediately. (Gellman 2008, 313–15)

The President asserted his right to executive power and the political appointees' duty to serve. Comey acknowledges both the right and the duty as asserted by the President. His own prepositioning of loyalty to "the statue of Lady Justice" (Bamford 2008, 279) positions him with a first-order duty to office and to the Constitution. This places him in conflict with the President's prepositioning of loyalty and the first-order duty to serve his political agenda. As such, Comey had no choice but to resign his assigned duty to serve the President.

BUSH: You look burdened.
COMEY: I am, Mr. President. I feel like there's a tremendous burden on me.
BUSH: Let me lift that burden from your shoulders. Let me take that from you. Let me be the one who makes the decision here.
COMEY: Mr. President, I would love to be able to do that.
BUSH: I decide what the law is for the Executive Branch.
COMEY: That's absolutely true, Sir, you do. But I decide what the Department of Justice can certify to and can't certify to, and despite my absolute best efforts, I simply cannot in the circumstances. . . . You do say what the law is in the Executive Branch, I believe that. And people's job, if they're going to stay in the Executive Branch, is to follow that. But I can't agree, and I'm just sorry. (Gellman 2008, 317–19)

CONCLUSION

Much of the conflict discussed in this chapter involved the positioning and counterpositioning of political appointees with competing first-order duties to serve—to serve the President, the Republican Party, the Constitution, or their appointed office. "When one rule of conduct requires an action that another rule of conduct condemns, the fate of the interest or value concerned depends upon the relative strength of the sanctions supporting the contradictory commands" (Morgenthau 1993, 221).

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, disrupted the normal and customarily recognized norms for presidential behavior while engaging in the business of government and the business of politics. This aberration provided an opportunity for the administration to attempt to impose new norms and practices for fighting the "War on Terror" that positioned political appointees with the first-order duty to serve the President and only a lesser duty to support and defend the Constitution and discharge the duties of their office.

One new practice was the selective disclosure of information to and between Bush administration officials, such that those who should have been informed were not (e.g., Secretary O'Neill, EPA Administrator Whitman, officials at the Department of Justice, and others). The administration—indeed, a very small handful of senior officials and advisors within the Bush administration—were the only ones who possessed all of the information, and they cohesively operated as gatekeepers of information, thereby stifling and at times choking the flow of information to those appointees charged with faithfully discharging the duties of their office.

Another new practice was selective consultation, such that those who should have been consulted were not. Perpetual politicization was yet another new practice, where politics trumped science and the enforcement of laws, forming the foundation upon which the business of governing was being conducted under the Bush administration.

The lack of tangible information flowing to appointees as a consequence of the gatekeepers' self-determined need for secrecy eroded their ability to assess, debate, and evaluate the merits of administration policies, actions, plans, means, and measures, however great or small, in the War on Terror. The norms and customs that were ultimately deployed were rarely assessed, debated, or evaluated between and among the very appointees who would be burdened by and subject to those practices. For those other than the gatekeepers, there were few objective points of reference against which the reasonableness and necessity of these new customs and practices could be gauged.

The absence of information, and the lack of meaningful opportunity for robust debate and objective evaluation by the persons charged with a duty to participate in those debates and evaluations, resulted in a loss of transparency in the business of governing. That, in turn, led appointees to conclude that the President's means for fulfilling his agenda prevented them from operating within the boundaries of the Constitution while they struggled to fulfill their sworn duty to office. The result of this was manifest conflict between the Office of the President and the President's political appointees.

> Tradition is a tremendously important consideration when you deal with power and its distribution. What was being ignored here [by and during the Bush administration] was, in large part, tradition, the way things were done and the way they had proven to work [even in times of national crises]. (Iglesias and Seay 2008, 150)

What if President Bush had followed the normal and customary practices of governing when conducting the national War on Terror? How might life be different today for America, for Americans, and for the citizens of foreign countries that were touched by the decisions of the Bush administration? Indeed, how would life be different for those individuals and organizations bent on practicing the unwelcome campaign of terrorism? We can only speculate on the answers to these questions.

We do know that the Bush administration's efforts to introduce new norms and practices in response to a national crisis, and the manner in which those norms and practices were utilized by a very select few officials and advisors, gave rise to unparalleled turmoil within the administration. We also know the American public rejected the administration's positioning of its right to impose many of those new norms and practices. As such, many of these have not and will not be woven into the national fabric that forms the mantle of tradition guiding political appointees and elected officials in the business of governing. Rather, these norms and practices might serve as a constant testimonial of how best *not* to operate, whether in response to a national crisis or in connection with the more mundane and constant day-to-day demands and requirements of the business of governing.

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4

Contradictions of Care

How Welfare Political Conflicts in Care Management Can Be Viewed through Positioning Theory

Anna Olaison

Resource allocations of care are key issues in welfare states (Daly and Lewis 2000; Rask Eriksen and Dahl 2005; Fine 2007). In countries that have government-organized care programs, care of the aged is often arranged and coordinated via a care management process in which older people who need help managing their daily lives can apply for assistance (Milner and O'Byrne 2002; Richardson and Barusch 2006; Victor 2005; Challis et al. 2007).[1] The assessments are usually made by having municipal care managers meet with older people to discuss the steps to be taken and to form some idea of the need for help.[2] However, in Sweden, aged care is characterized by a client-centered approach because Swedish law provides that the support must be furnished to the older person rather than to a close relative (Sweden 2001, 453). Despite this focus on the older person, relatives are major stakeholders in the assessment process with regard to decisions about home care initiatives (Gorman 2005; Lymbery 2005; Rosenthal, Martin-Matthews, and Keefe 2007; Dunér and Nordström 2007).

The introduction of a managerialistic model of care management in aged care in Sweden in the 1990s has led to reduced availability of home care services (Larsson and Szebehely 2006; Wrede et al. 2008).[3] In combination with an aging population, this has resulted in fewer people getting access to the formal service system, leaving the care to be provided by private and informal alternatives, often by relatives (Sand 2007; Sundström, Malmberg, and Johansson 2006). This in turn has had implications because it may create conflicts within families on how support for those receiving or providing care should be delivered. Assessments by municipal care managers form the basis for decisions on the home care needs for older people. When divergent views on the need for help are expressed, conflicting interests are managed in such assessments.

This chapter describes the implications the Swedish welfare model for home care has on practice—for example, how older people's individual living conditions and family situations are accounted for in assessments. We focus on how different communicative practices are created in assessments, based on the discursive positioning (Davies and Harré 2001) that occurs among the participants when divergent opinions on the need for help are expressed.[4]

The participants in the assessments—that is, the older people, their close relatives, and the care managers—use different positions to identify and affirm their subject positions, local identities that are created in encounters where accounts of needs for home care are offered. This study comprises 11 assessments in which older people and their relatives met in the older person's home with care managers to discuss needs for home care. The interviews used were taken from a larger project in which older people's participation in the needs assessment process was studied.[5] The description of the empirical findings is preceded by an introduction of the elements of positioning theory used in the analyses conducted within the framework of the study.

POSITIONING THEORY

Positioning in conversation can be identified based on the analytical concepts defined by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) as *story lines* and *positions*, which can also be referred to as *discourses*. A person can use different story lines to construct an object that is adapted to different situations. Edwards and Potter (1992) believe that positioning serves several social functions, such as attitude adoption and defense/justification. Story lines construct objects according to the relevant social functions assigned in each individual encounter. Participants in conversations accordingly choose to advance various socially accessible story lines in order to construct their position based on a predetermined objective. Different versions of this position are then created, depending on whom one is addressing in the conversation. Positioning is thus an ongoing process in the interaction, and people position themselves based not only on what they say about themselves but also in response to what others say (see Jones 2006 and Harré and van Langenhove 1999 for further explanation of story lines and positioning).

Van Langenhove and Harré (1994) draw a distinction between what they refer to as *first-order* and *second-order positioning*. First-order positioning refers to the way persons locate themselves (often implicitly) within an essentially moral order by using several categories and story lines, which is, in turn, predicated on an internalized discourse. In first-order positioning, the positioning act is perceived by a character (implicit) and a declaration (explicit). Second-order positioning (or *accountive positioning*) arises when an act is contested or negotiated in the course of the same conversation and occurs if first-order positioning is challenged or must be negotiated in some way. According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999), positioning theory is a useful tool for studying what is said and how it is said without stating any intention of determining a psychological state.

Looking at institutional assessments from a standpoint of positioning theory makes it possible to study the varying discourses that frame the experiences of, in this case, older people in relation to the societal care system. Positions are studied by focusing on the specific identity positions assumed by individuals in their first-position accounts of their individual lives (Harré and van Langenhove 1999; Harré and Moghaddam 2003). In this case, they can then be related to needs of both physical care and domestic help and to the organization and structure of the home care. Viewed from this perspective, positioning is to be understood as something that is relational—that is, it indicates the way in which categories derived from others are constructed in response to how participants position themselves either advantageously or disadvantageously. Participants in specific situated interviews prefer to assume some positions rather than others. It is also important to note that the story lines chosen by a person and the way that people position themselves always target the person who is listening (Wortham 2000). Davies and Harré (2001) claim that the positioning of participants creates social meaning, which is, per se, a product of the social force that a conversational transaction possesses in and of itself.

Assessments form the basis on which decisions about the care needs of older people are made. This chapter describes how older people, their relatives, and care managers discuss such needs when divergent opinions are expressed regarding home care. The ways in which the participants advance story lines and position themselves, and/or are positioned, in these assessments have a major bearing on decision making about home care and on the ways in which the daily lives of older people are given form in such interviews.

Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate what story lines and positions occur in assessments when older people and their relatives have divergent views on the need for help. This is an important issue to study with regard to the introduction of care management models in aged care and how these models have influenced the assessment process.

The study focuses on the following questions:

- Are different story lines used, and how are these handled?
- How are positions formed, and what content do they have?
- What consequences do the positions have in terms of how the assessment processes are performed?

Study and Participants

The data were collected in three different Swedish municipalities.[6] The ages of the participants varied, with the older people ranging in age from 67 to 93, while the ages of the relatives ranged from 46 to 88.[7] The material was gathered between summer 2003 and winter 2004. All the participants were informed of the process and gave their informed consent before the data-gathering process began.[8] The assessments were recorded on audiotape and transcribed verbatim. All the participants were then anonymized and assigned fictitious names. The lengths of the assessment interviews varied from one to one and a half hours and were conducted in the homes of the older people. The Ethics Committee at Linköping University approved the study (Doc no. 03-036).

Analysis

The material was studied using discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell 2002; Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates 2003; Wooffitt 2005). This tradition is based on studying speech and writing in social practices and examining the ways in which language is used to do things. The analysis has focused accordingly on the ways in which older people and their relatives use story lines to position themselves, and how these positions follow one another and are supported, contradicted, or undermined during the assessment. Working within this tradition, an attempt has been made to characterize how identity construction occurs interactionally by applying discursive resources—for example, how positioning occurs in specific institutional contexts (Wetherell 1998; Antaki and Widdicombe 1998).

The analysis was conducted in a two-step process. The first step was to grasp the overall themes in the data and where story lines and positioning occurred.[9] This was then followed by the second step, which included a more in-depth analysis of the story lines in which the focus was on how needs were discussed and negotiated.[10]

The in-depth analysis focused mainly on the ways in which the older people and their relatives positioned themselves during the interviews. The role of the care managers in the interviews was thus not an area of focus when processing the material.[11] The analysis explicitly addressed how positions were shaped and reshaped between the various participants, depending on the dominant story line. The analysis resulted in three major story lines of a social-psychological nature that emerged from the data on how the older persons and the relatives brought forward their arguments for how they viewed home care.

STORY LINES OF OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR RELATIVES DISCUSSING NEEDS FOR HOME CARE

Two types of story lines were favored by older people and their relatives in the assessments. One type had to do with issues of a social and psychological nature, while the other concerned issues of a material nature. The story lines of a material type contained fact-related questions. Story lines of a social and psychological nature dominated the assessments and encompassed the participants' views on and attitudes toward getting help. The story lines of a social-psychological nature also exhibited clear discursive positioning, and divergent views concerning decision making about the older person's need for help were a common occurrence. The assessments had no predetermined topics except for the general agenda to talk about physical and domestic needs for home care. Information in the assessments was obtained by open questions about the older person's health status and living conditions, in which the participants were encouraged to describe their situation. The accounts of the older persons and their relatives were then assessed in relation to existing categories in the municipality's service catalogue.

The contents of the story lines of a social-psychological nature that had to do with the need for home care are presented below. I have chosen to refer to these three story lines as based on their view of home care as an *intrusion*, as a *complement*, or as a *right*. The older persons and their relatives often positioned themselves in these story lines, as they had conflicting interests in terms of the need for home care and the decisions to be made about such care. The section concludes with examples of situations when differences of opinion about care needs were expressed by relatives and older people and how positioning occurred in the context of decision making about home care.

Home Care as an Intrusion

This story line is used by both older people and their relatives, but for different purposes. The older people who used this story line characterized home care as a step into a new phase of life involving physical deterioration and ultimately leading to death: "It is not fun to need help; then you realize that you are old." The older people viewed receiving home care as being negative in terms of their integrity and self-determination, often arguing on a basis of lost physical and mental integrity. One common quotation was "I'm used to managing on my own."

Many of the older people who used this story line also believed that their need for help could be met solely by the support they received from relatives in their daily lives: "So far, I've been able to get by with a little help from [name]." This was a way of expressing their position that they did not consider home care to be necessary and that they wanted their relatives to continue giving them the same help as before.

The relatives who used this story line also viewed home care as a change, but from a different perspective—one that would entail an intrusion into their daily lives and routines and into their relationship with the older person. The relatives put it in the following way: "After all, we've managed fine so far, and we hope that we can continue to do so." A number of the relatives who used this story line viewed needing help in their role as caregiver as a personal failure.

Home Care as a Complement

This story line, in which home care is viewed as a support for daily life, was commonly cited and was used skillfully by all the participants in the analyzed interviews. In this story line, home care had positive connotations as something good and beneficial, and it was viewed as a complement that would enable the older person to live a normal a life and stay in his or her own home for as long as possible: "It would be nice to have some help. It would make everything so much easier."

In contrast to those who viewed home care as an intrusion, the older people who used this story line viewed starting to receive home care as a natural part of aging and not as something that would necessarily entail restrictions in their daily lives. They viewed home care as a support and as a supplemental means of getting help in coping with the restrictions they were already experiencing. One quotation associated with this story line was: "If I just got help with that, I could certainly cope with everything else by myself." The older people expressed gratitude in numerous cases for the opportunity to receive help, indicating that this was something they welcomed.

It was, however, possible to discern differences in the accounts regarding home care as a complement to relatives, as spouses who lived together were perceived to be in need of home care support in order to be able to live a good life together. Viewing home care as a complement to support provided by children had more to do with not being too much of a burden on the children and relieving them so that they could get their daily lives together. In many cases, it was also about maintaining relationships (i.e., spousal or parent–child relationships) as they had been previously, before the need for help arose. This was expressed as: "After all, you don't want to be too much of a burden on your children."

Relatives who used this story line argued on the basis of their view of home care as a means of relieving their responsibility in relation to their spouse or parent. However, these relatives were also often careful to point out that they viewed home care mainly as a support and that they would be able to devote their energies to other aspects of their relationships with the older person rather than primarily being a caregiver. This was expressed as: "It would be easier for all concerned if I could be a bit fresher, and I would have more energy to get things done."

Home Care as a Right

In this story line, home care was characterized by the participants as both positive and negative. It was seen as positive insofar as it was available to the older members of society, and at the same time, it was viewed as a right, that is, something to which one should automatically be entitled upon reaching a certain age. This was commonly expressed as: "What services do you have to offer?" and "What help will I get?" The participants often expressed skepticism that this was something that should be subject to a needs assessment, arguing that it was society's responsibility to take care of people in their old age.

The older people who used this story line often argued that they were law-abiding citizens who paid taxes and therefore had a right to home care. The relatives often reasoned on the basis of socio-structural aspects, pointing out that responsibility for providing aged care had been turned over to society in the Swedish system and remarking on the advantages and disadvantages of that approach. The relatives who voiced these arguments were usually children who lived somewhere other than where their parents lived and consequently found it difficult to participate in caring for their aged parents on a daily basis. These relatives were often concerned that their parents should have access to as much help as possible, citing their distance from their relatives, the age of the older person, or the absence of a natural social network of friends and family as strong reasons for why their parents were entitled to receive help at home. A typical conclusion made by relatives on this issue was: "You have to understand us relatives as well; we would prefer to take care of our older people, but it's difficult when you're so far apart. We also think that it should be obvious that Mom has to get help, considering how old she is."

CASE EXAMPLES

How do these arguments manifest when the participants hold differing opinions about the help that the older person needs? Two excerpts have been chosen in order to illustrate how the older people and their relatives in these interviews argue on the basis of different story lines and positions.

The excerpts were selected because they exemplify the changes between story lines. To show how people talk based on different story lines in the excerpts below, I have chosen to identify the different story lines by using <u>underlining</u>, *italic,* and normal text. To facilitate matters for the reader, arrows are placed in the margins to indicate when a change of position occurs. (The examples that appear in the running text are highlighted by quotation marks, regardless of the story line in effect.) The transcription notations that have been used in the excerpts are the following:

- UPPERCASE indicates words that are spoken at a louder volume and/or with emphatic stress
- (.) denotes pauses
- * (asterisks) indicate laughter in the speaker's voice while pronouncing the words enclosed
- ((material within double parentheses)) marks comments on how something is said or on what happens in the context

"WHAT DO YOU SAY, DAVID?" INTRUSION VS. COMPLEMENT AND RIGHT

The first excerpt (see Table 4.1) illustrates the use of different story lines, in which home care is viewed as an intrusion on the older person but as a complement and right for the relatives, and it shows how this creates different subject positions in the assessments. Here we will meet David and Nora, who have been married for more than 40 years. David has suffered from a fatal disease for the past few years, and his wife has been the person who has taken care of him so far, with the help of medical assistance from the advanced home health care resources affiliated with their hospital. Nora views herself as the person primarily responsible for caring for her spouse.

After discussing matters with relatives and their children, Nora has decided that she would like help to relieve the burden of caring for David, because giving him a shower is difficult. If she needs to go out and do errands, she worries that something will happen to her husband. David has been totally bedridden for several years and accepts that he is no longer capable of taking care of himself. Early in the interview, Nora advances a story line to the effect that home care could be a complement, because such assistance could facilitate her day-to-day care of her spouse. David takes a somewhat different position.

Summary of Interview

Nora has a positive view of getting help from the home care service, and for most of the assessment she stays with her story line that home care

Table 4.1
Excerpt One

330	N	*I think it's just as well.*	
331	CM	*What do you say, David?*	
332	D	*I don't know.*	
333	CM	Do you think it's hard to have strangers come and wash you and the like? Is it awkward?	
334	D	What?	
335	N	Do you think it's hard to have some stranger come and help you use the toilet and the like?	
336	D	*No.*	←
337	N	*If it were like that but usually it's in the morning.*	
338	D	*No, that time is over and done with (difficult times that has been).*	
339	N	*Well, of course you've been in the hematology unit and that's gone so well. You were very popular.*	
340	D	*Yes.*	←
341	N	** Two times a week or if it's enough with one. . . . We'll take two times.	←
342	CM	*David wants that and it can be adjusted later in that case we can talk later if that's the case. It will be alright. . . . We do follow-ups and check how it's working.*	

Legend: N = Nora, D = David, CM = Care manager
Underlining = intrusion; *italic* = *complement*, normal text = right,
← Position change

could serve as a complement and support in making their daily life work better. Nora responds by advancing her story line of complement and again clarifying her position as follows: "I think it's just as well."

The care manager then asks David about his views in turn 331. In response, David, who was noncommittal about home care throughout the entire assessment, presents a story line in which home care is viewed as an intrusion into the daily routine he has established together with his wife. The few statements he makes in the interview are based on both of them doing well just as things are at present. He makes relatively few statements during the assessment, letting Nora speak for both of them. But in his noncommittal, "I don't know," in response to the direct question from the care manager in turn 332, he reveals that he does not fully subscribe to the attributed position that he has been assigned by Nora, that is, as being weak and needing help with most things.

In response to the follow-up question concerning integrity when going to the toilet, David comments, "No, that time is over and done with" (turn 338), thus positioning himself as one who has lost his bodily integrity because of the disease from which he suffers. On the other hand, Nora continues to advance her story line to the effect that they are in need of home care, and Nora's and David's differing story lines of intrusion run in parallel, although Nora's line dominates, as she does most of the talking.

Nora strengthens her own position as a wife who is in need of relief by asking David if he is experiencing problems with his personal integrity, while simultaneously minimizing any problems that may be present—"if it were like that" (turn 337)—by pointing out the positives that David could experience by seeing solutions to these problems, that is, home care. Nora then brings up the experiences they have had in connection with previous hospital stays, and she points out that David has been a good patient. Describing David in this way can also be a way for Nora to position herself in relation to the care manager and the institutional framework that surrounds the interview: if David is defined as a good patient, it may be easier to get access to help.

Summary of Findings

Nora's story line above is an example of what van Langehove and Harré (1994) term a fusion of first-order and second-order positioning, which is manifested when people in conversation position themselves in relation to a moral order—that is, prevailing institutional rules—while at the same time having their own personal characteristics. This is also evident in the interview with respect to David, as a position change occurs in turn 340 when David answers yes. Here, he progresses from having difficulty seeing himself as needing help (first-order positioning), where his position as being independent is challenged, to a temporary acceptance of the position he has been assigned, namely, as a good patient (second-order positioning), where he fits himself into the moral rules that define what it means to be a good patient and the things that accompany this discourse. It may also be easier for David to accept his ascribed position as a good patient because it is associated with previous events in a different context, when he was in the hospital and in need of care.

In turn 341, Nora changes her story line when she speaks of home care as a right. She stresses spousal rights to receive help by starting to negotiate about the extent of the home care assistance with the comment, "We'll take two times." The care manager positions herself with David and his desire to have time to think about whether home care should commence in her statement, "David wants that," while at the same time partially obliging Nora, who desires more assistance, but also assuring her of continued contact: "We do follow-ups and check how it's working."

The upshot of this assessment is that the positions between the spouses remain locked in place. Because the law is centered on the individual, it is mainly David's story line that elicits responses from the care manager. Despite this, Nora is the driving force and ascribes to David the position of being in serious need of care. During the interview, the care manager changes her story line and positions herself several times with both spouses in an effort to assess their respective needs. Despite the fact that Nora does most of the talking and positions herself and David as being in acute need of assistance, the assessment concludes to the effect that it is David's wishes that must be heard; the spouse will wait and see with regard to home care assistance.

The next excerpt illustrates a different problem set that appeared frequently in the assessments with regard to the need for home care: the question of how to draw the line between formal and informal care.

"I CAN UNDRESS MYSELF": A CONFLICT BETWEEN INTRUSION AND COMPLEMENT

In the second excerpt (see Table 4.2), different story lines concerning disagreements about the need for help and the extent of the assistance required are advanced in parallel. Here we meet Karin, a 91-year-old woman who, since her husband died 10 years ago, has lived alone in her apartment and has managed her daily life with help, but little practical assistance, from her children.

Karin has recently had influenza and has since continued to have problems taking care of herself. Her son, Adam, who lives nearby, drops in on her several times a day to see her and to help with practical matters, as well as providing assistance of a more personal nature, such as toileting. Karin

Table 4.2
Excerpt Two

179	A	*That's more for when she needs it.*	
180	CM	*In other words, you can't undress yourself and put yourself to bed.*	
181	K	<u>I CAN undress myself.</u>	←
182	A	*Yes but it's good . . .*	
183	K	<u>What?</u>	
184	A	*It's good to have some-one here then.*	
185	K	*Yes.*	←
186	A	*Here when it's time to go to bed at night.*	
187	K	*And dressing myself in the morning, that's a bit troublesome.*	
188	CM	*Yes, but we've said that that's when the staff will come, they can come and help you.*	
189	K	*Yes, yes.*	
190	CM	*But the question is what sort of help you need in the evening.*	
191	K	<u>No, no, I don't think so. I think I can manage by myself.</u>	←

Legend: K = Karin, A = Adam, CM = Care manager
<u>Underlining</u> = <u>intrusion</u>; *italic* = *complement,* normal text = right,
← Position change

is determined that she can manage by herself as long as she gets support from her children. Adam has a partially different view, believing that Karin needs more help than she is admitting. Adam expresses his concern over the fact that it is impossible for him to always be on hand, even though he lives nearby.

Summary of Interview

As we join the conversation, the specific times when Karin needs help during the evening are being discussed. This topic was initiated by Adam, who voices his concerns over the fact that Karin is unable to put herself to bed.

Here Adam pursues a story line in which he views home care as a complement to the support that he and his siblings are providing for their mother. When the topic of getting help in the evening comes up, he positions Karin as being in need of help in the evening, saying, "That's more when she needs it" (turn 179). The care manager agrees with Adam and advances the story line of complement actively. She often uses clarifying statements such as "In other words, you can't undress yourself" (turn 180) to confirm her own perception of Karin as being in need of help. Phrasing this assertion in this way may be one means that the care manager uses to ensure that the image of Karin as a home care recipient that has been created will not be altered.

Karin, however, contradicts the ascribed position by saying, "I can undress myself" (turn 181), in which she stresses her own story line. Here she denies that the proposed assistance is needed, making the home care seem more like an intrusion. But Karin then changes position in turn 185, as Adam makes her aware that it can be reassuring just to have someone present. When the topic of reassurance comes up, Karin falls in line with the others' story line that the home care can serve as a complement insofar as it can be viewed as a reassurance factor to have staff available even if no direct assistance is needed. This leads to Karin's concession that she does have some difficulties: "and dressing myself in the morning, that's a bit troublesome" (turn 187).

The care manager then steps in and summarizes what had been resolved earlier—that the staff are to come by in the mornings. She then makes a new attempt to position Karin as being in need of help in the evenings by saying, "but the question is what sort of help you need in the evening" (turn 190). Here Karin again changes position and reverts to the story line that the home care is viewed as an intrusion and that she doesn't want any help in the evening, saying, "No, no, I don't think so. I think I can manage by myself." The conversation between Karin, Adam, and the care manager then continues in the same vein, and Karin concedes that she feels depressed and could, with some convincing from her son, conceive of having home care in the morning for a while, until she is back on her feet again.

Summary of Findings

The example of Karin and Adam illustrates the difficulties that can be encountered in drawing a clear line between formal and informal responsibilities in families where relatives are taking care of older people. Earlier in the interview, Adam expressed his concerns that home care might not work, while simultaneously expressing a desire to continue helping his mother in her daily life. This could be an expression of ambivalence, as he wants to be relieved of his care responsibilities but at the same time is having difficulty escaping his concern about his mother.

DISCUSSION

The foregoing excerpts shed light on the complexities inherent in care management interviews concerning cases where divergent views on needs are expressed. Conflicting interests in the assessments are dependent on story lines that are diametrically opposed and in which participants are consigned to the positions that are possible within the story lines being presented (Harré and Slocum 2002). The results agree well with this view, as different dimensions of need and delimitations between formal and informal care can be viewed as examples of such situations, in which conflicts between older people and their relatives must be resolved, and where the fact that the participants have a limited choice of positions within the framework of the story line they have chosen to advance has consequences.

Positioning of Older People and Relatives in Assessments

The results show that the relatives and older people advanced three major story lines with respect to the need for help. The story lines presented by the participants also often had practical consequences in terms of the outcome of the interview. Advancing a story line in which home care is an intrusion means that home care is viewed as an infringement on the older person's personal space or on the role of the relatives as caregivers. With regard to the story line in which home care is viewed as a complement by both the older persons and their relatives, the interviews were characterized by more positive connotations. The help could serve as a support, and could be combined with giving the older people and their relatives opportunities to focus on other matters in their daily lives. The story line in which home care is viewed as a right was dual in nature, insofar as it received a sympathetic hearing but did not prove to be a convincing argument for getting access to help.

The relatives often made themselves into spokespeople for the older person by using first-order positioning (Harré and van Langenhove 1992). That is, they talked about what the introduction of home care would mean for the situation of the older people and their families. The relatives also employed arguments that they believed the care managers needed to hear by using second-order positioning, fitting themselves into the institutional framework to which the assessment was subject (Harré and van Langenhove 1992). The positioning of the relatives had an impact on the assessments, because the care managers took their accounts and the family situations into consideration. However, the older people were the ones who had the final say when it came to applying for help, even though, in a number of cases, their relatives were heavily involved in caring for them.

The content of the story lines and the ways in which positions are shaped within them illustrate how positioning is incorporated as part of the ongoing reflexive process in interaction (Jones 2006; Harré and van Langenhove 1999), where all the participants form an image of the older person's needs. The views manifest in these interviews with respect to self-determination for older persons and participation by their relatives in caring for their aged family members are highly consistent with the views of formal care expressed in many Western nations (Daatland and Lowenstein 2005; Lymbery 2005; Lowenstein and Daatland 2006). This raises further questions about family participation in decision making and arranging for home care needs for older people.

It is also clear that these assessments include dilemmas on several levels. One such dilemma deals with the tension between the client-centered social policy of aged care and the limited fixed categories of service within the municipality's service catalogue (Olaison and Cedersund 2006; Janlöv 2006; Dunér 2007). Contradictions can also be identified within the family dynamics in the decision-making process when relatives need support in both their roles as caregivers and as spouses or children, but the legislation argues for individualized care with a focus on the older person.

Do Contradictions of Care Represent a Welfare Political Conflict between Family and the State?

The assessment process regarding contradictions of care between older persons and their relatives has a built-in conflict, as has been shown in the present study. Managerialistic trends in home care services have existed in the Swedish welfare states since the 1990s (Rauch 2005; Rask Eriksen and Dahl 2005), which has influenced the care management process, and organizational and administrative interests are presently more in focus (Lymbery 2004; Vabø 2007). This has lead to a cultural change where rationality and efficiency have become a silent logic in aged care (Wrede et al. 2008), resulting in a more systematic orientation toward older people in need of services (Szebehely and Trydegård 2007). This in turn means that those with low-level needs (Powell et al. 2007) or who have relatives that can contribute to their care no longer qualify for assistance. Taken together with other studies, this suggests that we are heading toward increasing responsibility being placed on relatives and the volunteer sector (Daatland and Herlofsen 2003; Jegerrmalm 2005; Paoletti 2007).

