The Editor's Desk

This issue includes a number of papers addressing thorny issues in the conflict and dispute resolution domain, from historically violent conflicts to sacred and identity issues. Each type of conflict is likely to engender strong emotions and potentially anger, which can derail a negotiation or potentially be used as a constructive tool. In addition, this issue combines qualitative analysis with quantitative techniques, as well as laboratory, field, and case/archival data.

The paper by Irmer and Druckmann, "Explaining Negotiation Outcomes: Process or Context?" balances process against outcomes and context in violent conflicts over the past 50 years. Perhaps the strongest or most important context in which we, as conflict researchers, ply our trade is in the arena of conflict and peace. The paper provides a systematic approach that will facilitate comparative research using actual historical events and cases to enhance our understanding of conflict while incorporating an inductive approach with hypotheses. Further, their findings underscore the importance of trust in conflict resolution. Using the sequential analyses of the *A*ssociation, *C*ausation, and *E*xplanation approach (termed *ACE* by the authors) introduced by the authors, we, as conflict researchers, will be able to effectively complement our laboratory research with real events.

Gibson, Schweitzer, Callister, and Gray's manuscript, "The Influence of Anger Expressions on Outcomes in Organizations," takes the rather counter intuitive perspective that expressions of anger can result in positive outcomes in the context of work conflicts. Using structured interviews and combining both qualitative and quantitative analyses, their findings suggest that low-intensity verbal expressions in environments where such emotions are acceptable resulted in positive outcomes. Consistent with gender stereotypes, however, the authors found that the effect differed depending on whether it was a male or female who expressed anger. For females, there is a cost associated with the expression of anger in a negotiation context relative to their brethren. The practical implications for their findings are significant as organizations are inherently social contexts fraught with frustrations with the potential to make people angry. It seems that constructively expressed anger may be critical in improving work environments.

The paper "The Reality and Myth of Sacred Issues in Negotiations" by Tenbrunsel, Wade-Benzoni, Medvec, and Bazerman explores the impact of "sacred issues"—or more precisely "pseudo-sacred issues"—which easily can derail negotiations. Studying ideologically sacred issues is a difficult topic and one worth of study. Exploring these sacred issues and how they intersect with contextual factors to drive negotiator reactions and outcomes may help in furthering our understanding of many of the world's apparently most intractable conflicts. As the author's note, understanding these issues "has implications for a wide variety of social issues facing policy makers," e.g., stem cell

research, genetically modified foods, environmental issues and reproductive rights. These hot button issues may be solvable, but only if we can better understand the role of sacred and pseudo-sacred issues in conflict resolution.

Collier's paper, "Negotiating Intercommunity and Community Group Identity Positions: Summary Discourses from Two Northern Ireland Intercommunity Groups," underscores the potentially important role that intergroup identity may play in conflict resolution, yet the relationships are complex. Using a critical/interpretative framework to articulate insights about how group identity is negotiated across the boundaries of a dispute, Collier provides a better understanding of the role of identity, a factor that once again may characterize some of our most intractable conflicts.

Once again, I want to thank all of our authors, reviewers, editors, and staff for their help in making our new venture a success with this, our third issue. Thank you all.

Judi McLean Parks
Editor