What consequences do different ways of positioning oneself within the family have in the context of decision making about home care? The analysis of the story lines from the present study reveals the presence of conflicts (cf. Harré and Slocum 2002). The occurrence of such conflicts in the course of a conversation about the need for home care may be associated with the fact that the individual-based policy is strong in the Swedish legislation, leaving little or no space for relatives' needs, with the result that a family perspective is lacking (Szebehely 2005; Sand 2007). Another relevant aspect could be that attitudes toward familial obligations emanate from two different socially constructed concepts of the family: a narrow legal concept of the family that excludes the older people's children, and a broader concept based on the responsibility to care for family members across generational boundaries (Hammarström, 2006).

Older people and relatives who position themselves on the basis of a broader concept of the family have difficulty in getting their needs met in practice, because assessments are conducted based on a legal concept of the family that includes only spouses and in which the personal needs of the relatives in terms of assistance efforts cannot be subject to any formal assessment. There is a conflict in care management between the individual-based policy advocated in the legislation and the implicit expectations of the relatives giving informal care. The fact that aged care in Sweden has transformed its service system into a highly selective one (Rauch 2007) that is dependent on contributions from relatives, while, at the same time, there is no formal support system for those relatives as caregivers, constitutes today a dilemma in the Swedish welfare model.

The legislation mirrors an ideal reality in which older people have a strong say in decision making about their care, but in practice, as shown in the study, story lines mirror the struggles of contradictions between the family and the state. By analyzing these practices, political conflicts in regard to care are exposed at a micro level through positioning theory in terms of how participants advance different story lines of home care.

NOTES

1. There are a number of expressions used within the area of care management when referring to the delivery of services for older persons, such as *old age care*, *community care*, *geriatric care*, and so on. In this chapter, the term *aged care* is used when referring to the government-organized care programs.

2. Municipal care managers are often trained social workers, and in the assessment meeting, help of both a physical and practical kind is usually discussed.

3. The care management process is described according to Milner and O'Byrne (2002) in the following steps: (1) *Preparation:* Involves making clear what information needs to be discovered, the range of sources of this information, and the process through which the information will be collected. (2) *Data collection*: Assessment of clients' needs through interviews, letters, and telephone conversations; this also determines how data are stored and retrieved. (3) *Weighing the data:* Making judgments about the nature of the situation. (4) *Analyzing the data:* Development of a hypothesis based on theoretical perspectives in the interpretation of the data collected. (5) *Utilizing the analysis:* Checking the initial analysis against the views of the key parties in the assessment and putting services into action.

4. Another version of this text has been previously published; see A. Olaison and E Cedersund, *Communication and Medicine* 2 (2008) 145–58. Permission to publish a modified version has been given by Equinox Publishing Ltd.

5. Earlier results from the study in which older people met alone with care managers (Olaison and Cedersund 2006) showed that the care managers and older people in these interviews used different discursive resources to negotiate and jointly construct the older person's need for help. The results also showed that older people's accounts of their needs were assigned to preset categories, which had a bearing on the scope and content of various assistance efforts and which already existed with the framework of home care. This could be attributable in some measure to how the law was designed and the existing municipal guidelines, in combination with insufficient resources. The results from the first study raised further questions about how the older people's needs for help are discussed when relatives are present and led to the choice made in the present study, namely, to look at how the needs of older people are discussed when their relatives participate in the assessment interviews.

6. The municipalities consist of a small one (less than 35,000 inhabitants), one of medium size (less than 130,000 inhabitants), and one that is part of a major city (760,000 inhabitants) (SCB 2006). The purpose of this selection process was to achieve a spread across different municipalities, but it was also an attempt to minimize the risk that the participants might be identifiable, as the volume of data in the study may be considered relatively small.

7. The age breakdown for Sweden shows that 15- to 64-year-olds represented 64.5 percent, and those 65 and older represented 17.3 percent of the total population (SCB 2006).

8. The participants were asked to participate in the study by the care manager during an initial telephone contact in response to an application for home care. An information letter about the study was then sent out, and all the participants were given information in writing and again verbally by the author during the actual home visit.

9. An initial first analysis of the transcriptions was performed to determine the conversational topics within which decision making about needs took place, along with the activities of the older people and their relatives in the context of these topics during the interview.

10. The in-depth analysis was conducted by color-coding the statements associated with each respective story line. All the statements were then counted to calculate the scope and content of each story line. Typical quotations that could illustrate each story line were then extracted.

11. The care managers' contributions to the interviews were, however, included in the analysis when the statements made by the care managers in the interviews had an impact on the positions advanced by the older people and their relatives. This meant that the care managers' contributions were included in cases where they embodied support for or resistance to the story lines of the other two parties.

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5

Prepositioning, Malignant Positioning, and the Disempowering Loss of Privileges Endured by People with Alzheimer's Disease

Steven R. Sabat

The distribution of and competition for power and the dynamic changes that occur in power relations are central to politics. These are quite explicit in macro-level politics such as when, in democracies, political parties compete for power in elections and when, in dictatorships, rival gangs often literally fight with each other for dominance. At the level of the everyday life of individual citizens, the politics of power are likewise alive and well, even if less explicit; for there are multiple voices competing for the attention of and influence on individuals. Such voices are often linked to the macro level of politics, as when large pharmaceutical corporations, insurance companies, and physicians lobby legislators for votes favoring their positions, allowing their drugs to be covered under health insurance programs, or allowing their services to be covered in similar ways. On the other hand, those same voices can also have profound effects on interpersonal relations between people in the mundane, everyday social world—between parents and children, husbands and wives, caregivers and care recipients. An example is when the biomedical voice (that of physicians and pharmaceutical companies) educates the public through the mass media about the nature and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease (AD) and at the same time, pharmaceutical companies advertise, through the same media outlets, products (drugs) that are purported to provide relief of some of the symptoms of AD.

In this chapter, I will focus on two competing voices that speak to our understanding and treatment of people who have been diagnosed with AD. These two voices are akin to those of political parties, each with its own set of unique characteristics and its own power base. The first of these is the *biomedical voice*, which derives its strength and appeal from classical science and the various resources of the medical and pharmaceutical industries, as well as from values such as "objectivity," or at least the appearance thereof. The other is the *psychosocial voice*, which derives its strength and power from the moral order of everyday life and the abiding values of common courtesy that animate the traditional roles that live in our interpersonal interactions.

The competition between these two voices often involves a valuable "prize" to be won: government or insurance company subsidies that can support the financial well-being of either physicians and large pharmaceutical companies or licensed adult day care centers, for instance. Specifically, at present, a family's medical insurance will generally pay for drugs that are prescribed for AD, but will not pay for the cost of the diagnosed person to attend an adult day care center for supportive social interaction while the caregiver is at work or taking care of important family matters. The competition for power and influence will likely grow more intense in the coming decades, and they will do so for reasons that I will touch upon subsequently.

One of the most dreaded terms of our time is "Alzheimer's disease." According to much of what is transmitted through the mass media, AD is a scourge, a "living death," and we are encouraged to do crossword or sudoku puzzles and to exercise our bodies and eat healthfully so as to help ward off its dreaded onset. So-called brain exercises constitute the newest cottage industry, and even PBS in the United States features authoritative-sounding people presenting lectures on the importance of such regimens—although "continuing education" is never mentioned, oddly enough. Middle-aged people make anxiety-revealing dark jokes about the possible onset of AD whenever they misplace something or have trouble recalling some piece of information that once was more easily accessible. Each of these situations involves positioning in one way or another, for each involves people using words to describe themselves and others, and each locates AD, the prospect of being diagnosed, and the effects thereof as being nothing less than the horrific "long good-bye."

In such an environment, it is valuable to explore the ways in which positioning theory (Harré and Davies 1990; Harré and van Langenhove 1999) applies to interactions between people diagnosed with AD and healthy others (Sabat 2001, 2008) and to the ways in which AD is presented in the mass media. Although not presented in mass media to a degree worthy of its importance, it is clear that the behavior of people thus diagnosed can be affected by how they are treated by others in social interactions. Kitwood (1997, 1998) described many forms of dysfunctional treatment that he called "malignant social psychology" because it results in the depersonalization of, and a diminution of feelings of self-worth in, the person with AD. In so doing, such treatment constitutes the pouring of salt on an open wound from the point of view of the person diagnosed and exacerbates the negative effects of brain injury itself. I have proposed (Sabat 2006) that malignant positioning lies at the foundation of malignant social psychology; that is, the person with AD is positioned initially in ways that emphasize his or her defects and therefore is seen, quite innocently, as unworthy of being treated with the same common courtesy that would be extended to virtually anyone else who was deemed healthy, or who was suffering from arthritis or some other maladies that are observed in the elderly but that carry no stigma.

For example, one of my former students, working during the summer as an emergency medical technician (EMT), was about to administer a standard mental status test to a man diagnosed with AD whom he and his partner were taking to the hospital from the nursing home in which the man resided. My former student's partner, driving the ambulance, said, "Don't bother with that; he has Alzheimer's and won't know anything anyway." It should be noted that this was spoken in a voice that was loud and clear enough for the man with AD to hear, thus constituting a form of malignant social psychology. My former student, however, had learned some important lessons about AD and people who have been thus diagnosed, and so he proceeded to test the man using some supportive, facilitative techniques he had learned in our class. To the utter astonishment of the driver, the man with AD was shown to be alert and oriented for time, place, and person (this is a good thing to be, in medical terms). The driver said, "That was really cool."

"Cool" though it may have been, the ambulance driver's initial reaction and the belief that formed its foundation, as well as the aforementioned messages delivered through the public press, have in common one fundamental fact: they all tend to position people with AD as being dysfunctional, burdensome, lacking in important cognitive abilities, and perhaps even lacking selfhood. "They don't know anything anyway," so why should the EMT bother to test such a person? Why scruple about saying something so inappropriate when the target of the comment is there to hear every word? Why should anyone engage such a being as a person?

The problem that this situation illustrates is of great significance, for in the absence of a cure or preventive measures:

1. The number of people diagnosed with AD will triple in the next fifty years.
2. As a result, tens of millions of people will be affected directly and indirectly, including professional and family caregivers.
3. The financial costs associated with the care of diagnosed people will grow into the hundreds of millions of dollars. (Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Association 2000)

To assume that a person with AD is immune to being spoken about and treated in such demeaning ways can have far-reaching effects, among them creating conflicts between the person with AD and healthy others, and exacerbating the effects of brain damage already suffered by the person diagnosed, thereby increasing the levels of excess disability—that is, disability beyond that which would be predicted on the basis of the extant brain damage alone (Brody 1971). That is to say, malignant positioning and the resulting malignant social psychology can have significantly negative effects on people with AD and their professional and family caregivers alike.

It is my purpose in this chapter to show that some of the conflicts that ensue between people with AD and their caregivers:

1. can be traced, to a large degree, to the "privileged voices" or prevailing views about AD that have been dominant and whose effects are still being felt, and
2. result from the suspension by caregivers of everyday rights enjoyed by people with AD.

Specifically, the prevailing biomedical view, or the privileged voice, about AD carries with it an implicit positioning, a "prepositioning," of the person with AD as being understood principally as a "dysfunctional patient," and this bears the seeds of conflict between those diagnosed and those deemed healthy. Most important for this chapter is the fact that some instances of conflict result from the suspension of everyday rights, privileges, and courtesies enjoyed by people with AD—rights that we grant one another routinely. That is, the negative prepositioning of people with AD itself provides the basis upon which some of their everyday rights and privileges are suspended by healthy others. In a subsequent section of this chapter, I shall discuss how the privileged biomedical voice has been challenged and what fruits are born of such a challenge.

NEGATIVE PREPOSITIONING AND THE BIOMEDICAL VOICE

From the beginning, the privileged voice, indeed the only voice, insofar as understanding the nature and effects of AD was the biomedical voice. Alois Alzheimer's now well-known patient, Auguste D., was the subject of his famous lecture, "On a Peculiar Disease of the Cerebral Cortex," which was published in 1907 in the *General Journal of Psychiatry and Psycho-Forensic Medicine*. Three years later, Alzheimer's senior colleague at Heidelberg, the renowned psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin, in the eighth edition of his textbook *Psychiatry*, officially named "the peculiar disease" *Alzheimer's disease*. Although Alzheimer himself seemed reluctant to have what appeared to be a "peculiar" form of dementia termed a "disease," even if it bore his name, the die was struck and AD became a constructed reality (Whitehouse and George 2008).

One point of view shared by Alzheimer and Kraepelin was that mental illnesses were the product of neuropathology in the brain. This belief is another key point in the biomedical voice and in how the behavior of persons diagnosed is interpreted. Although the disease was named, it was not until decades later, in the 1970s, that Robert Butler, having been named the leader of the newly formed National Institute on Aging, said of AD, "I decided that we had to make it a household word. And the reason I felt that, is that's how the pieces get identified as a national priority. And I call it *the health politics of anguish*" (Maurer and Maurer 2003, 115–16). As a result of this and the reports presented in the public press by noted physicians about the problem of AD, the biomedical voice regarding the nature of this threatening phenomenon was strengthened to the point of hegemony.

At that time, more than three decades ago, AD was a disease entity that would become a household word, and, presumably, it would be understood completely just the same as is any other disease: from a biomedical point of view that included a list of its signs and symptoms. Changes in the behavior of a person diagnosed would be interpreted as a function of the progressive and irreversible physical disease process in the person's brain, ultimately ending in death. With the establishment of AD as a disease, research into its effects proceeded in accordance with the classical scientific approach to understanding any phenomenon: analyze the entity into its component parts and find general laws to describe its occurrence and the underlying mechanism that produces the symptoms as effects. Thus, the elucidation of the effects of AD on cognitive functions such as language, memory, attention, calculation, reasoning, emotion, and the like would be accomplished in ways that fit into the classical scientific model—objectively via the use of standard neuropsychological tests of cognitive function administered in a hospital, a clinic, or a nursing home and in accordance with formal testing procedures.

The biomedical voice prizes and reflects the objective measurement of people's cognitive abilities as defined by the assets and limitations of standard testing. As Seman (2002, 135–36) observes:

> A premium is placed on the objective measurement of performance in several areas of functioning, done in the artificial universe, away from the person's familiar environment. The assessment protocol is typically administered by a polite but unfamiliar and dispassionate technician or professional . . . and may not have obvious relevance to the person being tested. The procedure is based on the Western medical model . . . "scoring" the number of correct answers against the total number of benchmarked correct answers.

Often, all this occurs to the great consternation and anguish of the person being tested (Snyder 1999). Thus are the "realities" of the effects of AD established and codified: defects in memory; orientation to time, place, and person; apraxia (disorders in the ability to organize sequences of movements properly, so that the person cannot dress himself or herself, for example); agnosia (disorder in visual perception, so that the person cannot identify and name familiar, perfectly visible objects or name relatives); and aphasia (disorder in one or another language function so that the person might not be able to find the proper words to express himself or herself, spell correctly, understand the spoken or written word, follow directions, read, or write). These defects are established in terms of their degree according to the scores that the person tested obtains on each of many examinations.

In this way, "experts" describe the person in question as having "mild," "moderate," or "severe" probable dementia of the Alzheimer's type, even though said experts may never have had so much as a single *meaningful* conversation with the person in question, seen the person in a nonthreatening environment, or come to know the person in question as a person in terms of his or her long-standing dispositions, proclivities, or goals.

The biomedical voice establishes the prepositioning of persons with AD with what appears to be scientific rigor, and this information is then carried to the lay public through the various organs of the mass media, including newspapers, magazines, television, and the Internet. This form of communication is termed "metacommunication" by Seman (2002), and through it,

> persons with dementia are typically portrayed and described as hapless and helpless victims. The lay press commonly uses terms like *living death* and *unending funeral* to describe persons with AD. This theme of illness and abject dependency is often perpetuated by pictures on brochures, photographs and language used in solicitations of Alzheimer's associations, and marketing materials of pharmaceutical companies and other purveyors of health care products and services. (Seman 2002, 136)

Thus is the prepositioning of people with AD established in the minds of lay people—the very people whose relatives are, or will be, diagnosed with AD and for whom they must provide care. How can one be a successful caregiver for someone who is already believed to be understandable mostly, or solely, in terms of his or her real and imagined defects and losses, without any understanding of the person's strengths?

PREPOSITIONING, MALIGNANT POSITIONING, AND THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT

Having tacitly accepted the accuracy, truth, and power of the biomedical voice in conveying the reality of AD, and thereby having prepositioned *anyone* with the diagnosis in the above mentioned negative ways, the lay person now confronts situations that arise when he or she must be a caregiver for a loved one who has been so diagnosed. What is thought to be true of some amorphous "them"—those with AD, as established by the biomedical community—will now be applied to a specific known person. The possibilities for conflict are numerous in this situation. The caregiver will now position his or her loved one with AD on the basis of the established prepositioning such that:

1. attention will be focused on real as well as imagined "deviations" from normal behavior;
2. in any number of instances, the behavior of the person diagnosed will thus be interpreted in terms that emphasize defects, especially those that may possibly fall within the rubric of symptoms defined by biomedical categorization; and
3. on the basis of such defectological interpretations, the caregiver will treat the person diagnosed in ways that reflect malignant positioning, insofar as the diagnosed person will be seen as being pathological and thus not deserving either of the customary rights and privileges that are given to those assumed to be healthy or of person-enhancing interactions that might be available and easily provided.

Interpersonal conflict ensues from such treatment, and the following cases are exemplary.

The Case of Mr. and Mrs. R: Defectological Interpretations

Mr. R, a spousal caregiver, reported that his wife didn't do anything around the house anymore; that she couldn't follow directions; that she simply sat and watched television or "wandered aimlessly" at home; that she "became hostile" with him "for no reason"; and that she "smuggled makeup" with her to the day care center and put more on her face while there (Sabat 1994, 2001). Although Mrs. R was clearly able to apply her own cosmetics, Mr. R felt that she "used too much," and so he applied it for her in the mornings using less than she would, so as to suit his taste.

In this case, the effects of prepositioning and power relations are clearly evidenced in the vocabulary Mr. R used to describe his wife's behavior, because "aimless wandering" and "irrational hostility" are among the symptoms of the disease as defined by the biomedical voice. Mrs. R didn't "take" makeup with her to the day care center, but "smuggled" it—as though she did something that wasn't her right to do, even though it was something that she had done without question during her entire adult life prior to being diagnosed and attending an adult day care center. Mr. R reported also that at home and in restaurants, he cut his wife's food for her, as he believed that she did not possess the necessary eye–hand coordination required to do so successfully. He thereby deprived his wife of the right to feed herself and to avoid embarrassment in restaurants and at home. Subsequent further analysis of the contextual aspects of all this, later in this chapter, will be revealing.

The Case of Mr. and Mrs. D: Defectological Interpretations

Mr. D, the primary caregiver for his wife, reported that she was "delusional" because she claimed to have a job. It seemed that on the mornings before taking her to an adult day care center, she would tell him to hurry so that she wouldn't be late for work. Mr. D attributed this delusion to AD. He claimed also that his wife's becoming "irrationally hostile" with him on occasion was evidence that the Alzheimer's was growing more severe. And finally, he indicated that the maids at home "overindulged" his wife by giving her an afghan when she said she was feeling cold, even though he, himself, did not feel cold. Thus, her subjective autobiographical report was driven by AD, should not have been taken seriously, and should not have provoked the response given by the maids. Her diagnosis of AD, then, deprived her of the right to have her subjective experience taken seriously and responded to as it would have been prior to her being diagnosed, and there was no real job that would impose duties, such as punctuality.

It was apparent, from numerous home visits and interactions with Mrs. D at the day care center, that her demeanor in the two locations was quite different: at the day care center, she was "the life of the party," engaged other participants in conversation, welcomed new participants into the group to the delight of the staff members, led participants in singing songs, entertained them with jokes, and comforted those who had been ill. At home, however, she was sullen and quiet more often than not. When she would fail to comply with one of her husband's infrequent requests, he would reproach her (in the presence of guests), and she would lower her eyes and head and stare at the floor in embarrassment.

In these instances, she lost the right to be treated with the common courtesy usually extended to persons in this culture of having her feelings taken seriously and being treated with respectful deference. The loss of those rights stemmed directly from her being malignantly positioned as a "burdensome AD patient" by her husband, and the malignant positioning itself stemmed directly from the negative prepositioning accomplished by the biomedical approach. Again, further examination of the larger context of her "irrational hostility" and "delusion" and an analysis of the incorrigibility of her subjective experience in a subsequent section of this chapter will be revealing.

BEHAVIOR AS SYMPTOMATIC OR BEHAVIOR AS ADAPTATION: THE ROLE OF POSITIONING

In order to proceed to the identification and discussion of another "voice" in the understanding of people with AD and its effects, an example will be instructive. One of the participants with AD at an adult day care center opened the wardrobe where all participants' coats were kept and began reaching into the pockets of each coat, looking at the contents, and then returning the contents to the proper pockets. Moving from one coat to another systematically, the participant examined and returned the contents of one coat after another until he inspected the contents of one particular coat, returned the contents to the pocket, and then removed the coat from its hanger and put on the coat. It was, in fact, his coat.

In this situation, a day care center staff member observed the entire episode from beginning to end, but never interfered. That the staff member refrained from interfering required her not to have positioned the participant as "a dysfunctional AD patient" whose behavior should be interpreted solely in light of biomedically based malignant prepositioning. Indeed, if she had abided by the prepositioning discussed herein—positioning the participant as a dysfunctional AD patient—she would have quickly interpreted the participant's behavior as something that was clearly socially unacceptable and was caused by some sort of AD-induced "social disinhibition." Under these circumstances, she would have immediately interceded so as to protect the privacy and property of others, for it is against the norms of our local social order to look into and examine the contents of the pockets of clothing that belongs to others.

In this situation, the participant could not identify his coat by sight from among the others, but at some level of awareness, he knew that he would recognize his property in the pockets if he saw it. So, this behavior was a form of adaptation rather than an inappropriate invasion of privacy, or at the very least, it was a form of *both*. That is, although it is inappropriate to examine the pockets of others' coats, the person thus engaged was not doing so for no reason whatsoever, nor for reasons of idle curiosity, but because he was searching for his coat and this method was the only way for him to achieve his goal.

What leads to the two divergent interpretations of the same action is nothing less than positioning. In one case, the person is positioned as a dysfunctional AD patient and the behavior is socially inappropriate, worthy of interdiction. In the other case, the person is essentially given the benefit of the doubt and is thus positioned as a "semiotic subject" (Shweder and Sullivan 1989) whose behavior is driven by the meaning that the situation holds for him or her; thus the behavior is not viewed solely as a species of pathology, but as a species of goal-directed adaptation that he must be engaging in for good reason, rather than solely as the outcome of brain pathology.

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL VOICE AND RESPECTING SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

As an alternative to the biomedical voice, in recent years there have been increasing levels of awareness of and respect for what we can term the *psychosocial voice* in understanding what AD entails (Kitwood 1997; Kitwood and Bredin 1992; Snyder 1999; Keady and Gilliard 2002; Hubbard, Tester, and Downs 2003; Sabat 2001; Hughes, Louw, and Sabat 2006). In this approach, one still recognizes that there are some aspects of AD that can be appreciated from the biomedical point of view. For example, deficits in explicitly recalling recent events can be traced to damage to an important brain structure, the hippocampus. In addition, however, the actions of a person with AD are affected also by:

1. the person's reactions to the effects of brain injury
2. the treatment accorded him or her by others
3. the social situations he or she faces

Indeed, the person with AD may have very logical, appropriate reactions to the ways he or she is treated, but it is only via the psychosocial voice that such reactions can be understood, for it is the psychosocial voice that takes into account and privileges the interests, dispositions, and subjective experience of the person with AD as well as the wider social context within which the interpersonal interactions occur.

In this section, we will see that by avoiding the influence of negative prepositioning resulting from accepting the primacy of the biomedical voice, and by appreciating some of the other considerations listed above, it is possible to refrain from engaging in malignant positioning, and thereby to reduce interpersonal conflict between people with AD and caregivers and avoid suspending the rights and privileges enjoyed by most people in the everyday social world.

The Case of Mr. and Mrs. R Revisited

When we take into account the larger social contexts of Mrs. R's life, we begin to understand that the behavior that her husband characterized as being symptomatic of AD was actually quite logical and appropriate. When closely examining the situation at their home, we find that Mr. R had essentially taken over all household tasks, leaving his wife with literally nothing to do and, in fact, disempowered. That she did little but watch television or walk around the house was not due to AD, but to the fact that she had no other options.

That she could follow directions, set tables with place settings, and provide help to other people was clear from her behavior at the day care center, where she was engaged by the staff to help as she desired and was able. It was also clear at the day care center that she was able to feed herself (including cutting her own food) without any problems. At the day care center, she had a good deal to do and was treated almost like a volunteer who could be counted upon to help in a variety of ways, and she seemed to exult in the opportunities given her, for she had been a service-oriented person who valued giving of herself to others for most of her adult life.

The "irrational hostility" that she displayed was in response to her husband choosing her clothes for her. Her reaction was not symptomatic of AD, but a logical response to her husband's attempted refusal to allow her to wear an outfit of her choice. There was nothing wrong with her choice as far as its appropriateness for the weather and the venue, nor was the outfit she chose soiled. It seemed that she had worn the same outfit two days earlier (the last time she attended the day care center), when her birthday was celebrated there. Mr. R assumed that his wife wanted to wear that outfit again because she forgot that her birthday had already been celebrated, not simply because she liked it a lot. By positioning her malignantly, he created a conflict between them by trying to abrogate her right to choose her own outfit. Thus her supposed irrational hostility was actually righteous indignation.

Mr. R also claimed that his wife "used too much makeup" and accused her of "smuggling" makeup to the day care center, where she applied more. It seems that Mrs. R had blemishes on her face and touched them a great deal, thereby irritating them so that they were more visible. Hence, she wanted to cover them up with makeup so that her appearance would be improved; she had always been extremely fastidious about her appearance. In order to achieve that goal, she needed to have her makeup with her, as most women in Western cultures do, and as she herself had done during the balance of her adult life. She was not, therefore, engaging in smuggling, for she was acting very much within her rights as a person. The interpretation of her behavior as an instance of smuggling was tied to the fact that that her husband engaged in malignant positioning.

The Case of Mr. and Mrs. D Revisited

Mr. D indicated that his wife was delusional because she would hurry him on the mornings she attended the day care center, not wanting to be "late for work." To his knowledge, Mrs. D did not have a job. In discussing this matter with Mrs. D, it became clear to me that cheering up others at the day care center, helping to welcome new participants, and being the "life of the party" there was something that she considered her "work"—what she did to be of help to others in need. She was rightfully proud of that work, and the staff was delighted that she could be of service in that way, because it helped to make the social community there more cohesive and pleasant. Mr. D had positioned his wife as a burdensome patient and so would automatically interpret as symptomatic of AD any actions on her part that he did not immediately understand as being logical.

Mrs. D became angry with her husband because, in front of staff members and me, he proceeded to tuck into her trousers the turtleneck top she was wearing, assuming that she had forgotten to do so (even though it was perfectly fine to wear the top outside her trousers). Thus was Mrs. D humiliated in the presence of others, and this was the reason for her anger toward her husband—anger that she waited until they were alone to express. Mr. D was not sensitive to the meaning of his actions as far as his wife was concerned and was thus not aware that he was humiliating her. Therefore, he did not understand why she was angry and, as a result, labeled her anger as being "irrational" because "irrational hostility" is a symptom of AD, according to the biomedical perspective. It is ironic that because Mr. D did not understand *why* his wife was angry, in his mind it was *she* who was being irrational. This is precisely what happens when a person is positioned malignantly, and this is precisely what leads to interpersonal conflict and the abrogation of rights and privileges.

When Mrs. D indicated that she felt cold at home and the maid gave her an afghan to help her feel warmer, Mr. D saw the maid's behavior as being "overindulgent." This interpretation rests on the idea that Mrs. D's subjective experience is, itself, unworthy of being taken seriously and is invalid, according to Mr. D, because (1) Mrs. D has been diagnosed with AD and (2) he did not feel cold. Thus, Mrs. D's report of feeling cold was not driven by the reality of the way it felt in the house to her, but by her disease, and its inaccuracy was "proven" by the fact that he did not feel cold. It is impossible to negate another person's subjective experience, but in this case, that is precisely what Mr. D was doing. His wife didn't really deserve to have an afghan to keep her warm, he thought, because she couldn't possibly be taken seriously about feeling cold.

To the reader, this situation may seem to be bordering on the absurd, for how can one be told that one doesn't really feel the way one claims to feel, or how can a healthy person not take seriously such a statement? This illuminates precisely the power of the negative prepositioning that is created by the hegemony of the biomedical voice regarding AD: it can lead to logical absurdities. Thus was Mrs. D positioned so as to lead to her losing the right to be taken at her word regarding her autobiographical statements, and this, too, created conflict between her and her husband.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION, REPOSITIONING, AND THE PSYCHOSOCIAL VOICE

In both of the cases discussed above, conflict arose between a person with AD and her caregiver. In each case, the conflict concerned the suspension of the rights of the person with AD, and the basis for the conflict can be found in the way in which the spousal caregiver positioned his wife in malignant ways. The malignant positioning itself proceeded directly from the prepositioning that had already occurred as a result of the power of the privileged biomedical voice in creating an understanding of AD that was limited to objectively measured defects in some cognitive abilities. Ignored in this prepositioning were the significant intact cognitive and social abilities that each person with AD retained, despite being in the moderate to severe stages according to the arbitrary criteria that include performance on standard objective tests, which do not measure or account for the very abilities that remained intact. Thus ignored was the fact that Mrs. R and Mrs. D could still understand the meaning of, and react appropriately to, their losses and to the ways in which others treated them. Although I am not generalizing from these cases, it is clear from previous research that such cases are not exceptional (Sabat 2001, 2008; Sabat, Napolitano, and Fath 2004).

A principal outcome of negative prepositioning and the malignant positioning that follows naturally in its wake is the diminution of the rights and privileges that are customarily enjoyed and shared by human beings. This, then, forms the foundation of interpersonal conflict between the caregiver and the care recipient, and the fundamental basis of the conflict is the care recipients' experience of being treated unjustly and the precise manner in which they were treated. This is in accord with findings reported by social psychologists (Messick et al. 1985; Mikula, Petri, and Tanzer 1990).

It stands to reason, therefore, that one significant way by which conflict between people with AD and their caregivers can be reduced is for increased attention to be given to the psychosocial voice, prepositioning the person with AD in a more positive way that includes an accurate understanding of the cognitive and social abilities that remain intact even into the moderate and severe stages of the disease. Specifically emphasized is respect for the subjective autobiographical experiences reported by people with AD; a more fully developed understanding that such people can, and do, react appropriately to the losses they have experienced and continue to experience; and awareness that persons diagnosed with AD can be, and are, sensitive to the ways in which they are treated by others and can react appropriately to that treatment, as they are semiotic subjects whose behavior is driven by the meaning that situations hold for them.

From the foregoing, it is clear that positioning theory is especially applicable to the interactions between people with AD and their caregivers and that it has direct moral implications insofar as the ways in which the rights and privileges of people with AD can be abridged or respected, depending upon the ways in which they are positioned. Especially important here is the understanding that, in everyday interactions between people deemed healthy, it is often the case that a person can object to how she or he is positioned and can reject that positioning and reposition herself or himself accordingly so as to redress any wrong that might be inflicted as a result of the original, unacceptable positioning. It is also the case, however, that it is not a simple matter for people with AD to reject the way they have been positioned and then reposition themselves. Positioning is about how people use words, and given that (1) people with AD are sometimes unable to find, pronounce, and organize the words they want to use to convey their thoughts as coherently as they once did, and (2) healthy others often do not facilitate the communicative efforts begun by people with AD, it is the case that people with AD are not able to easily reject the malignant positioning to which they are subjected (assuming that they are even aware of the ways in which they are being positioned) and to reposition themselves in more positive ways so as to continue to enjoy the rights and privileges that have heretofore been theirs. For this, they depend on healthy others, and in this way we see the reality and the meaning of our interdependence.

By understanding how positioning theory applies to people with AD, we more fully appreciate the predicament that such people face in a social world in which they have been prepositioned negatively and then positioned malignantly by the very people upon whom they depend to help them navigate each day with dignity. It is clear, then, that for people with AD to live without enduring excess disability, to retain even the simplest of their rights in the social world, and to be accorded the dignity that they deserve, they must be understood more fully through the psychosocial voice that prepositions them more accurately than does its biomedical counterpart alone.

It should be apparent by now that the biomedical and psychosocial voices offer extremely different orientations to the care and treatment of people with AD and that in order to provide the most comprehensive and cost-effective care, the psychosocial voice must be given a full and fair hearing. For most of the twentieth century and into the present century, the biomedical voice at a macro level of politics has exerted its power by dominating the attention of legislators and the health care systems they have enacted in many democratic nations. Likewise, the power of the biomedical voice has had a profound effect by reaching down to affect the lives of individuals by supporting their purchases of drugs as the standard, indeed the only, "scientifically proven" treatment for people with AD, supporting financially the pharmacological treatment of people with AD in nursing homes, and thereby limiting greatly caregivers' understanding of how they might be able to work most effectively with their diagnosed loved ones.

More recently, however, the psychosocial voice has become increasingly audible, not so much at the macro level of politics in the halls of legislatures, but at the mundane level of the moral order of everyday life. In the latter world, we discover that recognizing, respecting, and supporting the personhood of people with AD—that is, positioning them as being more than merely "patients" as seen through the biomedical voice—can have profoundly positive effects on those diagnosed, as well as on those who provide care. In other words, we have seen that the psychosocial voice can provide nonpharmacological interventions that have significantly positive effects on all concerned. Among the nonpharmacological interventions are the repositioning of "demented patients" as "people with AD" and attendance at adult day programs wherein psychosocial support and social interaction can be provided. These interventions incorporate the idea that extending common courtesy to people with AD can have salutary effects on the person's sense of self-worth and can thereby reduce excess disability.

A new struggle for power and influence at the macro and everyday levels of politics has been joined by the psychosocial voice, and in the coming years the hegemonic power of the biomedical voice will be challenged increasingly. The outcome of this political struggle will be of profound importance in the lives of people with AD and those who love them, as well as in the lives of each citizen regardless of their connection with people diagnosed, for at stake is nothing less than the personal empowerment and interdependence of people everywhere.

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6

Barack Obama's College Years

Rewording the Past

William Costanza

In this brief chapter, I will apply positioning theory to analyze an exchange between Barack Obama and a college classmate, Regina, when both were students at Occidental College in Los Angeles. The example is taken from Obama's autobiographical account of his life contained in his memoir *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, which provides his version of his life as he subjectively experienced it from birth through his formative and young adult years, ending with his entrance into Harvard Law School.

The backstory to the exchange below is the following: In 1979, Barack Obama left Hawaii and entered Occidental College near Los Angeles. This marked the first time that Barack was living on his own away from family. Up to that point, his concept of race and black identity had been nurtured outside of mainstream U.S. culture, having spent his formative years growing up in Indonesia and Hawaii. During his freshman year at Occidental, he met and developed relationships with other black students who seemed to be on the same search for a personal and social identity—exploring, testing out roles. Barack was comforted to know that other African Americans were searching for a racial identity within American culture just as he was, but he was also dispirited by a sense of confusion that seem to exist among the young African-American classmates he befriended at Occidental. Barack claimed that during his sophomore year, his racial identity began to congeal. He subsequently became involved that year with the South African divestment campaign on campus, which he said evoked ties to his father's struggles in Kenya.

The divestiture movement, which aimed at pressuring South Africa to dismantle its apartheid policies, had begun mobilizing students on U.S. college campuses in 1976. The movement gained momentum at a number of universities nationwide as a diverse collection of student groups came together in support of the divestiture campaign. Both students and faculty members participated in various forms of protest, from teach-ins to demonstrations, to demand that their institutions withdraw their investments from companies that traded with or conducted business in South Africa because of its apartheid policies.

On February 18, 1981, Barack Obama gave his first public speech. It was a short but reportedly stirring speech given at a rally on campus during the day, in which he urged the campus community to support efforts to force Occidental College to divest its holdings in South Africa. Regina, a college classmate and supporter of the South African divestment campaign, also spoke at the rally, drawing about her personal family history to urge divestment as a protest against apartheid. The following dialogue (adapted for analytical purposes from Obama 1995, 107–8) took place between Barack and Regina at a party that evening:

(1) REGINA: Congratulations for that wonderful speech you gave.
(2) BARACK [*popping open a can of beer*]: It was short, anyway.

(3) REGINA: That's what made the difference. You spoke from the heart, Barack. It made people want to hear more. When they pulled you away, it was as if . . .
(4) BARACK: Listen, Regina, you're a very sweet lady. And I'm happy you enjoyed my little performance today. But that's the last time you will ever hear a speech out of me. I'm going to leave the preaching to you. And to Marcus. Me, I've decided I've got no business speaking for black folks.

(5) REGINA: And why is that?
(6) BARACK: Because I've got nothing to say, Regina. I don't believe we made any difference by what we did today. I don't believe that what happens to a kid in Soweto makes much difference to the people we were talking to. Pretty words don't make it so. So why do I pretend otherwise? I'll tell you why. Because it makes *me* feel important. Because *I* like the applause. It gives me a nice cheap thrill. That's all.

(7) REGINA: You don't really believe that.
(8) BARACK: That's what I believe.

(9) REGINA: Well, you could have fooled me. Seemed to me like I heard a man speak who believed in something. A black man who cared. But hey, I guess I'm stupid.
(10) BARACK: Not stupid, Regina. Naïve.

(11) REGINA [*takes a step back and puts her hands on her hips*]: Naïve? *You're* calling *me* naïve? Uh-uh. I don't think so. If anybody's naïve, it's you. You're the one who seems to think he can run away from himself. You're the one who thinks he can avoid what he feels. [*Sticking a finger in his chest*] You want to know what your problem is? You always think everything's about you. You're just like Reggie

and Marcus and Steve and all the other brothers out there. The rally is about you. The speech is about you. The hurt is always your hurt. It's never just about you. It's about people who need your help. Children who are depending on you. They're not interested in your irony or your sophistication or your ego getting bruised. And neither am I.

POSITION ANALYSIS

From lines (1) to (3), Regina positions Barack as a persuasive spokesman for the campus divestment campaign, a political effort led by African-American students at Occidental College whose aim was to force Occidental to divest itself of its investments in South Africa because of that nation's apartheid policies. Within her story line, she portrays Barack as an earnest, true believer who is effective in promoting the divestiture cause.

From lines (4) to (6), Barack abruptly rejects Regina's characterization of him as a true believer (and thus her story line) and essentially repositions himself as an "actor" by claiming that he was only putting on a performance and was not speaking from the heart as Regina had believed. In Barack's story line, he portrays himself as merely a mouthpiece who has lost faith in his ability to affect change and to speak on behalf of African Americans. He also repositions Regina, as well as Marcus (who is not in the conversation), when he notes "I'm going to leave the preaching to you. And to Marcus." The particular use of the word *preaching* by Barack can be understood in the pejorative sense, suggesting that Barack had satirically repositioned Regina and Marcus as proselytizers on a divine but futile mission. This section of dialogue also reflects a repositioning within Barack himself in which intrapersonal dialogues over the course of the campaign have led him to cast doubt on his own psychic orientation toward a broader range of interwoven personal narratives that have helped define his racial identity. Barack thus positions himself as "selfish person" seeking only attention and adulation.

However, Barack's assertion strikes a false note with Regina. From lines (7) to (9), she simply rejects his claim and repositions him, reasserting her original story line by restating her claim (in a satirical way) that Barack did in fact believe in the cause and his abilities to affect change in people's attitudes. In line (10), Barack provocatively calls Regina "naïve" and, in so doing, positions himself as a worldly-wise actor in contrast to Regina, whom he now positions as a naïve proselytizer. In line (11), the wrath of Regina is triggered by Barack's personal attack on her. She rejects his claim of being naïve and again repositions Barack, this time as a self-absorbed egoist around whom the whole world supposedly revolves.

The dialogue reveals several interesting elements that provide insight into the continuing emergence of Barack Obama's racial identity. First, Barack seems to be experiencing a crisis of confidence in which he questions his commitment to the divestiture cause and his ability to promote it. Barack claims in his memoir that his black identity was beginning to "congeal," but the dialogue with Regina suggests that his activism on behalf of black causes has led him to question more deeply what it means to be black in mainstream America by exposing him to a new cultural context in which he must make sense of his racial identity. The dialogue thus signals an attempt by Barack to relocate himself in a new cultural environment with respect to his racial identity. He appears to be in the process of recalibrating his expectations that he subjectively experiences as frustration in his attempt to explore his racial identity by assuming a more activist role in racial politics.

Second, there is a gender dynamic at play that also shapes the exchange. It is noteworthy that in line (11), Regina not only positions Barack as a selfish egoist but also places the other males—"Reggie and Marcus and Steve and all the other brothers out there"—in the same category. Regina is suggesting a gender-based difference in the level of commitment to the cause. Barack admitted to Regina that his activism made him feel important. Regina is essentially implying that Barack and the rest of the males in the organization need to grow up and not diminish her commitment to the cause by labeling her as naïve. It is doubtful that Barack would express feelings about his commitment to the cause in the same way with the males in the group as with Regina.

Third, the context of the exchange is another factor that must be taken into account to calibrate meaning and to arrive at some assessment regarding the reliability of the story lines expressed in the dialogue. The exchange takes place at a party at the end of a successful day in which the group's members have been drinking and celebrating. Within the framework of a party environment, the exchange most likely would be more open and emotional and less guarded than if it had taken place in a more sedate setting. This raises the question of whether Barack was testing out the role of a less-committed activist to reconcile conflicting narratives that tested deeper core attributes by pitting his sense of honesty against his need to be liked and accepted by the African Americans in his group and in American society at large.

In sum, the brief positioning analysis above highlights the complex nature of even a short exchange on a narrow topic. It demonstrates its analytic power by providing a means to access the multiple strands of our social selves that we selectively express within social discourse, which essentially constitute who we are and provide a hint of who we want to be. In the case of Barack Obama, the exchange with Regina allows us a degree of access to his self-doubts as he made his first foray into the public policy arena.

According to classmates and professors at Occidental, Obama was well-respected on campus for his analytic abilities. He was viewed by his peers as a "serious person with an intellectual curiosity and maturity beyond his years" (Helman 2008). Despite the narrative thread of self-doubt that surfaces regarding Barack's particular role and effectiveness in the divestiture campaign, it appears that he was able to confine his self-doubts to that specific issue, which was thematically linked to his own search for racial identity at that point in his life. The broader story line for Barack was that it was at Occidental that his active interest in public policy was awakened, according to journalism professor Margot Mifflin, who was a classmate of Obama's while at Occidental (Mifflin 2009). For Barack, new story lines were beginning to emerge as his dialogic encounters revolving around politics moved out of the classroom and into the town square.

POSTSCRIPT

The divestiture of South African investments by Occidental College finally took place in 1991, 10 years after Barack Obama made his campus speech. Seen in this light, it appears that his self-doubts about his own effectiveness and that of the movement at the time were warranted. These doubts did not diminish Obama's interest in public policy, however, and he subsequently left Occidental after his sophomore year to pursue a degree in political science at Columbia University. His next direct involvement in political activism occurred when he took a job as a community organizer in Chicago, which allowed him an opportunity to hone his political skills and test his level of commitment to political action and social justice in pursuit of specific goals. Armed with this practical political experience, Obama entered Harvard Law School and then went on to teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School for 12 years while also working as a civil rights attorney.

By the time he was ready to enter the political arena by running for state office in 1995, two major story lines, which had begun to emerge at Occidental, became more readily apparent: Obama's commitment to careful analysis of social problems, and his commitment to affect change in support of his concepts of social justice. The self-doubts that he experienced at Occidental regarding his role in the divestiture movement appear in many ways to be a sign of maturity, in that he was able to step back and question his own motives that touched at the core of his racial identity. This subplot, Barack's willingness to question his own motives, which we see surfacing in his early political activism at Occidental, seems to hint at an enduring story line that has, at least up to now, helped him navigate through the heady waters of presidential politics where ego and power can easily lead a nation off course.

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7

The Right to Stand and the Right to Rule

Rom Harré and Mark Rossetti

Politics is concerned with the management of societies. There are two fundamental questions upon the answers to which the political process ultimately depends:

1. What policies should be adopted by those who have the power to govern?
2. Who is to be ascribed or assigned the right to govern?

The practices through which these political processes are accomplished are largely discursive. Discussions, debates, clarifications, presentations, and so on are the means by which policies and programs are defined, promulgated, and put into action. The methods by which rights and duties are distributed, too, are discursive. Character and experience are described and evaluated in the course of discursive practices, which also involve the positioning of those involved in the local moral order. The dynamics of these essential processes are researchable in terms of the discursive practices with which they are accomplished. There is simply no such act as just laying claim to a post in the political domain and defending it by force. The positioning process provides "on the spot" legitimation of the choice of personnel for a political elite.

It should be kept in mind that the concepts of "right" and "duty" that are implicit in the conditions for the application of positioning theory to the analysis of political discourse do not exactly fit the traditional simple formula: my duties are what you can demand of me, while my rights are what I can demand of you. The "right to stand in an election" requires of the people in general that nothing is to be done to prevent a person standing and, more importantly, that the person who is to run for office is to be so qualified. A person born abroad does not have the right to run for President of the United States, for example. A felon does not have the right to vote in elections.

In this chapter, we are concerned with an aspect of the second question, how the right to govern is determined. In the case study to follow, it is presumed that this is an electoral process. (There are many other discursive practices by which the right to govern is acquired, such as coronations, charismatic displays, and inherited rank.) For there to be an electoral process, there must be a *constituency*, those entitled to vote, and, usually, more than one candidate. But who should be the candidates? There must be a way in which the individuals to be candidates in the final election are to be chosen.

In the United Kingdom, until recently a slate of candidates for the role of party candidate were interviewed by a local party committee and, behind closed doors, one was chosen as the party's candidate. In the Soviet Union, a selection by ballot was made from a slate of candidates at the local *soviet* level, with the winner to serve as the party candidate in the national elections, in which only the Communist Party candidates were entitled to stand. In the United States, there are open elections at two levels. In the primary electoral process, an electoral choice is made, by those entitled to vote, from among the candidates available, to select the individual who will go forward as the party's candidate in the general election. At each stage, there is a campaign and the personal presentation of a double case—for the right to be the candidate and for the right ultimately to rule the nation. Claims to the latter are also claims to the former.

The discourses offered by those who are standing for public office in countries with systems that pit two or more parties against each other involve two related main threads in their presentations. The candidate must make clear that he or she has the right to enter into a context, be it a democratic election or for decision in some other way, say, by a selection committee or board. The candidate must also display for those who will choose among the contestants whatever skills, knowledge, and characterological assets would make it overwhelmingly wise to select just this person for the post in question, even if the post is the simple right to stand for another post. It also helps if a candidate at least pretends that he or she feels a duty to stand—that this candidature is no whim, nor is he or she who claims it being pushed or forced into standing. The familiar mock-modest performance, put on by candidates who pretend that under pressure and reluctantly they are putting themselves forward at the behest of others, fools no one—though it is sometimes sincere, as perhaps in the case of the Roman Fabius. Looking back over these few lines, we see the outlines of a positioning theory issue emerging from the mist—rights and duties and the justification for claiming or disclaiming them have appeared.

Recent developments in positioning theory have brought to the fore the importance of the prepositioning processes by which people justify or undermine the rights of themselves or others to a post, a course of action, the possession of something, and so on. A formal version of prepositioning goes on in courts and tribunals concerned with property ownership or more often with inheritance. Who has the right to the bulk of the old man's fortune? His trophy wife will preposition herself by asserting that she made his declining years a joy, while his estranged daughter, upset by the advent of the trophy wife, might insist on ties of blood. These prepositionings bear more or less directly on the distribution of rights, as they take their places for consideration by the court to decide the distribution of rights among the litigants. The prepositionings are notoriously contestable—the daughter calling on the housekeeper to testify to the shrewish tongue of the wife; the wife calling on the same person to testify to the daughter's neglect of her poor old Dad. The property rights are contested via the contesting of the prepositionings. The system of primary and general elections in the United States is structurally similar to the format of this kind of court hearing.

In this chapter, we bring positioning theory to bear on the primary campaigns of the Democratic Party's would-be candidates for the presidency, Senator Barack Obama and Senator Hillary Clinton. We will also analyze the vice presidential debate between Senator Joe Biden and Governor Sarah Palin in a little less detail. In that latter contest, a great deal of prepositioning had been done by the newspapers and other media. Governor Palin had to shape her performance in part to contest the prepositionings to which she had been subjected.

In our study, we will be looking for acts of prepositioning by each claimant of the right to stand, both as to the content and the form of their prepositioning acts. Once the right to stand has been finally settled by an election, the activity gives way to the question of the right to rule by virtue of a second round of prepositionings that lead up to the final contest. Furthermore, we will try to ascertain whether the prepositionings and subsequent positionings were preemptive or reactive, spontaneous or rehearsed. Then, using this layer of the discourse as a springboard, we will try to bring out how mutual positionings were expressed and contested.

Of course, it goes without saying that neither contestant is likely to declare overtly that the other does not have the wherewithal to make a valid claim to the right to stand. This tacit concession must include an acknowledgment that the rival candidate has the capacity to rule, though in lesser measure. In a way, a formal right has been conceded already, since whoever wins the primary will indeed be the Democratic Party candidate and will stand as such. That right is not determined by the positioning performances we are studying.

POSITIONING ANALYSIS

Before we turn to dismantling the texts of the Obama–Clinton debates, let us remind ourselves of the task of the positioning analyst. We are in search of three features of discourses in which positioning acts are performed:

1. What are the story lines or narratives that each speaker is bringing into existence, step by step?
2. What are the social forces of the speech-acts that constitute this discourse, understood in the light of unfolding narratives and their constitutive conventions? We note that any form of words may accomplish more than one speech-act and that any unfolding discourse may be the bearer of more than one story line. We will follow J. L. Austin (1962, 91) in labeling this aspect of an utterance the "illocutionary force" of a speech-act.
3. What rights and duties have emerged in the discourse and how have they been assigned, refused, accepted, or contested by the speakers?

THE POLITICAL OCCASION FOR THE DEBATE

By mid-2007, public disenchantment with the Republican administration of President George W. Bush had become so vocal and widespread that it seemed certain that the presidential election of 2008 would favor the Democratic candidate, whomever that was to be. At the beginning of the long process of choosing a candidate through the primary elections, state by state, it seemed that for the first time in American history, a woman would be chosen as their candidate by one of the major parties. Hillary Clinton, the wife of former President Bill Clinton, was, as they say, a shoo-in.

However, a challenge quickly emerged from a dynamic and charismatic senator, Barack Obama, not then known to the majority of the American public. With successful fundraising of a campaign "war chest," Obama began to gain votes in the primary elections—so much so that by early 2008, his challenge to Senator Clinton for the candidacy of the Democratic Party looked increasingly powerful. This led to the proposal for a series of debates in which the leading candidates, by now whittled down to senators Clinton and Obama, would meet face to face to debate the issues of the day and how they would tackle them.

Part of the point of these debates was to establish a sequence of prior rights—the right to be the Democratic candidate, and from there the right to rule, achieved by winning the general election. The study of the discursive procedures by which rights and duties are determined is positioning theory. These debates were ideal exemplars of this point of view in social psychology. The analysis to follow will show how the political process involves the three components of a positioning analysis: story line, social interpretations of speech-acts, and the establishment and distribution of rights and duties.

THE TEXTS

We will use transcripts of the public and televised, that is super-public, debates between the then senators Obama and Clinton, leading contenders for the Democratic Party nomination for President of the United States. These amount to about 160 pages of text, within which we hope to find a mesh of developing story lines, layers of speech acts, and contested distributions of rights and duties. Behind all this lie the prepositionings upon which the higher-order and overt discursive moves are grounded. In addition, we will examine a transcript of the debate between the Senator Biden and Governor Palin, as well some material from newspaper responses to the Republican choice of Palin as Senator John McCain's running mate.

THE ANALYSIS I: PREPOSITIONING MOVES

A prepositioning move establishes that the target person has, or lacks, a desirable attribute for the ascription of a right or a duty relevant to the situation in hand. Alternatively, it might be a significant move to establish that the target person has an attribute that is undesirable or positively antithetical to the ascribed right or duty. Sometimes the prepositioning move is accomplished by someone other than the target person, and sometimes the target person self-ascribes the relevant attributes. Finally, there can be preemptive or reactive defenses against derogatory prepositionings. In the transcripts we are analyzing, examples of all four moves can be found: prepositioning ascriptions to the other and to oneself, and preemptive or reactive defensive responses to hostile prepositionings.

Reflexive Prepositionings

Both Obama and Clinton introduce autobiographical material as prepositioning moves. The chain of inferences runs from an autobiographical snippet through a claim of competence or experience to a self-ascription of the right to be the Democratic candidate to the ultimate ascription, the right to rule. We need not follow every step of this progression—the first two moves are enough to show how the prepositioning works.

In response to the charge that he criticizes people for "clinging to their religion," Obama responds with the following:

> I am a devout Christian. . . . I started my work working with churches in the shadow of steel plants that had closed on the south side of Chicago. [I claim] that nobody in a presidential campaign on the Democratic side in recent memory has

done more to reach out to the church and talk about what are our obligations religiously." (CNN News 2008)

Here Obama is making a reactive prepositioning responding to an implicit positioning move that would entail his not having the right to rule in a Christian country.

More telling, because it is more intimate, is Obama's claim to a special attribute: the ability to bring people together. To claim this, he offers the following:

> But what I look at as the trajectory of my life because, you know, I was raised by a single mom. My father left when I was two, and I was raised by my mother and my grandparents. . . . What was most important in my life was learning to take responsibility not only for my own actions, but how I can bring people together to actually have an impact on the world. (ABC News 2009)

This snippet serves to rebut the all-words-but-no-deeds accusation that Clinton has made about him.

Responding to a neutral query, Clinton makes a preemptive prepositioning move by introducing an autobiographical snippet:

> You know, I have, ever since I was a little girl, felt the presence of God in my life. And it has, been a gift of grace that has, for me, been incredibly sustaining. But, really, ever since I was a child, I have felt the enveloping support and love of God, and I have had the experience on many, many occasions where I felt like the holy spirit was there with me as I made a journey. (CNN News 2008)

There is a striking contrast in how Obama and Clinton discuss their experiences with religion—Obama addressing churches as point of community connection and religion as a duty; Clinton approaching her faith as a matter of personal experience and feelings. This contrast plays into significant narratives for each candidate, supporting Obama's self-proclaimed role as a paternal community organizer and reinforcing Clinton's image of an emotional and strong maternal character.

A more subtle undercurrent of prepositioning comes from the complexity of language used by Obama and the simplicity of language used by Clinton. Perhaps as a deliberate move away from her wealthy and well-educated history, Clinton uses very accessible everyday language that paints her as a politically minded friend of the voter. Obama, on the other hand, wears his education on his sleeve, giving a more professional and impressive presentation.

The opening statements in the Austin, Texas, debate illustrate the contrast between the two candidates' speaking styles. Clinton favors familiar language and very generalized arguments that resonate with media hype and the audience's emotions. Each of these aspects are present as she says,

> And I know that, if we work together, we can take on the special interests, transfer $55 billion of all those giveaways and subsidies that President Bush has given them back to the middle class, to create jobs and provide health care and make college affordable. (ABC News 2009)

The message here appears to be not so much about a specific plan as a general list of action items that have shown strength in the polls for the desired voting group.

In contrast, Obama uses personal stories to create a connection with the audience, then discusses political issues with somewhat greater complexity. The following sentence demonstrates these tendencies:

> I met a couple in San Antonio, who—as a consequence of entering into a predatory loan—are on the brink of foreclosure and are actually seeing them having to cut back on their medical expenses, because their mortgage doubled in two weeks. (ABC News 2009)

A personal story is introduced, then the unsimplified vocabulary "consequence," "predatory," and "foreclosure" are used in rapid succession in explaining the functioning of a bad mortgage. Ultimately, which of these two speaking models each voter sees as more presidential is doubtless an important factor in the candidates' persuasive power.

Obama demonstrates his intuitive skill as a politician in his ability to run out a doubled-up story line in which he presents himself both as "one of you" and also as "your champion" by virtue of the fact that, "as a Harvard-educated lawyer, I am not helpless in the face of the forces that overwhelm one of you!"

Prepositionings of the Other

In the context of a back-and-forth series of accusations and responses over the details of their different proposals for a universal health care plan, straightforward accusations of character effects appear as Clinton and Obama move from a discussion of the merits and demerits of their schemes to a discussion of the merits and demerits of their characters.

Clinton more or less accuses Obama of lying in his campaign with respect to whether health insurance will or will not be compulsory:

> You know, for example, it has been unfortunate that Senator Obama has consistently said that I would force people to have health care whether they could afford it or not. . . . And unfortunately it's a debate we should have that is accurate and is based on facts about my plan . . . because my plan will cover everyone and it will be affordable. . . . So we should have a good debate that uses accurate information, not false, misleading, and discredited information. (MSNBC 2008)

Reactively, Obama moves to counter the prepositioning implications of Clinton's accusation. He does this by focusing on the question of whether it was accurate to say that under the Clinton plan some people would be forced to take out health care insurance. So, it is "entirely legitimate for us to point out these differences" in the respective health care plans (MSNBC 2008).

Obama finds the health care debate an opportunity, while praising Clinton for "95 percent" of her plan, to preposition her with an accusation of what might be called a *cognitive defect*, in contrast to Clinton's prepositioning of Obama as having a *moral defect*—being economical with the truth, as they say. He accuses her of "vagueness" in the presentation of key points in her plan—which amounts to a covert accusation of prevarication—and of hiding the truth about how her scheme is going to work.

By lauding the vast majority of Clinton's health care plan, Obama is also executing an elegant tactic that demonstrates his superiority while maintaining a courteous demeanor and the integrity of the Democratic Party. By including Clinton's plan in his own, Obama destroys the uniqueness of Clinton's thought even as he validates its content, turning Clinton's explanations of her plans into mere priming for Obama's further statements rather than strong independent ideas.

At one point, the moderator of the debate presents Obama with a quotation from a speech by Clinton that is overtly a hostile prepositioning move, impugning his ability to manage the foreign affairs of the nation: "We have seen the tragic result of having a president who had neither the experience nor the wisdom to manage our foreign policy and safeguard our national security"—and, by implication, if you choose Obama as your candidate and he wins the election, you will find yourselves with just such a president again! Resisting this vicarious act of prepositioning, Obama reminds the audience of the wisdom of his foreign policy intentions in pointing to his strong opposition to the Iraq War. He saw the folly of the Bush policy from the beginning, which, he points out, Clinton did not.

THE ANALYSIS II: STORY LINES

Story Line 1: "I Am Just One of You"

Senator Clinton needed to disperse the impression that she was a different kind of person—indeed, a superior kind of person—from the bulk of Democratic voters whose support she was canvassing. She had to produce a story of her life that showed her in that light. We could call it the "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" story line that President John F. Kennedy deployed with good effect. She needed to say, I am not some person from a distant place whose interest in your welfare is merely theoretical—I am one of you, and your interests are my interests.

Continuing the autobiographical story quoted above, Senator Obama also uses it to show that he, too, is "just one of you":

> And so working as a community organizer on the streets of Chicago, with ordinary people, bringing them together and organizing them to provide jobs and health care, economic security to people who didn't have it, then working as a civil rights attorney and rejecting jobs on Wall Street to fight for those who are being discriminated against on the job—that cumulative experience is the judgment I bring. (ABC News 2009)

Story Line 2: "Disaster Has Struck, and I Am Your Savior—Follow Me"

Obama's deployment of this story line has all sorts of echoes as he positions himself on this basis of this story as one who has the right to rule. The Christian story line finds echoes here. Obama offers salvation if only the people will follow him. Calling the present election "a defining moment in our history" (ABC News 2009) explicitly leverages this situation, painting Obama as the way out, and perhaps also calling upon the historic nature of an African-American candidate so close to the presidency.

Story Line 3: "Robin Hood Will Right Your Wrongs"

Again and again, both candidates draw on the story line of the hero who takes from the rich to give to the poor. While not exactly saying that this is a proper response to the Bush tax cuts for the rich, which are really a way of robbing the poor, the implication is pretty clear. But Robin Hood has to find a moral justification for taking up the duty to redress economic injustices, and that needs a right to have been established.

Story Line 4: "Noblesse Oblige"

Clinton does not shy away from bringing her privileged origins into the debate—but she uses them as the basis of a positioning move, through which she establishes her duty to serve the people:

> And I resolved at a very young age that I had been blessed and that I was called by my faith and by my upbringing to do what I could to give others the same opportunities and blessings that I took for granted. (ABC News 2009)

Story Line Dilemmas

Tensions in Clinton's use of the biographical story line show up in contrast with Obama's use of his past. He does not have to apologize or explain why he is on the side of the underdog—he *was* an underdog! At the same time, he must also claim that he is not really an underdog—only as a Harvard law graduate does he have the resources to serve the people whom he is addressing. Clinton has to account for her positioning of herself as having a duty to serve the poor and underprivileged—but it is as Lady Bountiful that she is making her claim. Thus she must demonstrate that she is no less sincere than Obama in the her positioning herself thus—but she must undertake some prepositioning by making use of her religious history to account for her self-positioning move.

But in claiming that she has a right and duty to serve the poor, Clinton runs into a narrative tension between privilege and struggle. In the Austin debate, she remarks, "With all of the challenges that I've had, they are nothing compared to what I see happening in the lives of Americans every single day" (ABC News 2009). In one breath, she has tried to assert that her experiences with struggle make her a viable candidate to understand and represent the poor, even while recognizing a distance between her silver-spoon upbringing and the everyday American. And in trying to have it both ways, especially in such close narrative proximity, Clinton jeopardizes the integrity of both story lines.

Both Clinton and Obama face another paradox in their references to their religious faith—presenting themselves as devout. They must address the members of other religious affiliations for support—even though they, Clinton and Obama, must, by implication, believe the adherents of these religions to be mistaken. No one pushes this issue, though a whisper of it appears when each candidate is dealing with implications of anti-Semitism. Each undertakes explicit prepositioning moves to display support of Israel, which is, of course, not the same thing.

Joint Positioning Moves vis-à-vis the Republican Candidate

Occasionally, senators Clinton and Obama join rhetorical forces to establish that either one has a superior right to rule compared to John McCain, the Republican candidate for the presidency. They cite the fact that both are remarkable and indeed novel candidates. One is black, the other is a woman—unthinkable categories of person from whom to draw candidates, let alone presidents, even in the recent past.

Their moves against Senator McCain turn on his support for the Iraq War, widely regarded as George W. Bush's supreme folly. Both Clinton and Obama use McCain's remark that U.S. troops may have to stay in Iraq "for a hundred years" as the opinion of someone out of touch with both political and economic reality. McCain's judgment is called into question, ascribing to him a serious intellectual weakness even as they praise his stalwart character and honesty of purpose—neither of which is enough to support a positioning ascription of a "right to rule." Obama remarks:

> And I think that, when we are having a debate with John McCain, it is going to be much easier for the candidate who was opposed to the concept of invading Iraq in the first place to have a debate about the wisdom of that decision. (ABC News 2009)

He thus edges himself past Clinton's equivocal position on the war: "I would not have voted for it had I known what I know now."

However, there is a discursive positioning paradox. They propose that one of them should be President so that there is a Democrat in the White House, ridding the nation of the legacy of Republicans Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney. But the point of the debates we are studying is that both candidates are declaring, "It ought to be me!" However, one cannot denigrate the other too much in pushing one's own right to be the candidate so as not to spoil the party's chances of getting to the White House in the end. "Loyalty to the Democratic Party" becomes a subsidiary story line.

THE PREPOSITIONING OF SARAH PALIN

The governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin, was hardly known to most of the American public before her sudden appearance as the running mate of Senator John McCain. By choosing a woman as their vice-presidential candidate, the Republicans had matched the political shape of the Democratic team. Very quickly, though, alleged flaws in Governor Palin's experience and character were paraded. Americans generally are not well informed about the world at large, and it was easy to portray Palin likewise. Her prowess with a shotgun was evidently another stage prop to support the image of the glamorous but competent mother of a family—competent even in the killing of bears.

The prepositioning moves, implicit for the most part in Senator Joe Biden's positioning steps as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, depended on portraying Palin as someone without the experience needed to claim the right to rule. In their one televised debate, the candidature was already settled, so Palin and Biden appeared as the chosen candidates of their respective parties.

The grounding of the charge of "inexperience," a fatal flaw in one claiming the right to rule, turned on Palin's biography. Her overt mistakes were indicative of a biographical weakness vis-à-vis her opponent, Biden. However, in this debate, in contrast to the media portrayal of her failings, she manages two positioning moves with skill. In one, she prepositions herself as having a sense of the reality of the economy on the grounds of her (implicit) status as a "hockey mom." In the other, she directly positions Biden as continuing a style of politics that ought to debar him from the right to rule.

Palin's first positioning move comes when she says that the best way to find out the state of the economy is "to go to a kids' soccer game on Saturday and turn to any parent there on the sideline and ask them, 'How are you feeling about the economy?'" The attribute that is highlighted in this remark is "a mom with family responsibilities." This is the biographical attribute that sustains the claim to the right to rule. Again she calls on "Joe Six Pack, hockey moms across the nation," her kind of folks, to combine to demand the end of reckless banking practices (CNN Politics.com 2008). This move, prepositioning herself as a "hockey mom and hunter," however, leaves her open to the assertion that this is not the biography of a person fitted to represent the nation on the world stage.

Her second move comes in the discussion of the war in Afghanistan—a move into the moral domain. "Oh yeah, it's so obvious I am a Washington outsider," Palin says. "And someone just not used to the way you guys operate. Because you voted for the war and now you oppose the war. . . . Americans are craving that straight talk" (CNN Politics.com 2008). Her stance is one of honesty, straightforward declarations, and the end of hypocrisy. In essence, she is saying, I claim the right to rule because the ruler must have integrity and consistency—moral qualities that, and here she positions Biden directly as one of the old-style tricky talkers, her opponent lacks.

The first positioning move is more a claim about her personal attributes than the introduction of a complex evolving story line. The story line is simple—the life of a real mom. The second story line is more complex, contrasting the integrity of the folks from the hinterland with the moral corruption and inconsistency of those who have fallen under the spell of the Washington way.

CONCLUSION

As we remarked at the beginning of this chapter, there are two clusters of discursive practices that form the core of the modern political process. First, there are the practices involved in formulating, debating, and choosing between various policy initiatives and programs. The second cluster includes the means for identifying and eventually choosing between candidates for the right to claim the right to rule. Throughout the analysis, the relation between the three poles of the positioning conceptual structure—story line, social meaning, and position—continuously modulate as one or another takes precedence in the unfolding debates.

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8

Conflict as Ghettoization

Lionel J. Boxer

Conflict takes many forms; it manifests itself in a variety of ways, from peaceful verbal exchanges to violence resulting in death and destruction. Ultimately, it is a discrepancy or difference of opinion that is at the heart of all political disputes. Perhaps it is when people find themselves at variance with an opinion that the seeds of conflict are sown. Opinions or values may be strongest in an ideological ghetto. This chapter is an exploration of the conflict surrounding rejection of the opinion that military officer training should be conducted in Canadian universities and the underlying moods of differing student political perspectives.

In the 1960s, the Canadian Officer Training Corps (COTC), the part-time university-based military officer training program that had existed since before World War I, was discontinued in Canadian universities. Opportunities for developing leadership skills came to a sudden end by the decision of a Canadian government reacting to popular antimilitary sentiments. In part, Canadians—and especially those with a particular political student perspective—wanted to distance themselves from involvement in the Vietnam War being waged by the United States.

Two ideological ghettos or political perspectives can be defined here:

- Ghetto 1: those who benefited from COTC experience
- Ghetto 2: those who distance themselves from military action

Forty years after this decision, some Canadians—and especially those of ghetto 1—are promoting the reinstatement of COTC. To this end, a television documentary—*No Country for Young Men*—was prepared by Stornoway Productions (2008). In that program about the former COTC at the University of Toronto, subjects express themselves in ways that identify their positioning, both macro (in the sense of their political alignment on the issue) and micro (in the sense of their positioning with other subjects).

In this chapter, two distinct story lines are in opposition:

- Story line 1: COTC produces good leaders for all of society and helps future nonmilitary leaders better relate to and understand the military.
- Story line 2: COTC strengthens warmongers and makes violent conflict more likely.

Those from ghetto 1 are likely to prefer story line 1, and those from ghetto 2 may prefer story line 2. These two story lines are presented in a balanced way in the documentary. In doing so, the documentary presents another implicit story line—that of neutral journalism/reporting.

Comments made by subjects in *No Country for Young Men* will be analyzed below with a positioning theory framework. In this sense, positioning in part defines a political perspective assumed on this issue. It will be seen that opinions vary between story line 1, expressed as enthusiasm for COTC to be reinstated, through various levels of interest or curiosity, to story line 2, expressed as determined rejection of COTC's return. Subjects will be shown to assume both macro positions (with regard to their political perspective) and micro positions (with regard to their immediate discourse) in relation to the notion that COTC should be reinstated. Each subject brings with them their own perception of rights, duties, moral order, and actions associated with the decision. In exploring these, it will be shown that there is an inconsistent underlying mood—or political perspective—concerning the issue of reinstating COTC. From this, it will be suggested that the degree of variation of the underlying mood could be an indication of the level of conflict experienced in an organization or society.

CANADIAN OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

Abolished in 1964, COTC had trained military leaders since World War I. While COTC no longer exists, similar officer training corps (OTC) programs continue in other countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. In addition to *No Country for Young Men*, Stornoway Productions of Toronto has completed documentaries on the British OTC program at Cambridge and the U.S. Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, and plans are under way for similar productions concerning officer training at the University of Melbourne in Australia and at a South African university.

The mission of an OTC program is not necessarily to train professional military officers in a massive standing army. While a small proportion of graduates of the program do enter full-time military service, most become leaders in business, industry, and government. Having gone through the experience, they are better equipped to understand the military and the employment of military force. Furthermore, such training equips society's leaders with the wisdom to bridge the gap between society and the military, thus enabling them to establish appropriate policies to guide military leaders and direct deployment of military forces in a range of operations, including conflict resolution interventions.

United Nations interventions involving military forces to resolve international conflict have occurred since 1948. "The UN has . . . played a significant role in reducing the level of conflict even though the fundamental causes of the struggles frequently remain" (Frängsmyr 1989). This success is due in part to the professional leadership of the military forces delivering the intervention. Yet, at times, there has been a lapse in the standard of this leadership (Razack 2004). This could have been caused by an increasingly insular Canadian officer corps, as most officers that have been produced in the past 40 years are products of the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) with a corresponding decline of COTC-educated policy makers. The RMC program comprises a four-year academic degree at the RMC with four or five 13-week modules of military training during summers at military bases.

The preparation for military leadership is achieved through lengthy cultivation of military leaders in the classroom and, more importantly, application in the field under the scrutiny of course-directing staff drawn from experienced military officers. Knowledge required by military leaders goes beyond battlefield tactics and the strategy of generalship. This is especially the case in light of the pressures and requirements of UN intervention. It may be that preparing military officers in isolated military establishments produces a myopic breed of military leaders. If so, it is possible that, since the 1964 abolishment of the university-based COTC, Canadians have bred a generation of military leaders insensitive to broader concepts. Furthermore, an increasing proportion of policy makers are insensitive to and misunderstand military concepts and are unable to produce sensible military policy.

In an effort to improve the education of both military leaders and policy makers relating to employment of military forces, there is a move to resume the COTC. This chapter will explore the different opinions about such a move through of positioning theory relating to a specific current debate concerning the appropriateness of resuming the Canadian university-based COTC.

UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

Conflict occurs not only in violent societies. Differences of opinion and resulting conflict can be present in any community regardless of the intensity of violence. Even where there is a tendency for friendly civil interaction, there may be manifestations of conflict. By focusing on space where there is generally an absence of violence (behavior based on a peaceful code of conduct), an effort is made to isolate conflict and understand it.

Of the several definitions of conflict, in this chapter, I will frame conflict as being "a state of disharmony between incompatible or antithetical persons, ideas, or interests; a clash" (Answers.com 2010). In doing so, conflict is not dependent on violence, but on a state of disharmony between individuals and groups. As individuals have their own sense of truth or values, conflict becomes a matter of variation between values. In these terms, it will be shown that positioning theory is well suited to understand conflict.

Strongly held views are not easily changed. As Wittgenstein (1969) shows with "hinge propositions," people assume strong beliefs that are grounded firmly on what they have been told to be true through dominant discourse (Foucault 1970). Because dominant discourse can vary between social groups, when people from diverse backgrounds are required to compare their opinions about an issue, it is unlikely that everyone will share the same views about all aspects of the issue. This is amplified when people are myopic and ghettoized. For example, unique and especially esoteric social groups *ghettoize*—that is, become isolated in their thought and unable to accept alternate points of view of a more global discourse. In doing so, they become insular and reinforce their dominant discourse in a separate and unique way from other social groups. When interacting with wider society, ghettoized groups—social units defined by strongly held and myopic political views—may cause conflict even in the most peaceful societies.

A CONVENIENT CERTAINTY

It may be convenient to block out all opposition and live in a controlled and contrived space. For some, this may be a preference, while for others, it may appear peculiar. Perhaps an ideological ghetto is one reason nations are formed and their sovereignty enforced: creation of a controlled and contrived space. Canada was created as an ideological ghetto, where the monarchy was to be retained, while the United States had previously been created as an ideological ghetto where the monarchy was replaced by a republic. In some manifestations, such groupings are benign and fair, but at the other extreme, totalitarian fascist regimes have arisen that oppress some for the benefit of others.

There are people who remain convinced that Hitler was a good man who did great things for Germany. From that point of view, Hitler could be seen as having created a controlled and contrived space for the benefit of his society, and perhaps there was some good in it. However, the Western sensitized mind perhaps may imagine nothing but evil in Nazism.

Similarly, the notion of Ba'athism may conjure up images of human anguish for some and different feelings for others.

At the other extreme, some of the more overtly peaceful nations, such as Canada and Australia, may be perceived as being kind and giving, while being equally guilty of creating extremely biased regimes that are blind to broader issues. For example, political correctness and a perverted ethics may have denuded society of some aspects of humanity, denied an appreciation of important considerations, and created a perhaps misinformed, irresponsible reality. It is that sort of ghettoized bias of intellectual pursuit and the potential conflict it may create that this chapter is concerned with.

Recent deployments of armed forces could suggest that the contemporary Western world seriously misunderstands military organizations and their appropriate employment by a democratic society. This may be due in part to a pursuit of contrived ignorance and policy based on misinformation and illogic. That is, by excluding a military presence from university campuses and broader society, those not a part of the military remain apart from it and unable to appreciate military factors in the development of policy. In creating this partition, broader society may remain mostly unaware about the work of the military, its effective employment, and its limitations. As a result, policy makers may inappropriately commit and deploy troops, while the military fails to receive necessary guidance from political leaders and may become increasingly self-governing.

Some people perceive a need to expose society's leaders to military knowledge. They have put forward the need to reintroduce the COTC. However, others strongly oppose the idea. These positions are explored in subsequent sections by analyzing discursive data.

The analysis of statements cited in this chapter is conducted with a positioning theory discourse analysis framework (Boxer 2009, 2008, 2007, 2005, 2003). Positioning theory is concerned with the discursive production of selves. The framework connects the discursive production of selves with the underlying mood of society and demonstrates the interdependent nature of each individual self and the broader collective mood. Positioning theory and this framework will be explored in the next section. With this understanding, the final section will employ the positioning theory framework to explore comments made by those in ghetto 1 and others in ghetto 2 to better understand the different underlying moods and related story lines.

The intent of this chapter is the exploration of how conflict can arise—even in relatively peaceful societies—from contrived ignorance nurtured in ideological ghettos. Self-imposed ghettoism may itself be a cause of conflict, and a possible solution may be increased intergroup discourse. Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, and Tropp (2008, 1092) show that "the formation of cross-group friendship leads to reduced anxiety in intergroup contexts." Their research was concerned with "prejudicial attitudes and in concerns about being the target of others' prejudicial attitudes" (p. 1081).

POSITIONING THEORY PRIMER

While chapter 1 of this volume provides a concise introduction to positioning theory, the purpose of this chapter requires a focused exploration of those ideas and other factors relating to the analytical framework. Positioning theory concerns the discursive production of selves. Of importance is the view that this relates to the production of individual selves and collective underlying moods of societies. This section will show how individual selves and underlying moods of societies are interconnected.

Each person's individual self is influenced and perhaps controlled by the underlying mood of the society—or those several societies—within which they live. Likewise, the underlying mood of a society is influenced and perhaps controlled by the individual selves that participate in that society. For example, a person can be a parent, team member, leader in a social club, and member of a sports team. In each of those roles, the person is immersed in a different group or society and is positioned in a different way. This positioning may be more severe in an ideological ghetto, where story lines are strongly enforced through collective discourse. Figure 8.1 demonstrates that interdependence as well as the components of both individual selves and underlying mood. Each person is shown to be founded on a personal set of knowledge or truth, and that, combined with one's moral agency, results in a personal force that each person brings to social encounters.

Underlying mood is a concept unique to this framework. It was crafted from Foucault's gaze (Boxer 2009, 2008, 2007, 2005, 2003) and is in part derived from what Heidegger (1956) describes as "*stimmung*" or "mood," meaning the whole of being. It is in this sense that mood is here understood to be an indicator of culture. This is especially interesting if culture is defined in Schneider's (1988, 353) terms:

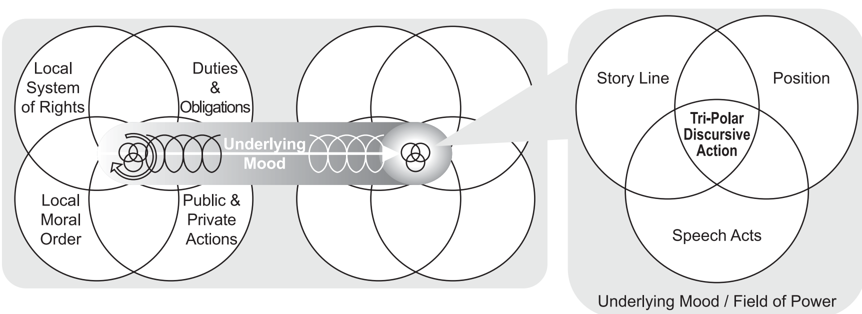

Figure 8.1

Culture refers to: (a) the values that lie beneath what the organisation rewards, supports and expects; (b) the norms that surround and/or underpin the policies, practices and procedures of the organisations; (c) the meaning incumbents share about what the norms and values of the organisation are.

Culture can be described in terms of this Heideggerian "mood" of values, norms, and meanings if there are some measurable parameters to define mood. It is here that discursive action (and the resulting positioning taking place within the underlying mood) becomes important. Informed by the Harré and van Langenhove (1999, 3) treatment of "moral order," "rights," "obligations," and "acts," I have previously shown (Boxer 2009, 2008, 2007, 2005, 2003) that the moral order, rights, obligations, and acts are four mutually interdependent components that define a larger social order or culture. Such a concept of culture could provide a discursive way of defining, measuring, and thinking about the culture of an organization that, in turn, could enable leaders to align themselves, their superiors, peers, and subordinates, other stakeholders, and the organization with important issues to be dealt with. In this way, positioning and mood are enablers in dealing with a broad range of issues, as well as cultivating deep understanding, appreciation, and cooperation.

Social encounters do not occur in a vacuum. Rather, they take place within a field of power that is created by the underlying mood of the society within which they live. Each conversation is formed by speech-acts concerning a story line that are made by the people involved in the conversation. This discursive action of ordinary conversation leads to the positioning of each person participating (or referred to) in the conversation. This positioning can alter or sustain the broader underlying mood of the society within which the discursive action occurs. In this way, intellectual ghettos are created.

In the next section, various perspectives will be considered and discussed using the approach taken in Boxer 2007. These will be presented with the story lines 1 and 2.

PERSPECTIVES CONCERNING THE VALUE OF MILITARY OFFICER TRAINING

In this section, several perspectives will be explored through the comments of subjects, as well as comments in print media, using the positioning theory framework. Three groups of subjects (A, B, C), identified by discursive data, are shown in figure 8.2 with respect to two parameters:

- Experience with officer training corps
- Open-mindedness to officer training corps

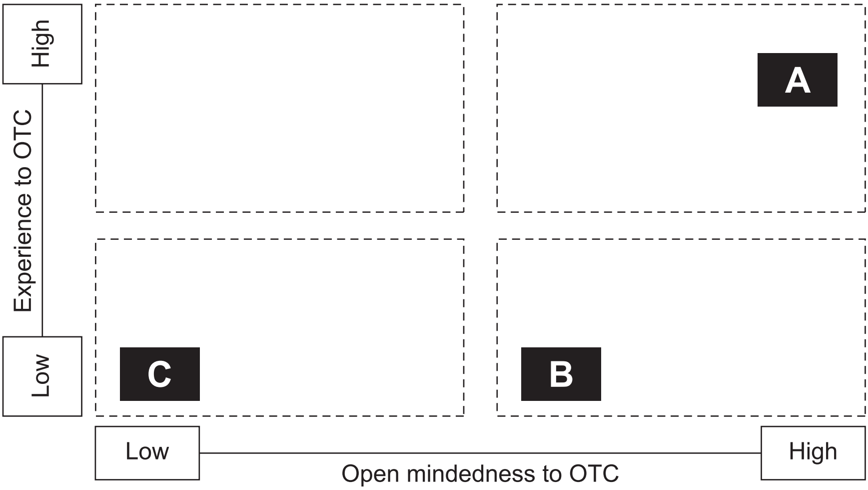

Figure 8.2

These groups of subjects are defined below.

Group A: Experienced and Open Minded

The first group of subjects tends either to have completed OTC or to be currently serving military members. They reflect story line 1 and represent ghetto 1. Examples of their discourse are:

- "We went on to be better citizens for being part of that—very much character building—it was such a wonderful way to become a man."
- "If nothing else, the military teaches self-discipline and teamwork; just having an exposure to the military . . . I discovered a world that I had never really accepted before."
- "At McGill, I was a football player and the McGill OTC was an activity like many others. The military was part of the life, and it was never a doubt that I would have a military career. COTC was considered natural."
- "I grew up with a sense that service to your country included military service."
- "I learned a lot about international affairs and international diplomacy."
- "I wanted to find out why we need militaries. . . . Why do we fight each other all the time? It gave me a sense of who I could be as a leader."
- "I find that, sitting in front of a group of actors that I am directing, you can probably trace some of that back to finding the guts to do that in OTC."
- "OTC teaches you leadership. It teaches you how to lead and train people."
- "OTC made us Canadians."

- "Even if they did not stay in the armed services, they went into the greater Canadian community and most of them took leadership positions. . . . They had an empathy for matters military . . . in the House of Commons, in business, industry, academia, the professions."

Group B: Inexperienced and Open Minded

The second group appears to have had no experience in the military but tends to appreciate the concept of OTC. They do not adhere to either story line 1 or story line 2 and perhaps are not ghettoized by any ideological ghetto. Examples of their discourse are:

- "As far as I'm concerned, I want the officers to be as educated as possible, like those are supposed to be the smart ones. Sending them to a prestigious school is not a bad thing as far as I am concerned."
- "I sort of think it's an interesting idea. I would be very . . . swayed to join it if the opportunity came up."
- "Whatever we're afraid of . . . we have to engage in the debate."

Group C: Inexperienced and Closed Minded

The third group of subjects displays strong opposition toward the notion of OTC or any form of military service and has taken action to ban the military presence at their university. They adhere to story line 2 and represent ghetto 2. It may be that this collective of subjects has ghettoized in their objection to military service and other aspects of mainstream dominant discourse. Examples of their discourse include:

- "We're trying to be a peaceful country and negotiate peaceful conflict resolution. Resolution between other countries and ours and foster a global community. I don't think that reintroducing the military is any way to do that, especially in our educational system."
- "I . . . question why . . . if it is actually necessary. . . . It is a place of learning, and I think that those two things should be kept separate."

Comparison of the Three Groups

The intellectual ghettoization of group A strongly positions the military, with certainty, as being a worthwhile pursuit and appears to have distanced it as an institution from the violence that it is capable of dispensing. COTC has been framed in this regard. These subjects position themselves as having benefited from COTC and imply that others would benefit from the experience. For example, they say, "OTC teaches you leadership [and] how to lead and train people," and call it "a wonderful way to become a man."

Group B subjects appear to position the military as an uncertainty, but something that they feel obliged to be aware of and understand. They position themselves as being possible participants in COTC and as individuals who would welcome COTC. For example, they say, "I would be very swayed to join" and "I want the officers to be as educated as possible." They display no intellectual ghettoization relating to COTC.

The intellectual ghettoization of Group C appears to position the military, with certainty, as being an undesirable institution to have any association with. They position themselves as having no place in COTC and as individuals who strongly oppose COTC. For example, they say, "We're trying to be a peaceful country and negotiate peaceful conflict resolution" and "I don't think that reintroducing the military is any way to do that."

A poignant example of how these differently ghettoized groups create conflict was presented in *No Country for Young Men*, a video clip from YouTube where a student council vote reports on whether or not Canadian military recruiting teams should be permitted to participate in a campus job fair at the University of Victoria. The video clip depicts an aggressive display by students who opposed the student council. In this case, the student council had positioned the military as an unworthy employer, while members of the wider student population disagreed with that positioning and sought to reposition the military in a more positive light. In doing so, members of the student union positioned themselves as being opposed to the military and the dissident students positioned themselves as being supportive of the military. This episode demonstrates in particular how the student council—perhaps of ghetto 2—perceived that they had the right to make certain decisions on behalf of the wider student body, whereas some members of the wider student body—perhaps of ghetto 3—challenged that perception.

Narration in the video observes:

> Student opinions are passionate and diverse, articulate and argumentative. But there is evidence of a dramatic shift of attitude towards the military. Dissident students forced the issue to be reopened, and voted upon, at a meeting of the full student society broadcast on YouTube for all to see. Overwhelmingly, the students say the armed forces are welcome on campus. (Stornoway Productions 2008)

It has been shown that group A, B, and C each can be defined in terms of influential ghettos. Within each group, the underlying mood attributes to them certain rights, duties, moral orders, and actions (as shown in Figure 8.1) that set them apart from the other groups. As each individual engages in discursive action, it becomes clear from which group they come. Conflict occurs where two or more ghettos differ.

For conflict to be solved, it may be necessary to develop techniques that temper differences along these lines of difference, achieving a degree of alignment. For example, is it possible to satisfy those in group A (who perceive a right to engage in OTC activities at their university) in a way that satisfies others in group C (who perceive a right to keep OTC activities out of their university)? Solving this single problem could prevent conflict in this case and perhaps could become a model for solving other similar conflicts. Perhaps to eliminate conflict, there is a need to understand ghettoization and eliminate intellectual ghettos.

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II

Political Parties and Factions

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9

From Dr. No to Dr. Yes

Positioning Theory and Dr. Ian Paisley's Endgame

Ciarán Benson

It would have been, in the United States, akin to Dick Cheney agreeing to share power with, and lead, an administration assisted by Ralph Nader, or to Jesse Helms having Larry Flynt as his deputy—unthinkable! Many people with a knowledge of Northern Irish politics and its seemingly endless, labyrinthine, and brutally violent journey to peaceful constitutional politics will have what amounts to a flashbulb memory of their first sight of two of the most emblematic figures of conflict in recent times sitting together in public, laughing and enjoying each other's company. Martin McGuinness, a key leader in both the republican Sinn Fein Party and in its military wing, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), was now deputy first minister to Dr. Ian Paisley, the most divisive and charismatic leader in Ulster Protestantism, and now first minister of the Northern Irish Assembly.

Even two years before this remarkable event in spring of 2007, no one would have predicted that Paisley would now be working with one of his most hated opponents—and would seemingly be working so well that they quickly earned the ambivalent sobriquet, the "Chuckle Brothers."[1] Something very significant had locked into place in what is known as the "peace process"—something that should be a good test of the descriptive, and perhaps explanatory, powers of Harré, Moghaddam, and others' "positioning theory."

Like any centuries-long conflict, this is a hugely complex narrative with much still to be publicly known, written, and digested. Yet the final transformation of the most oppositional, implacable, energetically nay-saying politician in modern Irish history into an avuncular, yea-saying leader of a coalition of the two most extreme parties to the most recent phase of the

Northern Irish conflict retains its startling quality. How can we describe in positioning terms what happened psychologically to a key player in these, we hope, final times of a very long peace process? That is the purpose of this chapter.

THE FOCUS OF "POSITIONING THEORY"

The intent of positioning theory is to unpack "the discursive procedures by which rights and duties are allocated, ascribed, claimed, disputed, fought over, and so on in the course of actual real-time conflict situations insofar as one can obtain records of them" (F. M. Moghaddam, pers. comm.). The emphasis in positioning theory has tended to be on the allocation and ascription of rights and duties and less on instances where they are claimed. In what follows here, the emphasis is on a claiming of rights, and the discussion will tend to concentrate on the *self-ascription* of such rights and duties by a key player in the last half-century of Irish history, Dr. Ian Paisley. More specifically, we will reflect on his self-ascribed right to radically change what he had previously argued was an unalterable position.

In the historical case of Ian Paisley and Northern Irish conflict, questions constantly appeared in the rhetoric about who had the "right" to speak as the defender of Unionist (largely Protestant) political interests and who had the "duty" to identify their adversaries and to struggle against them? For Paisley and his followers, those adversaries were forces seeking equitable power-sharing between the different communities constituting Northern Ireland as a political and civic entity, and their constant shadows, as he saw them: the forces of "Romanism," or Catholicism, which he so identified with the (southern) Irish Republic. In this, Paisleyites deployed a very particular, demographically majoritarian, but sectarian, concept of democracy. Then, at the end of a very long, internationally orchestrated peace process comes the *volte face*, in which Paisley—to the dismay of many in his church and party, and to the utter surprise of many an interested onlooker—entered power with his mortal enemies, Sinn Fein.

The questions are: What does an abidingly dominating, stridently rejectionist "voice" have to do in positioning terms to agree to be a mollifying power-sharing one? What is the significance of this agreement coming about only after Paisley has become electorally dominant? Whom does he have to convince and what strategies does he deploy to do it? In this, as we will see, a fuller sociocultural psychology is in play.

In an era when psychology is beguiled by the powerful charms of neuroscience, positioning theory, as part of a sociocultural psychology, argues for an alliance with history. While historians search for patterns of individual and collective action, they do so cautiously and with wider tolerances around the interconnectedness of events than is found in disciplines dominated by notions of simple causality. That is because they are happy to grant the players in their stories the credit to act in line with how they interpret their worlds and to thereby make those worlds meaningful. If neuroscience and cognitive psychology look to the causal mechanisms underpinning what a person *can* do, positioning theory, as developed by Harré, Moghaddam, and others, looks to what a person or a group *may* do, in line with what they judge to be the implications for action of their changing story lines (Harré et al. 2009).[2]

Between "can" and "may" lies the territory of history and culture and their local moral orders. That is why a psychology that concerns itself with what may or may not be done must be rooted in local contexts of the kind that historians and anthropologists study (Geertz 1985). Two aspects of positioning theory are particularly relevant to the present discussion: first, that "the realization that the content of positions is local and may even be momentary and ephemeral is the deep insight of positioning theory," and second, that "change in positionings can change the meanings of the actions people are performing, since beliefs about positions partly determine the illocutionary force of members' actions" (Harré et al. 2009, 10). In this present story, the major political change in position for Paisley was his newly dominant electoral position.

There were other elements in the pattern of a more personal kind in Paisley's decision. A major illness preceded his victory in that election, and questions of his age and mortality may well have prompted a radical reevaluation of the trajectory of his life's work and purpose. Also in play is likely to have been a concern to see his son, Ian Paisley Jr., settled into a more stable political firmament (see Gorman 2008).

Psychology has long been interested in questions of personality and historical figures. A recurring idea is that individuals exhibit enduring traits, or dispositions to act in specific circumscribed ways, of a kind that can be integrated into explanations of their actions (Elms 1994). A required condition for identifying such traits would be that they should be discernible over long periods of a person's life. From the many traits of Ian Paisley, there is one in particular that those who have observed his political trajectory have noted: a trait of opportunism. But, as we will see, that concept will need some refinement. Is this opportunism strategic or tactical; is it long-term or more likely to arise within currently given conditions? If tactical, that would fit particularly well with positioning theory's claim that "the content of positions is local and may even be momentary and ephemeral."

THE PERSONAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO PAISLEY'S TRANSFORMATION

To understand the nature of Dr. Paisley's transformation, one must grasp both the durability of his constituting worldview and biblically inspired identity, and the local, quickly shifting, political contexts that offer moments of ephemeral advantage to an agile opportunist. Rigidity of belief coupled with opportunistic ability makes a fascinating case for the descriptive powers of positioning theory. It is the individual qualities of the man and the transforming options of the situation that together led to what many, on his own side as well as on the side of his opponents, might have taken to be an unexpected reversal, "one that nobody could have foreseen, not even a prophet raised by God" (Moloney 2008, 329).

Steve Bruce (2007, 1) writes that "Ian Paisley is unique. No other person in Modern Europe has founded a church and a political party." By the standards of postwar European religion, the church he founded in 1951, the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster (FPCU), was as fundamentalist as the most fundamentalist church that could be found in the United States. It grew from a split within the Presbyterian Church in which "others played a large part in producing the outcome, and Paisley seized the opportunity" (Bruce 2007, 33). This opportunistic ability is a frequently identified feature of Ian Paisley.

Paisley was born in Ulster in 1926. His father was a Baptist minister. His mother was a Scottish Covenanter, as the members of one of the most conservative Scottish churches, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, are known. Covenanters have a very conservative theology and a historically fractious relationship with the state. Bruce (2007, 23) observes that the young Paisley inherited the desire for religious purity from his father. He was steeped in literalist studies of the Bible and later obtained "a thorough grounding in Calvinist theology and biblical scholarship in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Belfast in 1943" (Bruce 2007, 24–25). His biographers note, following his own account, the significance of a religious experience that the 23-year-old had in October 1949 when he spent three days praying with three friends. During this, Paisley had what he recalls as a life-changing experience after feeling himself "filled with the Holy Spirit." He had already been "born again" at the precocious age of six.

The identity of his church, the FPCU, is constituted in strong part by its opposition to Catholicism and "Romanism" in all its forms. Free Presbyterians view Catholicism as a false religion responsible for many vices. When Pope John XXIII died in 1963, the then Northern Irish prime minister, Terence O'Neill, tendered his condolences to the Catholic primate, Cardinal Conway. In protest, Paisley led a protest march to Belfast City Hall, where he railed "at the lying eulogies now being paid to the Roman antichrist by non-Romanist church leaders in defiance of their own historic creeds"(Bruce 2007, 78). The pope is, for Paisley, the Antichrist. A quarter of a century later in 1988, as Pope John Paul II was addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Paisley held up a poster reading "JOHN PAUL II ANTICHRIST" as he shouted, "I renounce you as the Antichrist," before being escorted from the chamber of which he was a member (Moloney 2008, 326). While this was intensely embarrassing to mainstream Ulster Unionists, it went down very well in the heartlands of Free Presbyterianism. "What holds the Common Market [the predecessor of the European Union] together?" journalist Ed Moloney (2008, 221) recounts him rhetorically asking his congregation in 1984. Paisley's answer was "Satanic power." It was, after all, the product of the Treaty of Rome!

A further significant part of Free Presbyterianism, again stressed by his chroniclers, is the concept of the "unequal yoke" (for example, the inability of a mule harnessed to a cow to pull productively, and therefore the undesirability of like associating with unlike) and its requirement to maintain a strict and vigorous separation from those who hold erroneous beliefs, as well as from those who associate with them, such as ecumenical Protestants. Bruce (2007, 46–47) explains:

> In the ecclesiastical climate of the 1950s and 1960s, with the ecumenical movement in the ascendancy in mainstream Protestant churches, this "double separation" meant that the attacks on protestant ministers who remained in the mainstream churches were often more animated than the criticisms of Catholicism that all "true Protestants" knew to be profoundly wrong.

This same principle of separation and noncontact was a key part of his lifelong oppositionalism and nay-saying. It was still operative among his followers right up to the final power-sharing deal with Sinn Fein in May 2007 and led, ironically, to him having to step down as moderator of his own church, 56 years after founding it (Moloney 2008).

"If we had to compress Ian Paisley's thought into just two propositions," writes Bruce (2007, 69), "strong candidates would be 'I am doing God's will' and 'you cannot trust elites.'" From his entry into public life more than 50 years previously, Paisley spent more than four decades as a key opponent of all forms of dialogue and compromise. His most ostensible opponents were those nationalists, predominantly Catholic, who agitated for civil rights. Violent opposition to the civil rights movement, by forces which included those of the Northern Irish State, later spawned the brutally violent Provisional IRA.

There are many, including Moloney (2008), who see in the rise of Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, and of Sinn Fein and the IRA, a symbiotic relationship (for an analogical relationship, this time between presidents George W. Bush and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, see chapter 10 in this volume). They have been implacable enemies whose mutual antagonism and hatred strengthened each of them. To jump forward in the story, many would agree with Moloney that the St. Andrews Agreement, which brought Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness into power together in May 2007, was in most important respects indistinguishable from the 1974

Sunningdale Agreement, which both parties set out to destroy, the one by all-out strikes, the other by lethal violence. The subsequent journey of more than 30 years saw nearly 2,500 more people die, with many more maimed. Much had to happen before the obvious solution was agreed and enacted.

In the bloody decades leading to the definitive agreement that substantially resolved "the Troubles" in Ireland as a whole, there were many attempts to move toward agreement and power-sharing. They took place between the deeply divided and hostile groupings within Northern Ireland itself, as well as between Northern Ireland ("the North") and the Republic of Ireland ("the South"), and between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, of which Northern Ireland continues to be a part. Always sensing treachery, and always alert to opportunity, Paisley had been a loud and effective voice opposing each and every attempt to, as he saw it, betray Protestantism, which was loyal to the British Crown. He would rail at every inclination to "surrender" to the forces of Romanism (i.e., Roman Catholicism and the South), republican nationalism, and the ever-present likelihood of "betrayal" by the British government and especially by his political rivals, the Ulster Unionist Party. When British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher—not generally known for any disloyalty to the concept of the United Kingdom!—signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement (November 15, 1985) with Garrett Fitzgerald, the prime minister of the Republic of Ireland, Paisley "led his congregation in a prayer asking God to take vengeance on 'this wicked, treacherous, lying woman'" (Jack 2008, 59).

Later, on December 15, 1993, when the British and Irish governments signed what became known as the Downing Street Agreement—crafted to lay the basis for a consensual peace process—Paisley stood outside No. 10 Downing Street and read aloud a letter to British prime minister John Major. Paisley warned Major, "You will learn in a bitter school that all appeasement of these monsters [i.e., the IRA] is self-destructive. The hand which reaches for your blood money will never be satisfied until it destroys you" (Moloney 2008, 340). Given the subsequent events of 2007, when he himself agreed to share power with McGuinness, the alchemy that transformed treacherous appeasement into peaceful power-sharing 14 years later is what begs to be understood. Paisley took it upon himself to be the one who knew the difference between peace and appeasement, and he was the one to decide which was which.

But those were to be a long and tense 14 years, during which the politically constructive center ground had ultimately to yield the fruits of their hard-won achievements to those who bore much responsibility for what many believe were the wasted years it took to gain them. Both the moderate republicans in the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) and their counterparts in the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) were the ones who eventually lost out electorally to the extremes.

Dr. Paisley and his party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), were fractious and suspicious players in the so-called peace process. This lengthy process involved both the British and the Irish governments (with much help and support from U.S. President Bill Clinton's administration); the moderate republican party in Northern Ireland, the SDLP; the moderate unionist party, the UUP; the militant republican party and political wing of the IRA, Sinn Fein; a variety of parties acting as the political wings of militant loyalist Protestant groups; and other leaders of civic society. It was a defining process in modern Irish history and led to what is called the Good Friday Agreement (April 10, 1998). This agreement was subsequently ratified by unprecedented referenda in both the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. This laid the ground for a peace in Ireland, which, while under current threat from diehard dissident republican groups, is the most robust basis for real peace on the island of Ireland. However, it took nearly 10 years more—twice as long as World War II, as has been noted—for the final enactment of that agreement to bed down and work. These are the years of Paisley's transformation, one that begins when he was well into his 70s.

To remind the reader of the rhetorical starting point of this change, here is a flavor of Paisley's rhetoric before the transformation began. Writing in his church's magazine, the *Revivalist*, for May–June 1997, Paisley had this to say:

> As I saw those tricolours [the flag of the Republic of Ireland] around the City Hall, as I saw that evil man, the godfather of terrors galore, Gerry Adams, and the other murderous godfather, McGuinness, when I saw both of them I said, "God deal(s) with evil men." Yes, bloody and deceitful men will not live out half their days, that is what the Book says, and I am praying for funerals, that is what I am praying for. (Moloney 2008, 514)

Ten years later, as the 81-year-old became first minister of Northern Ireland (a political position created by the same Good Friday Agreement, which he opposed) with the same Martin McGuinness as his deputy first minister, Paisley had this to say on June 9, 2007, to the *Belfast Telegraph*:

> We have had agreement at the end of the day after perhaps a fair bit of argument and stating our views but it has been courteous, it has been honest, it has been straight. (Moloney 2008, 514)

A CONCEPTUAL INTERLUDE: IDENTITY, BIOGRAPHY, "UNTHINKABLE BOUNDARIES," AND IAN PAISLEY

In a previous book on positioning theory (Harré and Moghaddam 2003, 61–84), Benson argues that the "boundaries" that make a person's identity the kind of identity that it is are substantially emotional and negative in nature.[3] Deploying ideas of the American philosopher, Harry Frankfurt, Benson argues that a useful way of conceiving of the boundaries of identity—boundaries that determine the nature of those identities—is in terms of *acts* whose enactment *by themselves* would be *unthinkable* to a person or a group. It is not that such a person or group simply believes that they may or may not do something, but rather that they could not even *think of* doing it without some powerful emotional restraints—involving controlling feelings of guilt, shame, disgust, fear, and so on—coming into play *involuntarily.* We are what we are largely because of the things that we simply will not countenance doing voluntarily.

For practically the whole of his lengthy public life as leader of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster, which he founded as a 25-year-old in 1951, and as the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, which he founded on October 30, 1971, it was anathema to Paisley to even deal with Romanists or republican terrorists, let alone share power with them. And then, to everyone's amazement, he changed. The question is, what kind of change was it? Was it a change of man, of meaning, or, more prosaically, of opportunity for an unchanged man? Positioning theory may be a useful way to describe the on-flowing patterns of man, meaning, and opportunity.

To address this question, here is a brief review of ideas on "unthinkability" and identity. Suppose that someone—say, Ian Paisley—began to act in a way that was both surprising and atypical of him or her. Would we say that the person had ceased to be one *type* of person and had become another? In other words, would we say that the person had changed his or her identity? Or would we say that such a person had now shown his or her "true colors"? The answer depends on the difference between two conditions which can be summed up in the phrases *could not* or *would not, unless*.

In the first instance, a person, irrespective of the context, might regard certain acts as unthinkable for himself because he thinks of himself as being the sort of person who simply could not do that sort of thing. Could the pope want to become a Free Presbyterian, or Paisley to become a pope? Their identities would be threatened by the very thought of acting in that way, and that threat would manifest itself in strong negative feelings of shame or guilt.

On the other hand, this individual might be the sort of person who would not do that sort of thing *unless he could get away with it* or, more benignly, unless he could rationalize that act to himself—in which case, he may not be the sort of person he has presented himself as being. The word *hypocrisy* might come to the minds of those surprised by the move. In the former case, the unthinkable continues to shape and control the self, whereas, in the latter instance, the unthinkable is in fact quite thinkable, but has simply been inhibited by unpropitious ambient conditions. The desire to think and act in that way is present, but it is inhibited by a lack of opportunity to get away with it, or perhaps by a lack of confidence that one can justify it to those others whose support one still needs to sustain advantage.

This distinction exactly is what is implicit in the views of one of Paisley's—unauthorized—biographers, journalist Moloney (2008, xiii):

> In a world where even Bob Jones University[4] can be accused of "going soft," Ian Paisley's journey from demagogue to democrat becomes a metaphor for the change that overcomes everybody and everything. Even so, Paisley's journey was special and extraordinary for the sheer distance it spanned, a journey unequalled in Irish history. For Paisley's often bewildered followers and for the rest of Irish society, one question above all others demands an answer. Why did Ian Paisley do it? Why did he put aside years of animus to all things Irish, Nationalist and Catholic to go into government with the IRA's political wing? . . . One is left with the nagging thought that maybe the wrong question is being asked. Perhaps the more appropriate question is this: Was Ian Paisley possibly the only member of his flock who never really or fully believed his own gospel?

If Moloney is right, then this is a case of the constitutive boundaries of identity being of the "would not unless" ilk rather than of the "could not" kind. But how would one know which was which? In Rom Harré's terms (1998), this would be a case less of change of "self 1" than of "self 3," which is to say, less of a change of how Paisley experienced himself as a subject and more of a change in how he managed his presentation of himself to others. What clues in the history of the person, and his historical trajectory, would indicate such a latent "flexibility" in an identity that all others took be intractably rigid, a taking staunchly underwritten by Paisley's own thundering rhetoric over more than half a century?

COMETH THE OPPORTUNITY, COMETH THE MAN!

The moral basis of personal and social identity has been outlined by philosophers such as Charles Taylor (1989). For Taylor, identity is partly defined by "the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand" (1989, 27).

What were Ian Paisley's horizons, and what shaped them? A fundamentalist and literal interpretation of the Bible as the unalterable and defining word of the True God is, as we have seen, a core part of his identity, as it is of the identity of the Free Presbyterians. Words carry great power and import. Like other Christian fundamentalists, they are creationist, homophobic, and adamantly opposed to what they would take to be the evils of modernism. Strict observance of the Sabbath and opposition to much of what constitutes contemporary art would also characterize their stance, as would a commitment to a very particular species of democracy. They are fiercely anti-Catholic and are opposed to all that they take to be associated with Catholicism—which includes the Republic of Ireland and much of the European Union. Paisley's strand of fundamentalist Protestantism saw itself preserving religious purity in a hostile, pan-European sea of Romanism.

Much of the Free Presbyterians' criticism of the Republic, it must be said, was until recent years justified, and their sense of self-certainty had its historical mirror image in the South. The first three decades of independent Ireland, up to the 1960s, were also marked by a sense of being a bastion of Catholic orthodoxy in a sea of decline. To Paisley and his followers, the Republic of Ireland was a nation dominated by the Catholic Church, and until very recently, there was considerable force to this belief. The Irish state that settled into being after its civil war ended in 1923 was characterized by deeply intertwined relationships between the Catholic Church and the orthodox nationalist political parties that have dominated political life in the Republic throughout the 20th century.

But the South has had its own moral laxities and hypocrisies. The Irish Catholic Church has been profoundly rocked by successive sex, and sex abuse, scandals over the last 30 years, just as the political establishment has been weakened by suspected widespread corruption and public mistrust. An astute, quasi-hermeneutic observation on their differences was that northern Protestants read the lines, whereas Catholics read between them! Or, to put it more crudely, the South often seemed to behave as though paying lip service to principle was the same as being principled! Suffice it to say that profound differences in outlook between Northern Irish Protestants and both Northern and southern Irish Catholics were constantly in play, with all the scope for misunderstanding and mistrust that these entailed.

However, once Paisley entered the arena as a public figure, and especially when that public figure became a political figure as leader of his Democratic Unionist Party, the constellation of forces and meanings within which he now had to carve out a position for himself had changed. His church and its adherents were politically crucial for him, but so too became other forces, such as middle-class Unionist elites and more sinister paramilitary forces, with which he formed loose, uneasy, and deniable alliances. For decades, his DUP played a marginal second fiddle to the dominant Ulster Unionist Party, which was, in terms of respectability, status, and electoral power, the dominant Protestant party. For every move the UUP made to become party to solutions aimed at solving the conflict through compromise and power-sharing, Paisley automatically mobilized his followers to oppose all such "surrender" and "betrayal," as he construed such moves.[5]

In this constellation of political forces, as is so often the case in political life, those who are similar ideologically often reserve their most bitter feelings for those who are closest to themselves but identifiably different as rivals for power. So it came to pass with the DUP and the UUP, particularly after the successful endorsement by both North and South of the 1998 Belfast Agreement. Ousting the UUP as the dominant Unionist party now became an electoral possibility if a substantial part of the uneasy Unionist vote could be convinced that this was a bad deal for them. And this is exactly what Paisley and the DUP set out to do. In this internecine Unionist struggle, the DUP's greatest allies, paradoxically, were Sinn Fein and the IRA. Sinn Fein, in its treatment of the UUP and UUP leader David Trimble, was Paisley's greatest asset in repositioning the DUP as the dominant Unionist party, especially in Sinn Fein's refusal to give Trimble the arms-decommissioning scenario he so desperately needed.

Every political party can be understood as an extension of its leadership, just as every leadership can extend itself only so far as their party will allow, particularly if avoiding an internal split or schism is a high and shared priority. In the space between these possibilities lies much scope for truthfully delaying concessions to other parties that are also trying to resolve the conflict. However, it also allows scope for negotiators to use the argument that a concession too far, or too early, will sunder the leadership's ability to deliver its base. Sinn Fein became masters at this during the nearly decade-long coming to fruition of the 1998 Belfast Agreement in 2007.

The key concession in question early on was the decommissioning of the IRA's arsenal of weapons. If the political wing of militant republicanism, Sinn Fein, incurred a split with its paramilitary alter ego, the IRA, then its role in any peace process, and its ambitions for significant political power, would be sorely weakened. But only those inside their secretive tent knew how likely or unlikely such a split was, and only they knew what would, or would not, precipitate it. In a situation where everybody else dreaded any return to violence, and where those sovereign governments most affected by the conflict had pulled out every stop to achieve the conditions for a peaceful, just, and workable settlement, this meant that those parties at the table who could deliver the cessation of violence had the keenest attention of the others and premium leverage to win concessions.

A recurrent noun used by the key players in this very protracted peace process was the word *choreography*. It was a good metaphor for what could be seen as an elaborate unfolding dance, where each dancer's next position was determined by what another dancer chose to do, or not to do. The question of who "jumped first" was critical for each party, because if they were not safely caught by a concession supportive of that jump, they would be seen to have clumsily betrayed their own base and been hoodwinked by the other, thereby adding to a downward spiral of mistrust. Huge concessions by all were written into the peace process script, concessions authenticated by the referenda north and south of the border.

Those who supported the process were very vulnerable to attacks on their flanks from those who didn't. And that is what happened, especially within Unionism. For the IRA and Sinn Fein to decommission their arms in a very public way would, from their point of view, be seen as surrender, and they did not feel that they had been defeated. Paisley's biblical focus on humiliating the IRA and demanding public repentance was no mere tactic. As late as November 27, 2004, in his speech to his party's North Antrim Association, he said:

> Sinn Féin's leader, Gerry Adams, says we want to humiliate the IRA. There's nothing wrong with that. I think it's a very noble thing. The IRA needs to be humiliated. And they need to wear their sackcloth and ashes, not in a back room but openly. And we have no apology to make for the stand we are taking. (Paisley 2004)

Talk such as this constantly put the choreographers of the process in London and Dublin to the pin of their creative collars. The details of this are as complex as the stitching in the most elaborate Persian carpet and are all the time becoming more available in new publications. Even to outline them is beyond the scope here. But the outline of the Paisley transformation can be sketched.

On June 11, 2007, a month after joining Martin McGuinness in power-sharing, Ian Paisley told the *Belfast Telegraph*: "I never thought I would sit here [in Stormont Castle, the seat of Northern Ireland's government], I never thought I would be in a place where I could really influence governments the way I wanted to influence them" (Moloney 2008, 512). That word "wanted" suggests long-standing ambition to have the power that was needed to have that effect. Paisley's harrying of David Trimble and the UUP, coupled with Sinn Fein and the IRA's refusal to give Trimble the public arms decommissioning concession he needed electorally, meant that Trimble and his party lost political support. In the Westminster election of May 2005, Paisley and the DUP crushed Trimble and the UUP. The UUP lost all but one of its Westminster seats, whereas the DUP now had nine seats. All the while, a parallel struggle was taking place on the nationalist side, with Sinn Fein focusing on becoming the dominant party over the SDLP. It achieved this in the same election, with Sinn Fein winning five seats as the SDLP's share fell to three. The two most extreme factions in Northern Ireland had moved into political center stage. The prize of power for both of them now involved finding a way of working together.

For Paisley and the DUP, who had denounced the 1998 Belfast Agreement and had vehemently asserted that they would never share power with Sinn Fein and the IRA, the problems they now encountered were inherently discursive and internal. Having positioned themselves at the pole position politically by very effectively weakening their rivals, they now had to reposition themselves discursively vis-à-vis their electoral base, which believed them when they said they would never share power. The discursive solution to this problem was to find a substitute agreement and to redefine the "Sinn Fein" they would share power with as a definably different Sinn Fein to the one they would never share power with. This is exactly what happened.

While speaking to their own supporters of a new agreement supplanting the Good Friday Agreement they had so vigorously opposed, the deal they endorsed was in fact substantially a recast version of that agreement. A five-year review had always been part of that scenario and was due to take place in February 2004. This allowed changes to be comfortably made all around without any loss of face. The process culminated in 2006 with what was called the St. Andrews Agreement. This paved the way for power-sharing with Sinn Fein (Moloney 2008, 459). Now, though, Paisley and his DUP had ownership of it. So what of the other party to the tango?

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, Sinn Fein very quickly grasped the fact that any taint of terrorism was now a liability, and arms decommissioning quickly began under agreed covert procedures. A later unilateral but witnessed decommissioning finally put this issue to rest in 2005. Sinn Fein's tardiness was a highly effective club with which Ian Paisley could batter the often hapless Trimble. "He is a liar, a cheat, a hypocrite, a knave, a thief, a loathsome reptile which needs to be scotched. I will let the people of Ulster detect for themselves the traitor and then pass their own verdict," Paisley said of Trimble when addressing the DUP Annual Conference in November 1998, six months after Trimble signed the Good Friday Agreement (Moloney 2008, 360).

A new test for the DUP of Sinn Fein's "readiness" to be a worthy democratic party with which to share power would be the requirement that Sinn Fein actively support the newly reformed Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). This was a very contentious issue for Sinn Fein, since the police service, and especially its Special Branch, had been its mortal enemy for decades. Paisley's rhetorical move was to make enmity of the PSNI constitutive of the "old" Sinn Fein with which he would *never* share power, whereas endorsement of the PSNI was constitutive of the "new and transformed" Sinn Fein with which he *would* share power.

In his biography of Paisley, Moloney obtained (and included as an appendix) the notes of a DUP dissident at a private meeting of the party in Lurgan in late October 2006. The meeting was called to discuss and seek support for the St. Andrews Agreement. The note taker was opposed to the agreement. It was by all indications a fractious meeting, with Paisley not easily getting his own way. But in the middle of the meeting came his rhetorical transformation of the unacceptable Sinn Fein/IRA into the acceptable one. The relevant sections of the notes read:

> Dr. P. again stated that SF [Sinn Fein] would have to specifically mention PSNI in pledge and this would bring SF Republicanism to an end because SF was built on opposition to the police. . . . Dr. P.—when IRA accepts the PSNI pledge *the IRA will cease to exist, therefore he will not be in Gov. with IRA*. The IRA that he will be going into gov. with will be stripped of its power. Now we could see our way through the Red Sea with this pledge. (Moloney 2008, 530; emphasis added)

By being the person to call for such a pledge to be taken, Paisley was further implying that he, in effect, would be the IRA's nemesis.

These rhetorical reconstructions of position partly assuaged Paisley's followers—but only partly. Many of his shocked supporters could in fact read between the lines and did not judge what they found to be plausible. The fact that he had to step down as moderator of his own church indicates that. Not long after that, he also resigned from his political position, and his first ministerial position passed on to his able and strategic (but no bosom intimate) deputy, Peter Robinson, who, at the time of this writing, shares power with Martin McGuinness.

Kinds of self-justification depend on the kinds of moral order that constitute a person's identity. The moral order determines the borders between the plausibility of implausibility of the self-justification. In Paisley's case, that moral order derives from an embattled, fringe Calvinistic church in which self-righteousness melds with pride in smiting enemies. But, as we have seen, when new and unanticipated opportunities offer the chance of long desired power and a chance to redefine the enemy, it is the dynamics of self-righteousness that must change. It is the public face of the person and the organization that needs to be reconfigured. If that happens successfully, then the subjective quality of private self-righteousness should not suffer any undue destabilization.

Ian Paisley is a man who lives under the domination of the word, especially the biblical word, and is also a charismatic deployer of the word as a tool of world-making and domination. So long as he feels a harmony between them, then, according to his story line, his change of position can be interpreted as a seamless coming to fruition of his long-standing desires—even if, to others, including his followers, it seems like a rupture.

So, was Paisley's conversion to power-sharing and compromise a Damascene change of identity? Or, more prosaically, was it a case of an old and ailing politician coming in from the cold and grabbing his last best opportunity for real power and acceptance by those same elites whom he had spent his life abusing? On the balance of evidence available to date, the latter seems the more reasonable conclusion. If we return to the question of Paisley's traits, we could then conclude that we are looking at a case of "tactical opportunism" rather than "strategic opportunism."

For nearly half a century, Paisley's utterly predictable response to changes that could have met the needs of the minority community in Northern

Ireland was an emphatic no. The invariance of this behavior rules it out as evidence of strategic thinking. With the very many twists and turns of politics and power in this political arena over that half-century and more, no one could have had such a strategic long-range vision as to predict what players would ultimately take power. Many on all sides did change their positions, however, and it was the pattern of their changes that eventually opened up the set of possibilities that led to stable constitutional politics. They also opened up the set of possibilities that Paisley's tactical adroitness took advantage of, once he had cleared the Ulster Unionists from the field by opposing them for what he himself would subsequently validate.

The lesson for positioning theory is this: Pay as much attention to the range of choices actually confronting players, and to the ways in which those choices are created and constrained, as one does to the nature of the players in the field.

One hundred days after the dramatic appearance of the Chuckle Brothers, an opinion poll showed that, of Democratic Unionist Party voters, 58 percent now backed the deal and 48 percent felt that Martin McGuinness was doing a good job, and of Sinn Fein voters, 54 percent thought Ian Paisley was doing a good job (Moloney 2008, 522). It is striking how quickly the unthinkable becomes normalized. Nonetheless, we will need new stories from both the DUP and Sinn Fein to understand why it had to take so long and cost so much in human life, suffering, and lost opportunity. Within the dance of power, the nuanced consistency of the nay-saying outsider can seem to come at a very high price, particularly to those displaced political players who actually built the dance hall where he came to lead the ball.

NOTES

1. Even the meaning of this image has been "spun" by Paisley. Speaking to Ian Jack (2008, 55) of the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, he had this to say of that iconic photo: "And that Chuckle Brothers photograph, you know, was never taken. That was two separate photographs. . . . That picture was taken when the prime minister [Tony Blair] was here and the prime minister was sitting beside me and I said to the PM, 'I don't know why so many people don't like me—because I'm a very likable person.' D'ye know. . . . And we laughed. And McGuinness was in another part of the room and he laughed. And they [the newspapers] put those two together." Jack comments, however, that there were many other such photographs and that Paisley "has a selective memory of the past, of which in his case there is so much."

2. "Positioning theory focuses on bringing to light the normative frames within which people actually carry on their lives, thinking, feeling, acting, and perceiving—against standards of correctness. In short, positioning theory looks at what a person 'may do and may not do'" (Harré et al. 2009, 9).

3. By "identity," here is meant the ways in which persons feel and think of themselves as being essentially who and what they are.

4. This is the college that awarded Ian Paisley his honorary doctorate. Paisley gained a number of "qualifications" from American postal colleges that involved no tuition. "In 1966 Bob Jones University, an educationally respectable, though thoroughly fundamentalist institution in Greenville, South Carolina, gave Paisley an honorary degree in recognition of his services to fundamentalism. It is this qualification that entitles him to be styled 'Doctor'" (Bruce 2007, 145).

5. A black humor was never far away in all this. The author remembers seeing a banner on a Belfast building one Christmas in the mid-1990s. It read, "Ulster says No-el"!

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10

Mutual Radicalization

Bush, Ahmadinejad, and the "Universal" Cycle of Out-group Threat/In-group Cohesion

Margarita Konaev and Fathali M. Moghaddam

> Nothing remains more vividly in my mind, looking back on my years in No. 10 [Downing Street, the prime minister's residence], than the eleven weeks in the spring of 1982 when Britain fought and won the Falklands war. . . . The significance of the Falklands War was enormous, both for Britain's self confidence and for our standing in the world. (Thatcher 1993, 173)

This is how Margaret Thatcher, the British prime minister from 1979 to 1990, recalled the Falklands War in her autobiography. The Conservative Party, of which Thatcher was the leader, had been trailing in the polls in the run-up to the general elections of 1982. But the apparently unexpected invasion of the Falkland Islands, eight thousand miles away in the South Atlantic, by the Argentine military suddenly rallied the British public behind the aggressive leadership of the prime minister. Thatcher (1993, 264), noted: "It is no exaggeration to say that the outcome of the Falklands War transformed the British political scene. . . . I could feel the impact of the victory wherever I went."

What political pundits called the "Falklands factor" is an example of a process that is repeated throughout the ages and across many different societies. The basic stages in this process are well known and consist of, first, recognition of an external threat, real or imagined, by in-group members, which results in increased in-group cohesion, increased bias against the out-group, and increased support for the in-group leader, as well as a more aggressive style of in-group leadership.

Coser (1956) argued that conflict with out-groups increases in-group cohesion, while Stein (1976) suggested that an external threat can cause the in-group to temporarily overcome its differences and unite against the perceived common threat. Furthermore, Coser (1956) emphasized "threat as a necessary condition in order for external conflict to increase internal cohesion."

Experimental research has, for the most part, explored the association between perceived threat from an out-group, increased in-group cohesion, and increased bias against the out-group (see Huddy 2003, 539–42; Duckitt 2003, 585–86). Further studies have showed that in the face of a threat, people felt more attracted to a group and more powerful together than alone and that an increase in the level of group cohesiveness led to members feeling less threatened (e.g., Burlingham and Freud 1942; Arsenian 1943; Shils and Janowitz 1948; Bernert and Ikle 1952; Torrance 1954; Pepitone and Reichling 1955; Stotland 1959; Cohen 1959). Field studies have given some attention to the increased support enjoyed by in-group leadership as a result of increased external threat (e.g., Sherif 1966). A well-documented example of this phenomenon was the increased support among Americans for President George W. Bush immediately following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks (Huddy, Khatib, and Capelos 2002).

More attention, however, needs to be given to how leaders channel in-group energies and displace aggression onto an external target. Because of its attention to the subtleties of social processes that take place over long time periods, positioning theory is uniquely able to explore this question and complement the contributions of experimental research, which tend to focus on relatively short time periods (such as in a laboratory experiment lasting an hour).

This chapter focuses on the process of recognition, framing, and positioning of an external threat, real or imagined, through the specific cases of President Bush and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, each concerned to secure cohesion, conformity, and obedience within their respective in-groups. The following analysis will explore three story lines integral to how Bush and Ahmadinejad positioned themselves and the other:

- *Story line 1:* The external enemy is real and highly dangerous.
- *Story line 2:* We are freedom-loving and open, but our enemy hates freedom and relies on violence.
- *Story line 3:* I am a man of the people and speak for the people; my opponent (the president of Iran/USA) does not.

In terms of communications, while the two leaders repeatedly shunned each other in international public functions and gatherings, both Ahmadinejad and

Bush addressed each other indirectly by means of public political discourse on numerous occasions. The underlying aim of the leadership within this process of positioning is to secure and maximize support from three audiences: the in-group public, the international community, and the out-group public.

MUTUAL RADICALIZATION

In the case of presidents Bush and Ahmadinejad, the political interactions between the conflicting parties can be described as a process of *mutual radicalization*, whereby a radical step taken by the leader of one group results in reinforcing and strengthening the radicalization tendencies on the out-group, which in turn, puts further pressures on the out-group leader to take a more radical next step. As a consequence, the leaders of the two groups can find themselves in lockstep, moving in opposite directions, with each radical move by either of the leaders being met by an increasingly radical move by the counterpart.

This process is shaped in large part by opportunistic group leaders who recognize that by identifying an external enemy and portraying this enemy as a serious danger to the in-group, their own leadership position is strengthened. However, leaders who take this path of targeting external enemies as a way of gaining in-group support face the danger of having to take ever more radical positions or else risking a drop in support among in-group members. Thus, the process of mutual radicalization is primarily a political process, motivated chiefly by political interest of group leaders to achieve, maintain, and extend their power base.

This chapter stresses the interdependence of radicalized leadership in Iran and in the United States, while focusing on the collaborative construction and mutual positioning of the in-group and out-group by radicalized leadership.

The process of mutual radicalization as it developed within the political exchange, written and spoken, between President George W. Bush and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is best analyzed through the positioning-theory lance, which "involves a shift of focus, from a study of conflict themselves, towards the flow of talking and writing within which the hostile actions of the conflict is usually set" (Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee 2008, 4). The American and Iranian presidents found in each other a partner with which to engage in a process of mutual radicalization through the use of political rhetoric. Bush and Ahmadinejad attempted to position themselves as peace-loving and tolerant individuals who were heading nations committed to international law and peace. They positioned the other nation as a warmongering enemy whose goals were to offset the equilibrium of international politics, spread fear and terror, and hinder real progress and development.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

This present study primarily covers the overlapping period of the presidencies of George W. Bush and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, from 2005 to

2008. The broader historical context of the study is the previous half-century of Iran–U.S. relations. A CIA-engineered coup against the only democratically elected government in the history of Iran resulted in deep distrust of the United States among many Iranians, but also brought in a pro-American dictatorship from 1953 to 1978. Mohammad Reza Shah (*R*. 1941–1979) was seen as an American puppet, and the 1978 Iranian revolution took on a strongly anti-American flavor. A complex set of political, economic, and cultural factors, together with what in hindsight could be considered a series of poor political and strategic choices in U.S. foreign policy (such as support for Islamic fundamentalists in the fight against communism; see Moghaddam 2006), resulted in Islamic extremists coming to power in Iran. The identity of the Iranian revolution took shape in fanatical opposition to the United States, which was branded as the "Great Satan." During the period 1978–2000, there was little variation in the degree of hostility between the United States and Iran, although in the 1990s there was a period of relative thaw. The already tenuous political relationship between the two countries then became further radicalized during the presidencies of Bush and Ahmadinejad.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, profoundly changed the international political arena and marked the start of a new era in American foreign policy. Conflict resolution through diplomatic tools and negotiations were rendered useless in the fight against global terrorism. Political debate around the War on Terror was constructed to purvey a very clear dynamic of "us" and "them." In light of this compelling national security emergency, opposition groups within the United States and moderates remained silent. The American nation rallied around the flag and showed its strong support for the President. ABC News and *Washington Post* polls reported a presidential approval rate of more than 80 percent in September 2001, as well as extremely supportive polls during the rest of the year and through most of 2002, dropping only slightly once the debate over the American invasion of Iraq began to take center stage (see Jeffery 2009). Such wide domestic support presented an opportunity for President Bush to adopt a rather aggressive political and military foreign policy not only to counter the international terrorism threat but also to promote in-group cohesion and secure his dominant leadership position and leverage.

With the United States engaged in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, in June 2005 Iran elected President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a relatively unknown former hard-line militia member, who won the a runoff against the "reformist" Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani. Ahmadinejad ran on a populist platform, promising to improve the economic standing of ordinary people. The coming to power of Ahmadinejad was not necessarily the result of the radicalization of the Iranian nation as a whole, but rather a widespread discontent with the economic inequality and corruption, as well as "a rejection of the Rafsanjani and [former president Mohammad] Khatami years, when these problems presumably emerged" (Gasiorowski 2005). It is also vital to note that, inside Iran's theocratic hierarchy, it is Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who exercises ultimate authority, rather than the president.

Ahmadinejad soon grew infamous for his anti-American and anti-Semitic statements and utter refusal to meet the demands of Western nations to stop Iran's nuclear power development program. Ahmadinejad, who closely associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps in his youth, came to be viewed as a strongman of the Middle East on the one hand, and a political pariah within the international community on the other. The absolute, categorical rhetoric that dominated political relations at the height of the War on Terror, positioned Ahmadinejad in opposition to President Bush, creating a dynamic of two archenemies with little room for dialogue or dissent. As one observer pointed out, "In this land of competing currents, the U.S. has focused on one: Iran as an expansionist, would-be nuclear power," adding that "the radical Bush presidency produced a radical Iranian response" (Cohen 2009).

THREE STORY LINES

We now turn to the three story lines that capture the various aspects of how President Bush and President Ahmadinejad mutually influenced each other's political discourse and, to an extent, policy choices. The first story line focuses on the framing of the political context as a confrontation between two opposing entities and the recognition and positioning of the other party as an external force of evil. The second story line details how Bush and Ahmadinejad positioned themselves and their respective nations as freedom-loving and open societies, but each other as oppressive leaders in charge of violent regimes. The third story line elaborates how Bush and Ahmadinejad positioned themselves as popular leaders widely supported by their respective constituencies, denied the popularity of the other, and attempted to communicate directly with the public on the other side. The three story lines will then be linked in the following section through a discussion of the nuclear issue, particularly Bush's positioning of Iran as being outside of the international community and Ahmadinejad's assertion of his nation's right to "scientific research and advancement." The political process of mutual radicalization is threaded throughout the three story lines as the framework for the escalating radicalization of the political discourse and rhetoric used by the aggressive leadership.

Story Line 1: The External Enemy Is Real and Highly Dangerous

Both Bush and Ahmadinejad focused on an external enemy (Iran and America, respectively) that they depicted as a real danger to their respective citizenry and the world community as a whole. Following 9/11, the political atmosphere of utter shock was quickly translated in America to public outrage and demands for revenge from right-wing factions. Political factions led by George W. Bush took advantage of this political context and adopted the rhetoric of national security, highlighting "a threat to the American way of life" in order to be able to pursue a political and military agenda without much opposition. Iran was targeted by the U.S. administration as a dangerous and radical state, whose support of the worldwide terrorist network gained it a spot on Bush's infamous "Axis of Evil," a term coined in the 2002 State of the Union Address. The President claimed that "Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom. . . . States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world" (Bush 2002). Bush positioned the in-group in the circle of the "free, peaceful and democratic nations," and Iran and its leadership as an "oppressive, terrorist regime threatening stability and world peace."

In his 2005 State of the Union Address, Bush said that the "responsibility to future generations is to leave them an America that is safe from danger, and protected by peace" (Bush 2005). With the United States involved in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, national security suppressed all other concerns, as the administration committed itself to confront the enemy abroad in full force. Bush had promised, "We will pass along to our children all the freedoms we enjoy—and chief among them is freedom from fear" (Bush 2002). The President framed the political reality of American military engagements abroad as a means of defense against an outside threat to American security: The external threat endangers not only the lives of Americans but also their freedom, democratic institutions, and the American way of life. This idea was reiterated to the American public in Bush's State of the Union Address in 2007, in which he defined America's greatest challenge in contemporary world politics in rather uncompromising terms: "This war is more than a clash of arms. It is a decisive ideological struggle, and the security of our nation is in the balance" (Bush 2007).

The framing of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in terms of an "ideological struggle" not only further escalated the hostilities between the conflicting parties but also rendered the conflict intractable. While conflict over political positions, economic grievances, and even social, cultural, and religious differences could potentially be solved through diplomatic efforts and peaceful means, compromise in an ideological struggle seems less possible. Furthermore, by identifying an outside threat to American national security, President Bush strengthened in-group cohesiveness and tightened his own grip on power, in the short term at least.

In his famously inflammatory speeches, Ahmadinejad positioned the United States both as a threat to Iranian national security and political interests and as a destabilizing force in Middle Eastern affairs with a destructive influence throughout the world. In his interview with Mike Wallace of CBS's *60 Minutes* in August 2006, Ahmadinejad called the United States the "great oppressor." When Wallace inquired about a reported unit within the Revolutionary Guard of militants trained for suicide bombing missions against American and British targets in the event of an armed attack by the United States on Iran, Ahmadinejad responded by saying, "So, are you expecting the Americans to threaten us and we sit idly by and watch them with our hands . . . tied?" (CBS News 2006). In an interview with Brian Williams from *NBC Nightly News*, Ahmadinejad identified the United States as an enemy, positioning the Bush administration in complete contrast to his own: "They speak of war so easily, as if it's on their daily agenda. We never speak of war." (Johnson and Williams 2006).

The use of categorical language, the construction of "us" versus "them," and the presence of nothing but war in between demonstrates the radicalization of political debate between the leaders, as part of the mutual-radicalization process playing itself out through political expression. The above extracts from Bush's and Ahmadinejad's speeches and interviews help demonstrate the use of the first story line, focused on a dangerous external enemy, to secure in-group cohesion and further expand the chasm between the opposing sides.

Story Line 2: We Are Freedom-Loving and Open, but Our Enemy Hates Freedom and Relies on Violence

Shortly after his election, Ahmadinejad said, "Without a doubt, the [Iranian] government emerging from the will of the people will be a government of affection and moderation—a government of friendship, a government of tolerance" (Esfandiari 2006). Yet, any hope of moderation soon faded when Ahmadinejad began directly calling for the annihilation of Israel and speaking of the upcoming end of "American imperial rule." This pretence of moderation became a regular façade as Ahmadinejad set about positioning himself as an "academic" who embarked on a political career simply to promote Iran's economic and political interest. He portrayed himself as a simple man who was plucked from the obscurity of school life to face the might of an American monolith (Johnson and Williams 2006).

After Iran ignored the April 30, 2006, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) deadline and United Nations warnings on refining uranium, President Ahmadinejad sent an 18-page letter to President Bush via the Swiss embassy, proposing to discuss their differences. According to the *New York Times*: "The letter was framed entirely in religious terms but also laid out a populist manifesto of anti-Americanism, offering illustrations of what has won the Iranian a following among many ordinary people throughout the Middle East" (Slackman, 2006). Furthermore, in an effort to expand the in-group Ahmadinejad presumes to lead, he "presented himself as the defender not only of Muslims but of all oppressed people, including those in Africa and Latin America" (2006). This description is in line with Ahmadinejad's remark in the *60 Minutes* interview, where he asserted: "We are opposed to oppression. . . . We support whoever is victimized and oppressed even the oppressed people of the U.S." (CBS News 2006).

While the letter itself attracted extensive international media attention, President Bush's response was rather reserved. According to the *New York Times*, President Bush said the letter failed to address the nuclear issue and that his administration was trying to find a diplomatic solution to the Iran standoff. He asserted that Great Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Russia, and China had all agreed that the Iranians should not have a nuclear weapon or the capacity to make one. "There is a universal agreement toward that goal, and the letter didn't address that question" (Hauser 2006). Bush's response represents an attempt to prevent Ahmadinejad from framing the terms of the debate. Furthermore, by mentioning the "universal" consensus against Iran's nuclear ambitions and positioning the United States at the center of the multinational coalition set to prevent such developments, Bush expanded the reach of the in-group and positioned Iran and Ahmadinejad outside of the international community.

This particular political episode exemplifies Bush's effort to solidify the in-group, both domestically and internationally, by recognizing Iran and Ahmadinejad as the dangerous out-group. With respect to the domestic in-group, Bush positioned himself as a representative of an administration committed to the diplomatic resolution of the dispute over Iran's nuclear program and attempted to solidify his support base by targeting an outsider who propagates violence. In the context of an international in-group, Bush named a coalition of nations united against the outside threat, isolating Iran in opposition to this coalition. Furthermore, the political context of the international community growing impatient with Iran's disregard of IAEA regulations escalated the process of mutual radicalization. Bush made use of this political context to position himself as the leader responsible for keeping Iran's nuclear ambitions under control. He framed the political context in absolute terms, portraying a political reality where negotiations and compromise on the Iranian nuclear issue were out of question.

Another useful example of political discourse taking a radical turn was President Ahmadinejad's speech at Columbia University on September 24, 2007. This was a highly controversial event that ignited demonstrations in support of free speech and normalization of political ties with Iran, as well as in opposition to Iran's potentially dangerous nuclear program and Ahmadinejad's anti-Semitism and fanatical radicalism. In one of the more controversial segments of his address, Ahmadinejad set up to question why there has been no further research done to dispute the current findings supporting the occurrence of the Holocaust. He used self-categorization to identify himself as an "academic" and positioned himself as an inquiring individual who simply wanted the right questions to be asked so that "the truth" could surface: "Why should an academic myself face insults when asking questions like this? Is this what you call freedom and upholding the freedom of thought?" (Ahmadinejad 2007). Ahmadinejad tried to present "the insults" he was facing for raising questions about the Holocaust as being directly related to his "identity as an academic" and his positioning of himself as a free thinker, an "inquiring mind in search of truth."

When asked about Ahmadinejad's speech at Columbia University, President Bush spoke to the "greatness" of America, positioning himself and the United States as being so confident in the American way that even the most evil of individuals and views were allowed to be voiced under the right to free speech. Speaking of Ahmadinejad, Bush told Fox News, "He's the head of a state sponsor of terror, and yet, an institution in our country gives him the chance to express his point of view, which really speaks to the freedoms of the country." Bush thus positions Ahmadinejad and the United States in direct opposition to one another—a leader with strong ties to terrorism versus a free, great country always prepared to engage in dialogue. Bush also voiced his concern that "Ahmadinejad uses these platforms to advance his agenda, which I suspect in this case . . . [that he] doesn't want America to know his true intentions" (Fox News 2007). In the place of "academia," truth, and willingness to engage in dialogue, Bush positions Ahmadinejad as a man who manipulates and lies in order to promote his clandestine anti-American agenda.

President Ahmadinejad, conversely, identifies his own country as a great nation and positions Iran as a member of the international community of nations who seek peace and justice. This great nation, he says, approaches international political discourse with tolerance, prepared for dialogue and interested in resolving grievances by peaceful means and diplomacy. "Here's a great nation. A nation which has culture, beliefs and message to the world. Dialogue with threatening language will not resolve the problem." He repeatedly asserts: "We are a peaceful, loving nation. We love all nations" (MacLeod 2006). Furthermore, he illustrates the grandeur of Iran by employing universally renowned principles such as freedom and equality. "Freedoms in Iran are genuine, true freedoms. Iranian people are free. Women in Iran enjoy the highest levels of freedom" (Ahmadinejad 2007). Through this political expression, Ahmadinejad assigns to Iran, and by implication himself, numerous positive qualities that strengthen the position of Iran, and its leader, on the world stage. These positive qualities are said to stand in direct opposition to the enemy of Iran, who disrespects the principles of international civility and peace.

In his remarks about the nuclear weapons issue, Ahmadinejad reflects: "We think that Mr. Bush's team and the parties that support him want to monopolize energy resources in the world. Because once they have that, they can impose their opinions, points of view, policies on other nations and, of course, line their own pockets." Ahmadinejad further asserts, that "the problem that President Bush has is, in his mind, he wants to solve everything with bombs. The time of the bomb is in the past. It's behind us. Today is the era of thoughts, dialogue and cultural exchanges" (CBS News 2006). In these remarks, Ahmadinejad positions Bush as a violent leader whose style of governance and leadership is not in line with the current, more peaceful political trends in international relations. He on the one hand positions Bush outside of the international community, which supports peaceful and diplomatic political exchanges, and on the other hand asserts his own position as part of this international in-group.

Throughout this story line, Ahmadinejad and Bush are focused on recognizing and characterizing themselves as champions of freedom, while positioning the other as an agitator who propagates violence. Winnifred Louis (2008, 22) argues that "the salience of different self-categorizations is thought to be highly consequential for interactions," and hence, this exercise of positioning is intrinsic to the political process of mutual radicalization.

Story Line 3: I Am a Man of the People and I Speak for the People—You Do Not

In the previously mentioned interview on *NBC Nightly News*, Ahmadinejad asked, "Why is the U.S. government so against our people?" (Johnson and Williams 2006). Ahmadinejad's use of the term "our people" is particularly interesting in light of the growing Iranian public discontent with his domestic and foreign policies (this discontent became even more clear in Iran's 2009 presidential elections, the so-called stolen elections, which resulted in Ahmadinejad being reelected "with a huge majority" amid considerable controversy). As Richard Dalton (2008) of Chatham House argues, "President Ahmadinejad's populism has failed to convert skeptics into supporters of his faction or of the conservative cause as a whole" (p. 5).

The schism in the conservative camp and Ahmadinejad's declining popularity found expression in the March 14, 2008, parliamentary elections in Iran, which brought about a substantial electoral gain to the "third-way" pragmatic conservatives who are critical of Ahmadinejad's economic policies and his provocations of the West. With this in mind, it can be argued that Ahmadinejad uses the term "our people" to position himself in the midst of the Iranian in-group and thereby to both strengthen the link between his leadership and the Iranian nation and secure his standing as a popular leader in the eyes of the international community.

While engaging in the mutual radicalization process, the leadership of one group attempts to deliver a message to the group on the other side of the political debate. President Bush and President Ahmadinejad often took the opportunity in their most widely publicized speeches to address each other's people. This tactic was used to reiterate that they were not at war with the people but rather with the aggressive government on the other side, and to encourage the people to pursue regime change from within. As they attempted to increase domestic support for themselves in their respective countries, Bush and Ahmadinejad actively tried to undermine each other's legitimacy in the eyes of the Iranian and American people, respectively.

In the 2005 State of the Union Address, after condemning the Iranian regime for supporting terrorism and denying the Iranian people even basic human and civil rights, Bush spoke directly to the Iranian people, "And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you" (Bush 2005). In his State of the Union Address in 2006, Bush stated: "The Iranian government is defying the world with its nuclear ambitions, and the nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons. America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats." Once again, the Iranian regime was positioned as a threat to worldwide security and an agent of violence and terror. However, in his address to the Iranian people, Bush employed a completely different tone, saying, "America respects you, and we respect your country. We respect your right to choose your own future and win your own freedom. And our nation hopes one day to be the closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran" (Bush 2006).

Using similar positioning strategies, in his letter to President Bush, Ahmadinejad (2006) bitterly condemned the U.S. support of Israel and its general political and military policies in the Middle East:

> As you are well aware, I live amongst the people and am in constant contact with them—many people from around the Middle East manage to contact me as well. They do not have faith in these dubious policies either. There is evidence that the people of the region are becoming increasingly angry with such policies.

Ahmadinejad often positions himself as a populist, a man of the people, speaking not only for all Iranians but also for many other Middle Easterners who want to express their deep frustration with the American policies. His use of "as you are well aware" is a conscious effort to frame his position as a popular leader in terms of a well-known fact, to legitimize his standing both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, Ahmadinejad positions the political context of growing animosity towards the United States in the Middle East both as evidence of his own public approval and as a threat to America's superpower status in the world.

In January 2007, in an interview with *Time*, Ahmadinejad spoke of the damage the American regime has caused not only to international politics but to its own people.

> The behavior of the American government has severely damaged the position of the United States in the world. . . . When the U.S. name is mentioned, usually people are reminded of war, aggression and bloodshed, and that's not a good thing. . . . The American people are paying for something they don't believe in. I'm sure if the American people learn what their tax money is converted to, in Iraq and in Palestine, they will never consent. (MacLeod 2006)

In this excerpt, Ahmadinejad positions Bush's administration outside of the international community, as an enemy of other nations. Yet, much like Bush, Ahmadinejad attempts to reach out to the American people, to "enlighten" them about the horrid mistakes of their leadership and encourage them to take a stand against it.

This story line, focused on the leaders' attempts to demonstrate their own popularity among their respective citizenry and to deny each others' domestic and international stranding and appeal, contributes to the process of mutual radicalization.

STORY LINES MEET: THE NUCLEAR ISSUE

An unstable political context, especially one that becomes subject to manipulation by the conflicting parties, is fertile ground for a political discourse characterized by mutual radicalization. Within this context, Ahmadinejad's and Bush's positions are interdependent, as the two seem to nurture extremism in one another.

As Louis (2008, 28) suggests, "In positioning theory, conflict protagonists are thought to work actively to choose story lines in order to position themselves to access useful repertoires of action, and position opponents to cut them off." Ahmadinejad's story line relates that some of the Western countries are selfish powers set to prevent Iran from conducting nuclear research and to keep the Middle East generally lagging behind economically and technologically due to their imperialistic aspirations. Ahmadinejad even goes as far as to argue that Western countries "are so rude that if we allow them, they will tell us to shut down all our universities, whereas research has no restrictions or red lines" (Sciolino 2006).

Louis (2008, 28) proceeds to argue that "in order to privilege the desired story line, disputants may define the conflict differently, implicating different actors and goals." Ahmadinejad frames the nuclear issue in terms of technology, research, and progress, all with surely peaceful intentions in mind. Bush, meanwhile, positions Iran as an aggressive power with clear links to terrorism, whose nuclear program is a threat to democracy, freedom, and world peace, as reiterated in his 2006 State of the Union address: "The Iranian government is defying the world with its nuclear ambitions, and the nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons. America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats."

The nuclear debate includes themes from the three story lines, as Ahmadinejad and Bush refer back to the danger the opposing nation poses to international security; the violent nature of the opponent, as opposed to the peaceful and freedom-loving qualities each assigns to his own constituency and culture; and the domestic and worldwide approval each of the leaders allegedly enjoys with respect to his policies.

LOOKING AHEAD

In light of the administration change in Washington, with Democrats becoming the dominant political party, and of the bloody turmoil that followed the June 2009 presidential elections in Iran, it is vital to reassess the various shifts in the political dynamics between the two countries.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were a watershed event in both domestic American and international politics, and 9/11 continues to have profound implications on the political relations between the United States and the Muslim world as a whole, and U.S.–Iranian relations in particular. However, the election of President Barack Obama has brought about the possibility for a change in Iran–U.S. relations.

On January 26, 2009, Obama spoke to the Al-Arabiya News Channel about a variety of issues, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace process, Iran's nuclear program, and the United States' commitment to improving its relations with the Arab world. Obama certainly recognizes the destabilizing influence of the Iranian leadership on Middle Eastern affairs. Yet, both in terms of tone and rhetoric, there is a gradual shift away from the bellicose rhetoric and aggressive political discourse that defined the relationship between President Bush and President Ahmadinejad. Obama asserts that

> Iran has acted in ways that's not conducive to peace and prosperity in the region: their threats against Israel; their pursuit of a nuclear weapon which could potentially set off an arms race in the region that would make everybody less safe; their support of terrorist organizations in the past—none of these things have been helpful. (Hutton 2009)

Thus, even when criticizing Iran's behavior, there is an evident difference between Bush's and Obama's choice of terminology when describing Iran's actions toward the positive rhetoric of progress, development, and peace by using words such as "helpful" and "conducive," rather than absolute depictions of Iran as an "evil" regime and a terrorist state. Furthermore, President Obama remains committed to his inaugural statement that, "if countries like Iran are willing to unclench their fist, they will find an extended hand from us" (Hutton 2009).

Ahmadinejad was sworn in to begin his second presidential term in August 2009. However, the political crisis in Iran continues, as reflected by violently repressed street protests and populist rallies, as well as growing schisms among the clerical elite. Despite the support of the Revolutionary Guards and Supreme Leader Khamenei, Ahmadinejad now has a weaker grip on power. He has failed to deliver on his promises of economic progress, and there is evidence that his anti-American rhetoric does not enjoy widespread support, although it does rally the core fanatical groups. A survey conducted by Terror Free Tomorrow in February 2008 found that

> 76 percent of Iranians back normal relations and trade with the United States, as they did in June. 71 percent also favor Iran working with the United States to help resolve the Iraq war, while more than 60 percent back unconditional negotiations with the U.S. (Terror Free Tomorrow 2008)

Kelly Campbell (2008) of the United States Institute of Peace suggests that any efforts at normalizing political relations between Iran and the United States will require a long-term commitment on behalf of both parties. The American leadership change could serve as a "potential catalyst for a shift in bilateral relations," Campbell says, and could possibly put a halt to the process of mutual radicalization, which stems from the interdependence of escalatory and aggressive political rhetoric.

If as a result of a change in leadership, one party grows disinclined to engage in continued radicalization and refrains from becoming further entangled in this aggressive political process, the other party faces the danger of losing legitimacy and domestic support when responding with a hostile attitude. Mutual radicalization works on the premise that, by channeling negative energies onto external "enemies," aggressive leadership will be able to solidify internal support and gain international leverage. But aggressive leadership is placed in a precarious position when the external "enemies" do not play their expected hostile role.

Obama has refrained from playing the role of "Great Satan," and Ahmadinejad has become weaker both nationally and internationally because of the questionable way in which he was (supposedly) reelected. These changes have, temporarily at least, brought to a halt the dangerous process of mutual radicalization engaged in during 2005–2008 by the presidents of the United States and Iran.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the symbiotic relationship between the leadership in Washington and Tehran. We suggested that, in the case of a sudden and severe change in the global political system, a process of mutual radicalization is likely to develop when opportunistic leaders on both sides frame the political context in terms of an impending external threat. This pattern is exacerbated by relentless escalation of political aggression both in response to and in provocation of the other actor.

Using three story lines:

1. the external enemy is real and highly dangerous,
2. we are freedom-loving and open, but our enemy hates freedom and relies on violence, and
3. I am a man of the people and I speak for the people, but the other leader does not,

we analyzed the political process of mutual radicalization within the framework of positioning theory and presented examples of how an aggressive leadership positions itself and the opposition in relation to its own in-group, the out-group, and the international community. The leadership's exercise of positioning is largely aimed at securing in-group cohesion and international approval through the recognition of an outside threat and the concentration of aggression toward the out-group that constitutes the latter threat. The study concluded with the observation that the rise of a new leadership might create an opening for a change in the dynamics of mutual radicalization between the two conflicting parties, but only if the new leadership refuses to adopt the pattern of radicalization of the political debate.

As a final point, there are conditions in which external threat will not result in internal cohesion and the other consequences we have explored in this chapter. For example, if the external threat is overpowering, the result could well be the fragmentation and annihilation of the in-group. There are numerous historical examples of aggressive leaders focusing in-group attention on a powerful external threat, only to find that the external threat is too powerful and the in-group is not able to withstand the pressure exerted by the out-group. Thus, there are clear limits to the "universal" tenet that external threat leads to internal cohesion.

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11

Political Positioning in Asymmetric Intergroup Conflicts

Three Cases from War-torn Mindanao

Cristina Jayme Montiel, Judith M. de Guzman, Charlie M. Inzon, and Brenda S. Batistiana

On the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, one of the world's oldest conflicts is being waged. This three-hundred-year-old intergroup discord is, today, commonly referred to as the "Muslim–Christian Mindanao conflict," but it actually involves three groups of people: the Muslims, the Christians, and the Lumad or indigenous peoples.

Considered to be a land of promise due to its vast land, water, forest, and mineral resources, Mindanao is home to approximately 18 million people and comprises around 24 percent of the total population of the Philippines (National Statistics Office 2005). Of the Mindanao population, 75 percent are Christians, 20 percent Muslims, and 5 percent Lumads (Kamlian 1999); this translates to approximately 13.5 million Christians, 3.6 million Muslims, and 900,000 indigenous people. The literacy rate for Mindanao is 86 percent, which is lower than literacy levels in the two other major island groupings of the Philippines, Luzon (95 percent) and Visayas (92 percent) (National Statistics Office 2005). In terms of poverty, 6 of the 10 poorest provinces in the Philippines are located in Mindanao (National Statistical Coordination Board 2008). Similarly, 7 of the 10 least developed provinces in the Philippines are also located in Mindanao (Human Development Network 2005). More striking perhaps is the observation that out of the remaining five provinces where Muslims continue to be the majority, three of these rank among the poorest provinces, while all five provinces are considered to be among those that have the lowest levels of human development in the Philippines.

In terms of majority–minority relations, we regard Christians as the majority group and Muslims and Lumads as minority groups. In general, the Christians in Mindanao represent migrant settlers who came from the northern and central parts of the Philippines. Through resettlement programs sponsored by the U.S. colonial government and the newly independent Philippine state, Christian migrant settlers came to Mindanao, starting in 1913, and have since become the majority in this region. On the other hand, the Muslims represent the people who resisted Spanish and American colonial rules even as these foreign powers controlled other northern and central parts of the Philippine archipelago. Lumads are comprised of different mountain tribes in the Mindanao region. Of the three subgroups, Lumads are the least politicized and most fragmented. But it is in Lumad territories that Mindanao's rich mineral deposits are located.

One of the more dominant story lines about the Mindanao conflict is that it is a conflict about land. Although various researchers make this claim, these studies focus on the structural causes of land conflict, such as, among others, the Muslims' claim for a *Bangsa Moro* (Moro state) independent of the Philippine state (Kamlian 1999), ineffective land distribution programs (Gutierrez and Borras 2004), and competing land claims (Vidal 2004).

As an added dimension to past research, our investigation looks at the social-psychological fabric of the land contestations that are embedded in war-torn Mindanao. We examine public conversations about land as peoples in Mindanao engage in heated struggles over land. To do this, we use the lens of positioning theory—a theory with the power to nuance conversations and detect patterns of relations embedded in words.

This chapter looks at the nature of the use of words to position one's own group and the other group in a conflicted place. We describe positioning that is not only conflictual but also intergroup, political, and asymmetric. We see conversational positioning as intergroup rather than interpersonal, because the words that are used symbolize utterances of one group as they relate, in antagonism, toward the other group (Louis 2008). In intergroup positioning studies, the goal of the researcher is to detect how groups position themselves in relation to other groups, as such groups dynamically construct their collective story line. We do not infer motives or other mind-sets of groups that produce the utterances, but rather, we focus on how utterers position their group and the other groups in particular ways based on their use of words (Louis 2008). In our discursive pattern detection, we ask the psychological *how* and not the *why*.

The intergroup positioning that we study is public and political. The antagonistic groups do not converse with each other privately, but rather, they talk among themselves in the public sphere. We use *public sphere* in the Habermas sense, where private individuals come together to form a public assembly and produce various (positioning) phenomena through discourse (Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox 1974). The intergroup conversations we examine are not only public but also political because the discussions are related to activities of the state (Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox 1974). Because of its political nature, the conversations involve both intergroup utterers and the society at large, as utterances aim to win over the third-party public (Simon and Klandermans 2001).

The political conversations we look at arise among groups that are asymmetrically related rather than equal. Past studies have shown that positioning interweaves with power (Louis 2008; Montiel and Christie 2008), so it is imperative that one should recognize the power relationship between group utterers. In our research, one group is more powerful than the other groups; one clearly has more material and political resources than the other (although in one case, the asymmetric relationship changes as the intergroup conversation unfolds). In the context of Mindanao, the Christians are the most powerful group, followed by the Muslims, while the Lumads are the least powerful group.

We present three studies that discursively analyze political positioning over land issues in Mindanao. We do not intend to propose any solutions to the Mindanao conflict. Rather, we present thick analytical descriptions of the discursive terrain on which the conflict thrives, from which a problem-solving conversation may emerge in the future.

Although all three cases in this chapter are about contestations over land ownership, these are nuanced in different ways. Our first case analyzes the text of the Public Land Act, which is the law that primarily contributed to the unequal access of Christians and non-Christians to land ownership and use in Mindanao. Using a positioning lens, we point out how the language of the law positions Christians above non-Christians. We take a study of land law as crucial because it is this legal text of the Christian-dominated Philippine state that contains the structural story line from which the Christians derive their upper-hand position in "the flow of actions and interactions in an evolving social episode" (Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee 2008, 11) in land contestations.

The second case highlights narratives about the Mindanao conflict, derived from in-depth interviews of key politico-military leaders of armed organizations. All three groups are involved—Christians, Muslims, and indigenous peoples. Here, we see how each group's story about the Mindanao conflict is essentially a story about land rights. The intergroup discursive variation is not in the basic story line ("The Mindanao conflict is about land"), but in the secondary story lines and positions derived from each group's nuanced narratives.

Our third case features public conversations that arose when a group of farmers from a Lumad tribe fought and won their struggle for 144 hectares

(355 acres) of land claimed by a huge Manila-based food conglomerate, the San Miguel Corporation. Our positioning analysis traces how the two groups claimed rightful ownership of the contested land based on contrasting discourses. Further, we also observe how an asymmetric relation, with the Lumad farmers as underdogs, transformed along the way as accusations and counteraccusations unfurled in public space.

STUDY 1: HOW A LAW POSITIONS CHRISTIANS ABOVE NON-CHRISTIANS IN MINDANAO

This first study focuses on the Philippine Public Land Act that governed the disposition of public lands in Mindanao from its passage in 1936 under the Commonwealth government—as Commonwealth Act 141 (CA 141)—until the ratification of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which guarantees equality of all citizens. The Public Land Act of 1936 was almost completely adopted from Act 2874 of 1919, which was a compilation of land laws of the government of the United States for the Philippines, which was a U.S. colony from 1898 to 1945. Similar to Act 2874, the Philippine Public Land Act used the term *non-Christians* to refer to groups of people that had not been converted to the Christian faith. In the context of Philippine society, *non-Christians* referred primarily to Muslim and Lumad peoples.

The equality principle of the 1987 constitution made the discriminatory provisions of Commonwealth Act 141 null and void. However, the constitution, as well as its enabling land laws, does not address issues of restorative justice, which would aim to bring back intergroup land-ownership structures that were in existence before the Public Land Act. Thus, we posit that the Public Land Act continues to influence the structural configuration of land ownership and conflict in Mindanao.

We content-analyzed sections of the Public Land Act, which dealt with the land rights of non-Christians vis-à-vis the land rights of all other citizens, who, by definition, would be the Christians. Using positioning analysis, we then described the story lines, positions, and speech-acts embedded in these sections of the Public Land Act.

At least one dominant story line emerged from the analysis: *Because Christians are more "civilized" than non-Christians, Christians deserve more land rights than non-Christians*. The Public Land Act not only devoted more sections of the law to Christians but also entitled them to own and use more hectares of land. Sections 12, 19, and 44 allowed a Christian Filipino who was at least 18 years of age or the head of a family to acquire a *patent* (homestead or free patent) for a tract of land of up to 12 hectares (30 acres; 24 hectares/60 acres in the original version). Section 22 also allowed a Christian Filipino of lawful age or family position to purchase a maximum of 144 hectares (355 acres) of land as an individual or 1,024 hectares (2,530 acres) as a corporation or association, provided that at least 60 percent of the capital stock was Filipino owned. Furthermore, Section 33 allowed Christian Filipinos and corporations or associations to lease up to 1,024 hectares (2,530 acres), or 2,000 hectares (4,940 acres) if the leased land would be used for grazing.

Let us now look at the rights allocated to non-Christians by the Public Land Act. Section 21 allowed a non-Christian Filipino to acquire a *permit of occupation* in a tract of land of not more than 4 hectares (10 acres) with the condition that it must be cultivated and improved within six months; otherwise, should the non-Christian Filipino fail to develop the land, the permit would be canceled.

The Public Land Act also described how non-Christian Filipinos may obtain the same benefits as the Christians. The middle portion of Section 84 stated that if the secretary of interior certified that the majority of non-Christian inhabitants are "advanced sufficiently in civilization," then the president may order that such lands be granted to them. Also, if the secretary of agriculture and natural resources is satisfied with the qualifications of the non-Christian inhabitants, then these non-Christian inhabitants can be certified to take advantage of the benefits of the other provisions of the Public Land Act. As such, this part of the Public Land Act allocated to the (Christian) government tremendous decision-making powers over non-Christian land ownership. Table 11.1 summarizes the story line, position, and illocutionary force of the Public Land Act.

In the above positioning analysis, the assigning of unequal land rights (positions) to non-Christians and Christians was assessed to have an effect—defined as *social meaning* or *illocutionary force* or *speech-act* in positioning theory—of segregating the non-Christians from the Christians

Table 11.1
Positioning of Christians and Non-Christians in Commonwealth Act (CA) 141

Story Line of CA 141	Positioning	Illocutionary Force
Because Christians are more "civilized" than non-Christians, Christians deserve more land rights than non-Christians do.	*Christians* are entitled to acquire bigger tracts of lands than non-Christians and also to enjoy the full benefits of the Public Land Act (CA 141). *Non-Christians* (*Muslims*) are obliged to prove their capability to cultivate and improve lands so as to enjoy same benefits given to Christians by the Act.	Segregation of non-Christians from the Christian citizens; biased for the Christians; prejudiced against the non-Christians in conferment of land rights.

and of treating non-Christians as people of a lower level of civilization. This speech-act may likewise pressure the non-Christians to acknowledge the authority of the (Christian) state as they conform to state requirements with regard to land ownership.

The Public Land Act highlights the discrepancy in land rights assigned to Christians and non-Christians, thus leading to heated conflicts over land among the different groups of people in Mindanao. What is even more striking is how the Mindanao conflict based on land came to be framed as a religious war between Christians and non-Christians despite the fact that the war is mainly about land contestations and not about matters of religion. Thus, in the same way that the law utilized religion as the basis of categorization in relation to land ownership, so did religion become a basis for disadvantage, particularly for the non-Christians. Correspondingly, the categorization of people in Mindanao as Christians, Muslims, and Lumads, which led to economic inequality and discrimination, has also become a landscape for the religion-based consolidation of conflicting groups and the production of religious narratives during intergroup contestations in Mindanao.

STUDY 2: INTERGROUP POSITIONING BY LEADERS OF ARMED GROUPS IN MINDANAO

In our second study, we conducted separate group storytelling sessions with leaders of armed groups associated with the three major social categories in Mindanao. These groups were the Mindanao Christians and Highlanders Association (MICHA), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and Lumad organizations represented by the Pasakaday Manobo Association (PAMAAS) and Nasavakan Tarigunay't Bukidnon du't Kalindaan Federation (NATABUKFED; Cultural Solidarity of Indigenous Peoples in Bukidnon Federation). The armed groups of Christians and Muslims were politically positioned against each other, while the Lumad groups were organized to protect their community and were not ideologically positioned against any other group.

Respondents in the first storytelling session consisted of three leaders of the Muslim group; the second session had two leaders of the Christian group, while three leaders of Lumad organizations participated in the third session. In these sessions, the respondents were asked to narrate the story of the conflict in Mindanao. The stories told by the leaders of the three groups were transcribed and qualitatively analyzed. We now show how one group positioned the other groups in the conflict along the story line of land ownership.

When asked about the story of the Mindanao conflict, the topic most commonly raised by all the leaders involved narratives about land ownership. Although all groups discussed similar topics, they drew legitimacy for their respective claims to land from divergent story lines and positions. All three groups talked at length about matters related to:

1. their land possession claim or legitimacy of ownership,
2. dispossession of land through displacement or unlawful land claims, and
3. accusations directed at the other groups in the conflict.

For example, one Christian armed-group leader claimed land-ownership legitimacy based on purchase and development input, saying, "Okay, there is an open land, you cultivate it, buy it, clear it and then educated Muslims come and accuse Christians of deceiving their parents into selling their lands." A Muslim story line about land dispossession would include accounts of intrusion by Christians, as in this narration by a Muslim leader: "Our ancestors were generous in giving lands. However, as time passed, more and more people entered our ancestral land and because the government is not for the Muslims, ownership of land titles was given to Christians." Talk about the Mindanao conflict also included intergroup accusations, as this utterance by a Lumad tribal leader illustrates: "The whole of Mindanao as Moro Homeland should be examined carefully because some portions of Mindanao have been Lumad territories even before Islam and Christianity arrived."

In one story line about the Mindanao conflict, land ownership is legitimized by state-approved land titles. Within this story line, the legitimate land owners in Mindanao are mostly Christians who have registered their land through the process mandated by the Christian-dominated government. The Lumad groups are also considered legitimate land owners in Mindanao, whose tribal territories were collectively registered under the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) enacted by the government. Thus, the Muslims who claim land ownership despite not having land titles are positioned as illegal aggressors, while the Christians and Lumads are positioned as legal owners who must defend their land against these aggressors. However, as described in the previous section, the laws governing land rights were biased in favor of Christians until recently. The IPRA law separately grants land rights in favor of the Lumads, but these two state mechanisms appear to undermine Muslim ancestral land claims.

A second story line about land ownership in the region claims that the land belongs to those who originally inhabited Mindanao, because it is the land of their ancestors. In this "ancestral land" story line, Christians, who are identified as migrant settlers, are positioned as intruders and illegitimate owners of land in Mindanao. Correspondingly, the Muslims and especially the Lumads are positioned as legitimate land owners through their inheritance claims as original inhabitants of Mindanao. However, the ancestral land claims of the Muslims and the Lumads differ significantly.

Table 11.2
Story Lines Embedded in the Narrative about Land in the Mindanao Conflict

Positioning by Group	State-Legitimized Land Ownership Storyline	Ancestral Land Storyline
Christians	Legal owners	Intruders
Lumads	Legal owners	Heirs to some Mindanao lands
Muslims	Illegal aggressors	Heirs to all lands in Mindanao

Muslims claim the entire Mindanao as their ancestral domain, while the Lumads insist on ownership claims to tribal territories where their communities lived even before the arrival of Islam.

Table 11.2 summarizes the two story lines and the corresponding positions of the Christians, Muslims, and Lumads within these story lines. We emphasize that the Lumads draw legitimacy from both story lines.

STUDY THREE: POSITIONING OF LUMAD (INDIGENOUS) FARMERS VIS-À-VIS A LARGE CORPORATION

On October 10, 2007, 55 Higaonon farmers from the municipality of Sumilao in Mindanao launched their "Sumilao March for Land" campaign. The campaign saw the Sumilao farmers marching from Mindanao to Manila, covering approximately 1,700 kilometers (1,050 miles) in 70 days, to fight for what they claimed was their rightful ownership of 144 hectares (355 acres) of land. The contested land was previously owned by a Christian landlord. The protesting farmers belonged to the Higaonon tribe of Sumilao and claimed that they were the rightful owners of their ancestral land. On the other hand, the San Miguel Corporation said it had legitimately bought the land from the previous Christian landlord. The corporation had begun constructing a modern piggery when the Sumilao farmers launched their protest march.

We analyzed different group accounts regarding this intergroup conflict by collecting published utterances of the Sumilao farmers and of the San Miguel Corporation, as well as of interested third parties in the conflict such as the Catholic Church in the Philippines, the Philippine government, local nongovernment organizations, media personalities, and business organizations. We utilized text data from public documents such as print advertisements, press releases, manifestos, pastoral letters, and editorial articles and identified the different story lines, positions, and social forces that emerged from the group utterances. In addition, we traced changes in conversational positioning and power as the conflict escalated.

Two story lines emerged in the intergroup conflict over the rightful ownership of the land parcel in Sumilao:

1. Sumilao farmers have rightful ownership of the land.
2. The San Miguel Corporation has rightful ownership of the land.

These incompatible story lines represented the conflict that was based on both groups' claim to the rightful ownership of the contested 144 hectares of land in Sumilao.

The Sumilao farmers claimed rightful ownership of the land based on legal, social justice, and character-based discourses. In particular, they and their supporters asserted rightful ownership of the land on the basis of:

- the ancestral/agricultural nature of the land (legal),
- the mandate of the law, particularly the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (legal),
- the value of social justice (social justice),
- their advocacy on behalf of the poor and powerless (social justice), and
- the moral deficiencies of the San Miguel Corporation and its supporters (character-based).

As rightful owners of the land, the Sumilao farmers positioned themselves as having the right to claim the land as their own and to continue in their protest actions to regain the land. On the other hand, the farmers and their supporters positioned the San Miguel Corporation as land grabbers and as having the obligation to cease operations and return the land to the Sumilao farmers.

The San Miguel Corporation claimed rightful ownership of the land based on legal, economic development, and character-based discourses. In particular, the corporation and its supporters asserted rightful ownership of the land by virtue of:

- the agro-industrial nature of the land (legal),
- the magnitude of the benefits the corporation can provide for the people (economic development),
- the principle of economic development (economic development), and
- the moral deficiencies of the Sumilao farmers and their supporters (character-based).

The San Miguel Corporation positioned itself as having the right to claim the land as its own and to continue in its development operations. The corporation further positioned the Sumilao farmers as intruders and troublemakers and as having the obligation to cease their protest actions, yield their ownership claims on the land, and support the development plans of the corporation.

Table 11.3 summarizes the story lines and positions that emerged in the conflict between the Sumilao farmers and the San Miguel Corporation.

Given that both the farmers and the San Miguel Corporation employed story lines based on counterbalancing legal and character-based claims, the main point of discursive contention in the conflict between these two groups lies in the story lines that pitted the principle of social justice against the principle of economic development. In particular, while the San Miguel Corporation and its supporters put forth story lines about economic development, the Sumilao farmers and their supporters countered these story lines by advancing story lines about social justice. As intergroup conflict escalated, both parties sought to ascribe socially desirable public meanings to the conflict in hopes of influencing the general public's opinion regarding the rightful ownership of the 144 hectares of contested land. To illustrate, the San Miguel Corporation put forth economic development as the main principle for the rightful ownership of the land, as depicted in its full-page print advertisement in a leading Philippine broadsheet:

> San Miguel Foods, Inc.'s (SMFI) P2.4 billion agro-industrial estate will create thousands of jobs not only in Sumilao but in the entire Bukidnon province.
>
> The project will generate employment for 2,400 workers, and the facility will require 400 employees with an annual payroll of approximately P50 million.
>
> By partnering with SMFI, the farmers of Bukidnon will have access to farm inputs, financing and technology, which will improve farm productivity and guarantee better farm-gate pricing.
>
> Local government tax revenues will increase 30-fold when the project is fully operational. From P3 million in annual tax collection, SMFI will pay P98 million annually in taxes, allowing government to improve the delivery of education, health, housing and other basic service. (San Miguel Corporation 2007)

In response to the economic development story line put forth by the San Miguel Corporation, the Sumilao farmers and their main supporter, the Catholic Church, as represented in the Philippines by Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, countered with the following statements, the first from the farmers' manifesto and the second from a pastoral letter:

> Is it right and just for them to illegally convert the land because of their promised economic benefits? Didn't the previous owners say the same empty promises when they applied for conversion? Does the P2.4 billion they claim to have invested make their illegal operations justifiable? What about the constitutionally-mandated social justice? Do we abandon social justice in exchange for promises of economic benefits? If so, what is the price of justice for the marginalized, the poor and the vulnerable? (Sumilao Farmers 2008)

Table 11.3
Positioning in the Sumilao March for Land

Story Lines	Discourses	Positions	Rights and Duties
Sumilao farmers rightfully own the land.	Legal; social justice; character-based	Sumilao farmers as rightful owners; the San Miguel Corporation as land grabbers	Sumilao farmers have the right to claim the land and continue protests. The San Miguel Corporation has the duty to cease operations and return land to the farmers.
The San Miguel Corporation rightfully owns the land.	Legal; economic development; character-based	The San Miguel Corporation as rightful owner; Sumilao farmers as intruders and troublemakers	The San Miguel Corporation has the right to claim land and to continue its operations. Sumilao farmers have the duty to cease protests, yield claims to the land, and support the development plans of the corporation.

> For the Sumilao farmers who are coming back to Manila, the issue here is justice. The basic issue is justice. On top will be business. A business that promises profit and employment to hundreds and even thousands of potential workers. But that is the superficial issue. The real issue is: Could they be just to the farmers who have the prior rights over the contested land? You can build justice and put it under business to be crumpled upon, because the basis of everything is: How just could you be to your fellow men? To society? And even if the company's promise is profit, development. Development, profit, employment cannot be built on an injustice. (Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila 2008)

At the onset of the Sumilao March for Land, the power differential between the Sumilao farmers and the San Miguel Corporation favored the latter. The corporation was the high-power group because of its access to material and political resources as one of the largest food companies in Asia. On the other hand, the Sumilao farmers were the low-power group because of their landlessness and lack of economic and political machinery. What was striking in this case was how the farmers and their supporters created leverage in this asymmetric conflict by advancing their own story lines about the conflict.

During the initial months of their long march from Mindanao to Manila, the Sumilao farmers issued several statements about their claims for land ownership through press releases and public manifestos. However, these utterances were met with silence from the San Miguel Corporation, a silence that can be construed as positioning the Sumilao farmers as a nonthreat to the corporation. However, as the conflict progressed, the farmers continued to advance their own story lines about the conflict. In addition, other social groups, such as the Catholic Church and the Philippine government, also issued statements about the conflict in support of the farmers.

Slowly, as the story lines of the Sumilao farmers began to pervade the public sphere and as other social groups expressed their support for them, the power differentials between the two groups began to diminish. The shift in the power differentials, with the Sumilao farmers occupying the high-power position as compared to the San Miguel Corporation, can be observed in the corporation's publication of a full-page print advertisement actively engaging the issues raised by the Sumilao farmers, thereby repositioning the farmers as being worthy of attention. This power shift proved to be significant, as the farmers eventually forced the corporation to negotiate with them, culminating in a landmark victory for the indigenous Sumilao farmers as they arrived at a win-win agreement that allowed them to gain ownership of the 144 hectares of land.

DISCUSSION

Two implicit story lines underlie intergroup relations in the context of the studies discussed in this chapter. In the first story line, the law is presented as just, thus positioning all of the people involved as having the duty to obey. On the other hand, the second story line presents the law as unjust and as serving the interests of only the powerful, thus positioning all of the people involved—particularly those who are disadvantaged—as having the right to question, disobey, and reform the law. Consequently, positioning theory allows us to illuminate these story lines in view of further understanding how the law and its institutions position particular social groups in society.

The studies presented in this chapter illustrate that in asymmetric intergroup conflicts, political positioning entails advancing competing public story lines to win over the third-party public. Further, the type of group utterances in the public conversation changes along with the power positions of the antagonistic groups.

During intergroup political conflicts, contending narratives shape the meaning of the conflict, and both compete to win over the third-party public. These group narratives carry alternative story lines that position the respective groups as owning the moral right to win over the other group. This is apparent in the positioning and counterpositioning that has occurred among the Christian, Muslim, and Lumad peoples regarding the issue of land in Mindanao. Whereas the Christian group advanced story lines about land ownership based on state laws, the Muslim and Lumad groups countered these assertions with story lines based on ancestral and territorial claims. It is important to note that the discourses each group chose to advance corresponded to story lines in which that particular group is positioned as rightful or legitimate. Thus, political positioning involves actively advancing story lines wherein one's own group occupies an advantageous position in the eyes of the general public.

The inequality of power between two antagonistic groups may call for different types of conversation-engagement between groups (Louis 2008). In asymmetric conflicts, groups that have more access to material and political resources tend to dominate verbal conversation, as they stand in a better position to articulate and disseminate their own story lines about the conflict. In such a situation, low-power groups can resort to other expressions for political interaction, such as actions without talk, purposive inaction, or purposive silence (Montiel and Christie 2008). This is manifested in the armed struggle waged by the MILF against the Christian-dominated government, as well as in the 1,700-kilometer march carried out by the indigenous Sumilao farmers in opposition to the San Miguel Corporation.

On the other hand, low-power groups in asymmetric conflicts seek to advance their own story lines about the conflict by engaging in the public conversation through forceful forms of nonutterances such as armed struggles and long marches, oftentimes in a bid to focus the attention of the third-party public on their plight.

Analyzing how political positioning unfolds in asymmetric intergroup conflicts can provide an understanding of the discursive terrain that permeates real-world conflicts such as the discord in Mindanao involving Christians, Muslims, and Lumads. For instance, in applying positioning theory to the issue of land in the Mindanao conflict, a multiplicity of meanings can be observed as battles over land ownership come to be expressed through story lines about state laws, ancestral land, economic development, and social justice. Thus, through positioning analysis, different story lines and positions about the Mindanao conflict come to light and allow us to veer away from black-and-white explanations that position one group as rightful and legitimate and other groups as unrightful and illegitimate. We hope that this additional dimension will contribute toward crafting problem-solving political conversations in the public sphere about the Mindanao conflict.

As a final note, we put forward some ideas for future research. It is important to note that a low-power group's verbal or mass-media positioning to win over the third-party public can be optimized in a relatively democratic and free political context. In other political situations, such as an absolute dictatorship or martial law, open positioning to gain the upper hand may be too dangerous or virtually impossible. Under tight conditions, positioning by the underdog may be mute (thus no textual data will be available for analysis) and may be in the pure form of actions without talk, purposive inaction, or purposive silence. Future research on political positioning may explore other ways of collecting and analyzing nontextual group data to understand the conversation structures in acutely asymmetric intergroup conflicts and intergroup contestations carried out in contexts of political fear.

NOTE

This research was partly supported by an Ateneo de Manila University professorial chair (2009) to Cristina Jayme Montiel.

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12

Indigenous Peoples Are Disadvantaged, but They Were Here First

A Positioning Analysis

Donald M. Taylor, Julie Caouette, Esther Usborne, and Michael King

Indigenous peoples in Canada, the United States, and around the world share a similar legacy (Eversole, McNeish, and Cimadamore 2005). All have been internally colonized, all are extremely disadvantaged, all are struggling with a variety of social issues from economic depression to substance abuse, and all are stereotyped negatively by mainstream society. But there is one crucial reality that impacts the positioning of indigenous peoples vis-à-vis mainstream society: They were "here" first.

Our positioning analysis focuses on the indigenous peoples of Canada, collectively referred to as *Aboriginal peoples*. Being the original inhabitants of Canada, and then having their sovereignty crushed by colonization, lies at the heart of the unique configuration of positions taken by Aboriginal peoples and the descendants of European colonizers. That is, to the usual intergroup distributions of rights and duties by groups of unequal status (Sui-Lan and Moghaddam 1999) must be added the complexities that are associated with the special status that is accorded those who first settled the land. This special status is very real, if surveys of intergroup attitudes in Canada are any indication (Berry, Kalin, and Taylor 1977; for a recent review, see Berry 1999). Repeatedly, Aboriginal peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, are judged negatively on a variety of evaluative dimensions, but they are also rated as "special" and "respected" as the original inhabitants of Canada's vast geography.

In this chapter, we outline three important positioning implications to this unique reality. First, we detail some of the key labels that form the basis of intergroup communication between Aboriginal peoples—a small, distinct minority—and non-Aboriginal Canadians, who constitute the vast majority. These include *colonization*, *empowerment*, *decolonization*, and *self-government*. Second, we explore the positioning that arises out of mainstream guilt for having decimated Canada's Aboriginal peoples and relegating them to remote reserves and communities. Finally, we detail how the rhetoric of the intergroup conflict at the abstract level is sharply contrasted with bitter, and sometimes violent, confrontations when the abstract is made concrete.

THE SHARED DISCOURSE OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES AND MAINSTREAM CANADIANS

The intergroup relationship between mainstream Canadians and Aboriginal peoples is rooted in an assimilationist and often abusive past, a history of victimization that continues to the present (Frideres and Gadacz 2008). Aboriginal peoples and mainstream Canadians currently have a fundamentally unequal societal status that is marked by an extremely negative intergroup history. The power and status differences between the groups are so extreme that the positioning of each group might seem predictable. Neither on the basis of numbers, location, concentration, nor power do Aboriginal peoples have the resources to make demands for rights or increased opportunity and resources. Mainstream governments have so much relative power that they would not have any need, in either rhetoric or reality, to address the plight of such an invisible group.

But, because of the special status accorded Aboriginal peoples as the first inhabitants, a very different positioning has emerged. Specifically, what has evolved is a shared public discourse between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal, mainstream Canadians. This shared discourse culminated in the public arena on June 11, 2008, when the prime minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, offered an apology to former students of Indian residential schools, acknowledging the rampant physical, psychological, and sexual abuse of Aboriginal children and the institutionalized cultural genocide. This discourse continues with the establishment of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In positioning theory terms, this dialogue opens up the possibility of according more equal rights to Aboriginal peoples over the entire spectrum of personal and social life.

Underlying this discourse is the joint recognition of the fact that "colonization" did occur in Canada. According to both groups, *colonization* or the *colonization process* refers to the destruction of the traditional Aboriginal ways of life, first by European colonizers and more recently by mainstream Canadians, through the relegation of Aboriginal peoples to remote reserves and communities and the forcing of their children into residential schools where assimilationist policies and practices, and even abuse, were the norm (Annett 2005). The effect of colonization was the withdrawal of all social rights that were taken for granted by the arriving European colonizers. There appears to be a shared recognition of this colonial past and a shared desire to emerge from it in a positive and constructive fashion. Thus, presently a process of prepositioning has begun, in terms of the attributes now being assigned to the Aboriginal populations. This shared recognition is exemplified throughout the official discourse of apology given by Prime Minister Harper on June 11, 2008:

> You [Aboriginal peoples] have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time, and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey. The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples for failing them so profoundly. (Canada 2008)

From this jointly acknowledged situation, there has arisen, in public discourse, a series of shared labels pertaining to the relationship between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Both of these groups express a desire for the "empowerment" of Aboriginal peoples. Here, *empowerment* implies granting more power and authority to Aboriginal peoples—in effect, more rights—an ideal that both sides express a desire to achieve. Similarly, the label *decolonization* has come to refer, in shared public discourse, to the process by which mainstream Canadians and Aboriginal peoples will work together to redress the wrongdoings of the past. It is an increasingly popular term whereby the sins of the past are recognized and hope for the future is implied. Finally, the term *self-government* refers to the eventual independence of Aboriginal communities, with an unassailable right to make decisions concerning their own forms of life, which is thought to be the ultimate goal of many Aboriginal groups in Canada. They would be entities in and of themselves and unaffiliated with mainstream Canadian government. Indeed, the achievement of Aboriginal self-government would be a concrete representation of the successful emergence of both Aboriginal people and mainstream Canadians from their colonial past.

The labels *colonization*, *empowerment*, *decolonization*, and *self-government* are all endorsed and used by mainstream Canadians and Aboriginal peoples equally. The meaning of these labels, at least on the surface, appears also to be shared. Therefore, the intergroup positioning concerning the past and future relationship between Aboriginal peoples and mainstream Canadians seems to be a forward-looking one. Both groups have a vision of the future that includes Aboriginal empowerment and independence—that is, a wholly new distribution of personal and political rights—and both groups seem committed to this vision.

Aboriginal peoples desire an improvement in status, and mainstream Canadians seem equally devoted to this goal. Indeed, there is an entire federal department in Canada dedicated to Aboriginal peoples and their concerns (the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada), as well as a complex and expensive, taxpayer-supported bureaucracy dealing with Aboriginal land claims, housing issues, health, education, and employment, to name a few. Compared to other minority groups in Canada, Aboriginal peoples indeed have a unique status. Given the apparent level of commitment on both sides, Aboriginal peoples and mainstream Canadians seem well positioned to emerge from a history of negative intergroup relations and unequal social status engendering the long-standing and massive disparity in rights that this dialogue recognizes.

The language used thus far implies two story lines and their associated positions: one present and one future. The *current* story line depicts Canadians as having the bulk of power in this intergroup relationship, yet having a lower moral status. The reverse can be said of Aboriginal peoples' present situation: they are disadvantaged in terms of power, but hold the moral high ground. The *future* story line that emerges from the dialogue promises intergroup relations of equal power, manifested in equality of positions—that is, rights and correlative duties.

However, the methods by which both groups progress toward the aspired future positioning of equal rights must be closely monitored because the key conceptual labels on which the discussion hangs, although endorsed by both groups, involve hidden incompatibilities. By achieving empowerment, decolonization, and self-government, Aboriginal peoples would be gaining power and resources for themselves, which necessarily implies having material and psychological resources taken away from mainstream Canadians. In other words, this clearly involves the future possibility of extensive financial and identity costs to mainstream Canadians. Admittedly, mainstream Canadians have benefited, and continue to benefit, from long-term internal colonization of Aboriginal peoples. Achieving empowerment, decolonization, and self-government concretely means returning the land that was once taken from Aboriginal people, or providing appropriate compensation for past harms committed. While the public discourse sounds consensual, this positioning—for example, the assignment of rights to the reoccupation of lands—may well mask very fundamental conflicts of interest. Indeed, such conflict may be even more difficult to negotiate given that, on the surface, the positioning of both groups seems shared, thus hiding the true intergroup challenges.

Thus, it is important to explore why mainstream Canadians appear so ready to engage in this shared positioning and so committed to the same vision as Aboriginal peoples, even though this vision has potentially negative consequences for them. Collective guilt no doubt plays an important role.

COLLECTIVE GUILT: THE ROOT OF A SHARED POSITION

Non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Canadians share a common story line in their adoption of identical labels to describe the internal colonization of Aboriginal peoples. This shared story line is made necessary by the inescapable reality of the devastating internal colonization process and its related policies of assimilation, which produced long-lasting damage and great harm. It is clear why Aboriginal peoples endorse labels such as *empowerment*, *decolonization*, and *self-government*, since these labels all imply an improved status for Aboriginal peoples. But why would mainstream Canadians endorse these same labels and the commitment they imply?

Collective guilt may be the motivator. In this section, we argue that collective guilt is at the root of this shared positioning. But we will also ask: Does collective guilt position mainstream Canadians and Aboriginal peoples for genuine social change, that is, for genuine redistribution of rights across the entire gamut of social, economic, and political life?

Mainstream Canadians appear motivated to recognize the harm caused by the internal colonization of Aboriginal peoples; however, this recognition implies accepting that Canadians as a group are responsible for historical wrongdoings. Such an admission is made necessary because Canadians strongly endorse the values of equity and fairness, as exemplified by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. Such a recognition of historical wrongdoings may bring collective guilt to the fore, motivating mainstream Canadians to share a vision of reconciliation toward Aboriginal peoples. But by the same token, this guilt may reflexively tarnish their social self-image, which paradoxically may be preventing some Canadians from wanting to confront the past in order not to be faced with an emotion as aversive as collective guilt (see Caouette and Taylor 2007).

Instructive, from an intergroup positioning perspective, is the discourse associated with the reconciliation process put forward in the context of the formal government apology given to former students of the Indian residential schools. Indeed, the root of this contemporary collective guilt can be traced back to the last century. The plight of Aboriginal peoples is so inescapable, dramatic, and blatant that Canadians have come through a long process, first confronting their guilt and then coming to terms with it.

Over a hundred years ago, Dr. P. H. Bryce (1907), then chief medical officer for Canada's departments of the interior and Indian affairs, revealed a virtual genocide of Aboriginal children in his *Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the North West Territories*. This report revealed that the average mortality rate in residential schools was close to 25 percent, and in some schools it was as high as 47 percent. The most common recorded cause of death was tuberculosis. This reality was so shocking that, since then, different pleas have been made for reparation and restitution, starting with Bryce (1922) himself. The story line displayed in this discourse, then, was analogous to the present one: hopes of reconciliation and moving forward by crucial positioning moves.

Yet, the legacy of residential schools is still felt in Aboriginal communities today, with pressing concerns over adequate housing and their overall health. Compared with the general population, the percentage of Aboriginal peoples living in overcrowded housing is five to six times higher on reserves and in the North. Poor housing conditions allow diseases such as tuberculosis to spread. For example, in 2005, the tuberculosis rate was 27 active cases per 100,000 in Aboriginal peoples, compared with 5 per 100,000 in the general Canadian population (Statistics Canada 2007). These statistics portray a reality that Canadians cannot avoid: Aboriginal peoples suffered from their internal colonization not only in the past but still to this day. This reality is indeed so obvious that it forces a clear moment for the repositioning of Aboriginal peoples that demands action on the part of non-Aboriginal Canadians: internal colonization appears morally wrong today, and thus Canadians are bound to face collective guilt as a result.

The reality of racial inequality was considered so alarming that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established in 1991. The discourse, based on a story line of collective guilt, was captured eloquently by one of the commission's chairs, René Dussault, who stated in his address for the launch of the report:

> We believe the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada must change. We believe it can. The cycle of blame and guilt, grievance and denial, frustration and fear can be broken. It is time to renew, to turn the page. . . . We cannot afford to allow the present situation to persist. The legacy of Canada's treatment of Aboriginal people is one of waste: wasted potential, wasted money, wasted lives. It is measured in statistic after statistic: in the rates of suicide; of substance abuse; of incarceration; of unemployment; of welfare dependence; of low educational attainment; of poor health and poor housing. (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991)

Clearly, there is a recognition that mainstream Canadians are accorded a lower moral standing here and that they need to face their wrongdoing; however, there is a clear sense that, in spite of this recognition, there is a motivation to move forward, to adopt a story line that turns away from the past and toward the future, to distance mainstream Canada from aversive feelings of guilt and blame.

In 2008, almost 15 years later, the statistics revealed that little had changed, and, indeed, little has changed in terms of the discourse. In his formal apology to former students of Indian residential schools, Prime Minister Harper delivered a familiar message: “This [apology] represents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian Residential School system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians.” The leader of the opposition, Stéphane Dion, also said:

> Today’s apology is about a past that should have been completely different. But it must be also about the future. It must be about collective reconciliation and fundamental changes. It must be about moving forward together, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Reconciliation will require a commitment from Canadian society for action. . . . We must be prepared to hear the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recount a very shameful collective past. (Canada 2008)

There is a clear temporal and inclusionary positioning here: Canadians are willing to recognize Canada’s wrongful historical actions, but there is also a clear focus on the importance of the groups moving forward together in the crucial matter of rights. Research on collective guilt suggests that this temporal and inclusionary shift is in fact evidence that group members do not want to experience prolonged collective guilt. They would rather perceive their group in terms of future positions where the granting of rights to Aboriginal peoples becomes a shared mission rather than the wrongful actions specifically committed by their group in the past. In the same vein, research has found that a more inclusive categorization—us moving forward together—similarly leads to a lesser focus on the particular uniqueness of the specific group wrongdoings and therefore to more group forgiveness and reduced collective guilt assignment: in short, a new story line (for a review, see Wohl, Branscombe, and Klar 2006).

In sum, the Canadian government is clearly trying to shift its moral status from that of a nation abusive to its Aboriginal inhabitants in the past toward a reconciliatory positioning in the future. The government recognizes that Canadian assimilationist policies toward its Aboriginal populations were morally unacceptable and that a more constructive future is required. The use of words such as *today*, *now*, and *moment* in the following excerpt from Jack Layton, the New Democratic Party leader, clearly shows that the government is attempting to distance itself from the positionings of the past and toward a new reconciliatory future:

> Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country. The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian residential school policies were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on aboriginal culture, heritage and language. The legacy of Indian residential schools has contributed to

social problems that continue to exist in many communities today. . . . [June 11, 2008,] marks a very significant moment for Canada. It is the moment when we, as a Parliament, as a country, take responsibility for one of the most shameful periods in our history. It is the moment for us to finally apologize. It is the moment when we will start to build a shared future, a future based on equality and built on mutual respect and truth. (Canada 2008)

As exemplified by this official apology made to former students of Indian residential schools, there is a recognition of the horrendous treatment of Aboriginal peoples, a positioning that can induce some to feel regret, anguish, guilt, or shame over this situation (for a wider review of collective guilt in the context of historical wrongs, see Barkan 2000; Wohl, Branscombe, and Klar 2006).

FROM GUILT TO CONCRETE SOCIAL ACTIONS

Despite the story lines of the discourse indicative of a new collaborative relationship and the transformation of long-standing positionings, the intergroup relationship remains tense. Many land claims are still unresolved, and many mainstream Canadians feel uneasy about the tactics used by some Aboriginal groups to assert their rights and to act on the positions they now believe themselves to have been accorded.

In the same period, when the official apology was announced in June 2008, an Angus Reid poll found that Canadians were disappointed with some recent railway line blockades staged by Aboriginal protesters: 56 percent of respondents believed these actions were unjustified, and 67 percent agreed with Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice, who recommended penalizing Native leaders if federal money was used to plan blockades. This may suggest that despite the spirit of reconciliation heralded by the apology and the idealized wish for racial harmony, once actions become real—once Aboriginal groups start to act on the hopes fueled by the apology, when Aboriginal people start to actually be "empowered" and claim their rights—some Canadians may be less enthused (see also Leach, Iyer, and Pedersen 2006).

In fact, some Canadians may still need to come to terms with their national ghost, as some Canadians were in fact hesitant in face of the actual apology. On March 7, 2008, before the official policy was made public, Canadians were split on whether their government should offer an apology for the residential schools. An Angus Reid poll asked:

As you may know, the Government of Australia offered an official apology to the country's Aboriginal population for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering, and loss on Australia's Aboriginal peoples. Do you think the Canadian government should offer a similar apology to Canada's Aboriginal population?

This poll showed that 42 percent of respondents thought an official apology was warranted, while 39 percent disagreed.

Although there seems to be an official governmental recognition that Aboriginal peoples have suffered and still experience consequences from the internal colonization at the hands of mainstream Canadians, many Canadians today continue to find themselves uncomfortable with Aboriginal peoples' attempts to regain their rights to control their lives and to improve their fate. Indeed, despite the official positioning taken by the government, everyday Canadians seem to be faced with a positioning challenge: If they recognize the past wrongdoings by their Canadian forefathers, accepting this ascription and the consequential positionings, then what's next?

Interestingly, Dussault of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples foresaw this predicament when launching the commission's report:

> Canadians are now embarrassed by the arrogance that runs through our history and by the acts of state suppression that it gave rise to: the Indian Act in all its permutations, the residential schools, the frequent relocation of whole communities, the negation of treaty commitments. Yet the underlying assumptions have not died. Although positive change has occurred, too many still see Aboriginal peoples as an unfortunate minority who only need better education and better tools to take their place alongside the majority, having adopted the majority's values. Governments are loath to give up control since this would involve repositioning those who were once denied their right to self-determination. There is still a deep reluctance to stand back so that Aboriginal peoples can assume responsibility for themselves and to exercise the full range of government authority that responsibility requires. (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991)

Put simply, many mainstream Canadians recognize that the creation of Canada has caused suffering for Aboriginal peoples through the dispossession of their lands and the imposition of Euro-Canadian culture. Yet, they are unwilling to give up the positions that endow them with the power and privilege they enjoy.

This clinging to power comes as no surprise. Despite Canada's lofty egalitarian values, a legacy of social psychological theorizing, including social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986), social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto 1999), and system justification theory (Jost and Banaji 1994), underscore how advantaged group members—in this instance, mainstream Canadians—are motivated to maintain and legitimize a system of inequality from which they benefit. Why would a mainstream Canadian readily accept that his or her Canadian identity has been constructed out of land theft and cultural annihilation at the hands of Aboriginal peoples? Why accept *collective* guilt, when contemporary Canadians were not directly the cause of the internal colonization?

Compared to personal guilt, collective guilt may leave open more room for psychological maneuvering. It may be no more than a rhetorical flourish to a conservative political discourse. In the case of collective guilt, the entire *group* is the perpetrator of the wrongful actions, and the *individual* can, with relative ease, escape any feelings of collective guilt. For example, Tyler (2001, 351) notes: "From a self-interest perspective, the unfairly advantaged are most strongly motivated to eliminate their guilt psychologically. If they do so, they need not redistribute resources, make more efforts, or treat those around them more fairly, to re-establish justice." It is easy to alleviate collective guilt by denying that any real harm was done, by arguing that the in-group's privileged status is rightly deserved, by displacing responsibility, by distancing oneself from the in-group, and by denying group responsibility or dissociating oneself from any personal benefits as a result of the group's unjust act (see Branscombe and Miron 2004).

In fact, even though most lines of research on collective guilt have portrayed this emotion as being an impetus for social change (e.g., Branscombe and Doosje 2004), some researchers instead have argued that collective guilt is an unwanted motivator for social change, because of its self-focused nature that prevents individuals from genuinely empathizing with the plight of the disadvantaged group (e.g., Steele 2002; Iyer, Leach, and Pedersen 2004). Psychologically, collective guilt may not be a shared feeling but rather a common story line.

Thus, even though the Canadian apology has momentarily positioned both groups on an even status, maybe even putting the Aboriginal peoples on the higher moral ground with a more powerful claim to formerly denied rights, it is clear that Aboriginal people still have the least amount of power and that they will have to keep fighting for more equality, since the apparent repositioning has not been achieved. This message was clearly communicated by Phil Fontaine, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, in response to the apology:

> Brave survivors, through the telling of their painful stories, have stripped white supremacy of its authority and legitimacy. The irresistibility of speaking the truth to power is real. Today is not the result of a political game. Instead, it is something that shows the righteousness and importance of our struggle. We know we have many difficult issues to handle. There are many fights to still be fought. (Canada 2008)

And with this reminder of past atrocities, Fontaine went on to take a conciliatory stance, emphasizing the original essence of Aboriginal peoples as the first inhabitants:

> We are and always have been an indispensable part of the Canadian identity. Our peoples, our history, and our present being are the essence of Canada. The attempts to erase our identities hurt us deeply, but it also hurt all Canadians and impoverished the character of this nation. (2008)

It is clear that Aboriginal peoples gain currency by declaring themselves to be the first peoples to inhabit Canada and therefore as having preemptive rights over such vital matters as the occupancy and use of the land. However, the goal of creating a more racially equal and harmonious nation requires a new positioning. That positioning and its accompanying discourse involve a new story line with a focus on the future, one where mainstream and Aboriginal Canadians share a common vision. The challenge is to turn rhetoric into reality.

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Afterword

Naomi Lee

It has been two decades since the publication of Davies and Harré 1990, which put forth "positioning" as a discourse-oriented and immanentist alternative to the deterministic explanations of human action so routinely encountered in the social sciences. The focus of that paper was on selfhood. Since then, positioning theory has matured conceptually and has been applied to a wide range of important social phenomena. The present volume is the fourth edited collection of work by positioning theorists (the earlier volumes were *Global Conflict Resolution through Positioning Analysis* [Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee 2008]; *The Self and Others: Positioning Individuals and Groups in Personal, Political, and Cultural Contexts* [Harré and Moghaddam 2003]; and *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action* [Harré and van Langenhove 1999]). In this afterword, I will highlight some of the strengths of the present volume and discuss directions for future development of the theory and its application.

POLITICAL PROCESSES, CONFLICT, AND ACTORS' MOTIVES

The present volume extends Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee 2008 by linking conflict to political processes. In chapter 1, Fathali M. Moghaddam and Rom Harré suggest that the political process can be seen as "a form of conflict resolution, or at least suspension or transformation." They point out that this perspective contrasts with our usual understanding of the political process as "managing the affairs of institutions" large and small. In other words, the concrete activities that we might think of as managing institutional affairs (dividing up work, allocating funds, creating policies, etc.) are bound up with acts of positioning, that is, discursive acts that distribute rights and duties. Through these acts of positioning, conflicts that bubble up in a political process undergo amplification, transformation, and resolution. Here, as in Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee 2008, the conflicts of concern—and hence the political processes of concern—run the gamut from intrapersonal to interpersonal to intergroup to international. The collection of empirical chapters demonstrates well the power of positioning theory to cast light on complex dynamics occurring at each of these levels.

If we adopt Moghaddam and Harré's view of the political process, the relevant questions to ask about political machinations shift from "Why are they doing that?" (a search for actors' motives) to "What meaning(s) are actors assigning to phenomena?" and "How do those meanings influence conflict and peace?" In pursuing these questions of meaning and discursive action, the editors set out to address a lacuna "in the psychological, microsociological, linguistic, and political science literature on political processes and conflict" (p. 6). How does this volume fare in its endeavor?

The majority of contributions to this volume display a shift in analytical attention from actors' motives to the discursive actions they perform (in the form of story lines, positions, and speech-acts). However, some chapters also endeavor to offer some insight into actors' motives. I will highlight two examples here.

Ciarán Benson (chapter 6) asks whether Ian Paisley's power-sharing move constitutes a radical change in his identity or yet another opportunistic grab at power. In scrutinizing the trajectory of Paisley's political career, including his public discourse, Benson suggests that the latter is more likely the case. Can Benson's analysis be criticized by "purist" positioning theorists for (mis)treating discourse as a window into private understandings of oneself, including one's motivations for action? Or, perhaps we should understand Benson's concept of identity—including his "unthinkable boundaries" of an identity—as irreducible to private and public versions? If we accept that identity is not reducible to dichotomous parts, then there is not a bright line of separation between what Paisley tells himself about his actions and what he tells the public. In this account, Paisley's public discourse is a suitable source of knowledge about his identity.

As a second example, Margarita Konaev and Fathali Moghaddam (chapter 10) subtly infer the motives of George W. Bush and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in their concluding comment that the "leadership's exercise of positioning *is largely aimed at* securing in-group cohesion and international approval through the recognition of an outside threat and the concentration of aggression toward the out-group that constitutes the latter threat" (p. 169, emphasis added). The question of exactly how conscious the state leaders are of their positioning strategies is not speculated upon by the authors. Should it be? Bush's and Ahmadinejad's use of the same three story lines might indicate anything from their highly rational implementation of a commonly used political-rhetorical strategy to spontaneous displays of "saying what comes naturally" in the moment. Is there a place in positioning analysis for inquiry into the self-awareness actors have about their acts of positioning?

A thorough dialogue among positioning theorists about their epistemological and ontological assumptions could further enhance positioning theory. There may be interesting and important variations in response to the questions: Do motives exist? In what form do motives exist? How can we know about them? A discussion about the limitations of or possibilities in asking "Why do people position themselves and others the way they do?" may also address the criticism leveled at positioning theory (and related forms of inquiry) that it merely *describes* rather than *explains* social phenomena. It has been suggested that motive-talk must be understood as a discursive act of self-positioning like any other and should not be taken as a "cause" of action (see Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee 2008). However, this position and others would benefit from deeper discussion.

Moving from theory to practice, it would be interesting to consider how the form of the research questions that are asked, and the assumptions embedded therein, influence the way positioning theory is applied in the field. Consider, for instance, the conflict over land in Mindanao analyzed in chapter 11. What practical conflict-management approaches might be spring from an analysis of story lines and their associated positions as compared to an analysis of each groups' motives? The same question could be asked of the analysis of intergroup relations between Canada's indigenous peoples and "mainstream" Canadians. If we focus on the story lines to which actors are wedded, are we perhaps in a better position to make informed decisions about concrete next steps? How might a peaceful intervention at the level of story lines look? A future volume could link theory to practice by reporting on how practitioners such as conflict management specialists, peace activists, or mediators apply positioning theory in the field.

TWO-STAGE POSITIONING AND LOCAL MORAL ORDERS

A major refinement of positioning theory that gets worked out in this volume is the differentiation of positioning into two phases. This distinction is brought out nicely in the analysis of primary speeches by senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton (chapter 7) and in the discussion people with Alzheimer's disease being prepositioned as "dysfunctional" patients (chapter 5). Phase-one positioning, also referred to as "prepositioning," involves assigning "qualities of character, intellect, or temperament, sometimes supported by biographical reports on the past behavior of the person in question" (p. 9; see also Harré et al. 2009). Prepositioning *sets the stage for* assigning or refusing rights and duties (phase-two positioning).

This distinction is important because it underscores how important it is to look to the local context of discursive action, as seen from the actors' perspective, in order to grasp how rights and duties are distributed. As conversation analyst Harvey Sacks (1992) has pointed out, the categories we use to describe people are "inference-rich," meaning that we have conventional expectations for what certain kinds of people are likely to do and ought to do or not do. Thus we hear, "The baby cried; the mommy picked it up" and infer that the "mommy" is the mother of the aforementioned crying baby, even though there is no reason why she must be the mother of *this* baby. The growing interest in membership category analysis builds from the inference-rich quality of membership categories.

A connection can be made between membership category analysis and positioning theory through the concept of local moral orders, defined as "a cluster of collectively located beliefs about what it is right and good to do and say" (p. 10). It seems to me that membership categories function as they do because they are embedded in a local moral order. This local moral order includes fields of locally available inferences. The concept of prepositioning usefully guides analysis toward exposing local moral orders. In one local moral order, calling someone the "senior member" may precede divesting them of the duty to participate in a committee. In another, the same act of prepositioning may set the stage for granting her the right and duty to chair a committee. The refinement of "positioning" into "prepositioning" and "positioning" makes it clear that we are interested in *participants'* inferences about what is right and good to do and say, which is why it is an incomplete analysis to assert that "she was positioned as a senior member." We need to go the next step and understand the local moral order that sustains those speech-acts as meaningfully distributing rights and duties.

Several contributors to this volume give explicit attention to local moral orders (see chapters 2, 5, 7, and 8). Lionel J. Boxer (chapter 8), for instance, conceives of (local) moral orders as combining with rights, duties, and acts in "mutually interdependent components that define a larger social order or culture" (p. 131). The status of local moral orders in relationship to "culture," "social order," and "social structure" is an area that calls for further theoretical development.

STORY LINES

The concept of story lines also presents itself as a component of positioning theory that is especially ripe for further elaboration. Contributors to this volume display varied ways of using the concept of story line in a positioning analysis of political processes. Yet, newcomers to positioning theory who have used the analytical lens of Foucaultian "discourses," "narratives," "small stories," "voices," or "interpretative repertoires" might ask how the concept of "story line" is different. Burr (2003) devotes some space to discussing Foucaultian discourses, positioning, and interpretative repertoires. She places these onto a spectrum that extends from macro- to microsocial constructionist approaches. However, the concept of story line is not explicitly compared to discourses.

In sociolinguistics, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) have put forth "small stories" as a new perspective on narrative and identity, one that sees fleeting discursive interactions and small talk about self and others as dynamically constituting, rather than representing, who we are. They locate "small stories" into a "model of positioning" (Bamberg 1997) that aims to provide a middle ground between micro and macro accounts of human meaning-making. It is unclear how their proposals might be "positioned" in relationship to positioning theory.

Finally, the literature on "narratives" has grown so thick and internally differentiated that an attempt to compare story lines with narratives may be difficult. At the same time, since positioning theorists do occasionally use the term *narrative* as a synonym for *story line*, it may be useful to push for a further refinement of terms. Along those lines, some discussion of method (for example, what are the linguistic features of a story line?) would be welcome. One trend in narrative studies has been to question the utility of typologies of narratives and narrative structures. Nonetheless, the narrative framework proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1972) has hardly faded away. Do positioning theorists see value in further specifying the structure of story lines, or of attempting to document "kinds" of story lines?

WHAT ABOUT THE METHODS SECTION?

Readers anticipating a step-by-step procedure for how to perform a positioning analysis may be surprised by the variety of routes contributors to this and previous volumes have taken. Some contributors chose to structure their analysis by explicitly identifying all three components of the positioning triangle: *positions* (both phases one and two), *story lines*, and *acts* (see in particular chapters 7 and 11). Others focus more on positioning acts than on story lines (as in chapter 2). Some contributors bring positioning theory into contact with complementary approaches, as in Steven R. Sabat's (chapter 5) designation of biomedical and psychosocial "voices." This variety demonstrates the flexibility of positioning theory to accommodate the characteristics of the specific contexts in which it is applied.

At the same time, newcomers to positioning theory may be at a loss for how to carry out a positioning analysis. Some explicit guidance on how to structure an analysis could be useful, especially for students who have been exposed to only quantitative methods.

SUBSTANTIVE TOPICS FOR FUTURE WORK

The range of topics to which positioning theory has been applied is also testament to its versatility. Areas that could be explored in future research might include gender relations, medical discourse, globalization and citizenship, environmental discourse, economic discourse, and embodiment and positioning.

On the topic of gender relations, in recent years the mainstream press in the United States has devoted considerable print space to debates about how far women have advanced since the 1970s in educational achievement, political leadership, corporate management, and economic power. Alongside the data reporting women's advances are reports of boys falling behind in high school graduation rates and college attendance. Amid the celebration of women's advances, backed up by objective measures, there are also ominous reports that women's happiness has declined both absolutely and relative to men since the 1970s (Stevenson and Wolfers 2009). Anecdotally, I can attest to hearing from academically talented undergraduate women that climbing the corporate ladder is an aspiration they would happily forfeit in favor of raising families. Indeed, a survey of women graduates of elite colleges reported in the *New York Times* (Story 2005) found that a surprising percentage choose the "mommy track," much to the chagrin of advocates for women's rights such as Linda Hirshman (2005). The cacophony of voices in this discussion about the impact of the women's movement provides a rich terrain for piercing analysis along the lines of positioning theory.

The global economic downturn of late is also fertile for analysis that cuts through the endless talk about the greediness of executives and politicians, and the naïveté of consumers. When the economy breaks down, a relevant question for critical consumers of mass media is: "How do the story lines that are provided by economic pundits and others set limits on how we can rationally conduct our financial affairs?" How does the motto "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping" get taken up by "ordinary" people? A positioning analysis of economic discourse could also enrich theoretical debate about the relationship between discourse and economic systems (e.g., see Nightingale and Cromby 1999).

Taken as a whole, this volume introduces provocative links among conflict, political processes, and discourse and promises to stimulate further development of the theory, perhaps in ways mentioned in this afterword.

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