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The Influence of Belief in Offender Redeemability and Decision-Making Competence on Receptivity to Restorative Justice

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Abstract

Restorative justice (RJ) processes offer a way to address multifaceted harms caused by wrongdoing. Yet, questions remain about people's attitudes toward restorative processes such as victim–offender conferences (VOCs) and the factors that influence those attitudes. This study examined whether beliefs about youth and adult redeemability and decision-making competence influence perceptions of justice outcomes, VOC effectiveness, VOC appropriateness, VOC support, and VOC participation willingness. Analysis of survey data gathered from 207 participants through Amazon MTurk suggests that perceived redeemability and to a lesser extent decision-making competence significantly shape outcome- and process-related beliefs and evaluations. Namely, the more people believe that offenders are redeemable, the more they are likely to support restorative outcomes, perceive VOCs to be effective and appropriate, support the use of VOCs, and be willing to participate in a VOC. The study's findings are useful for potentially shaping people's understanding of and support for RJ.

When someone is accused of violating the law, the normative response in the West is to let the conventional criminal justice system investigate the situation, evaluate that person's guilt or innocence, and decide on any consequences that should be levied. Conventional justice processes, such as trials, emphasize principles such as procedural fairness, objectivity, and evidence-based reasoning (Rieke & Stutman, 1990; Wenzel, Okimoto, Feather, & Platow, 2008). Theoretically, the emphasis on procedural justice heightens the likelihood of arriving at a just outcome (i.e., distributive justice) for all parties.

Critics of conventional processes, however, argue that the criminal justice system is deficient in its outcomes, procedures, and treatment of the parties. To address these deficiencies, some critics advocate for the use of restorative justice (RJ) processes that they claim are more effective at addressing the personal and relational dimensions of conflict sparked by offensive behavior. Generally, RJ in the context of wrongdoing emphasizes the repair of material, emotional, and relational harm by the wrongdoer, typically through the use of facilitated dialogue among stakeholders (Paul, 2015, Paul & Borton, 2017; Bazemore & Walgrave, 1999; Borton, 2009; Daly, 2016; Marshall, 1999; Rugge & Cormier, 2005). There are many processes that fall under the RJ umbrella, including victim–offender mediation (VOM), victim–offender conferencing (VOC), family group conferencing, and peace circles (McCold, 2000; Raye & Roberts, 2007). These processes, while different, have a common value system that prioritizes personal and relational restoration of all parties, positive accountability, and dialogic communication (Paul & Borton, 2017, Paul & Swan, 2018; Bolívar, Aesrtsen, & Vanfraechem, 2013; Borton & Paul, 2015;

Braithwaite, 1999; Doolin, 2007; Newbury, 2008; Okimoto, Wenzel, & Feather, 2009; Roche, 2003; Tsui, 2014; Van Ness & Strong, 2010; Zehr & Mika, 2010).

Even as practitioners work to grow the use of RJ processes in communities, a central question connected with that work concerns ripeness for growth. Ripeness in this context pertains to people's receptivity to and support for the use of RJ processes in their communities (general ripeness) and to their willingness to participate in an RJ process if they are the victim of an offense (situational ripeness). A handful of studies have explored such ripeness by evaluating attitudes toward RJ, RJ processes, and RJ goals (Paul, 2015, Paul & Borton, 2017, Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2018; Ahlin et al., 2017; Bazemore & Leip, 2000; Roberts & Stalans, 2004). What remains largely unknown, however, is the factors that shape those attitudes.

Given the interpersonal nature of RJ processes, examining interpersonal beliefs people hold about one another should shed light on the roots of attitudes toward RJ participation and RJ goals. Research suggests that beliefs people hold about the other party in a conflict influences both conflict goals and practices (Adair, Taylor, & Tinsley, 2009; Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry, 2006). This likely extends to people who are presented an opportunity to meet with someone who has harmed them. In offense situations, victims tend to stereotype their offenders based on beliefs into which they have been socialized (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin,2017; Haegerich, Salerno, & Bottoms, 2013; Okimoto et al., 2009; Shapland et al., 2006; Zehr, 1990). These stereotypes, developed over time from numerous sources, include beliefs about the redeemability of offenders (i.e., whether offenders can change) and beliefs about the decision-making competence of offenders (i.e., whether offenders were capable of making sound decisions). Both beliefs are connected to core restorative justice aims of helping offenders to learn, grow, and take responsibility for their behavior (Paul & Swan, 2018).

Thus, this study examines not only people's beliefs about the redeemability and decision-making competence of youth and adult offenders but also the extent to which beliefs about youth and adult offenders' redeemability and decision-making competence influence perceptions of the importance of offender-related outcomes, the effectiveness and appropriateness of RJ processes, and willingness to participate in RJ processes. Examining the influence of these stereotypes helps to move research and practice forward in terms of individuals' general and situational RJ ripeness. In terms of general ripeness, there is little research, particularly when it comes to the influence of offender stereotypes. If RJ processes are indeed collaborative (or at least co-constructed) (Paul & Borton, 2017), then it is beneficial to understand how individual factors as well as beliefs about the "other" in RJ processes influence receptivity. It also is beneficial to explore socialization processes that shape such beliefs (Gavin & MacVean, 2018; Nowotny & Carrara, 2018). In terms of situational ripeness, when it comes to considering whether or not to participate in an RJ process such as victim–offender conferencing (VOC), research is developing a fairly clear understanding of the role that goals play in influencing participation (Paul, 2015, 2016, Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2018; Borton, 2009; Rugge & Cormier, 2005; Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2004; Van Camp, 2017). Less clearly understood are the factors that shape those goals. This study contributes to filling that gap, exploring how offender stereotypes influence participation willingness and the justice goals that shape such willingness. In all, this study contributes to the growth of systematic, "second-wave" RJ research (Hansen & Umbreit, 2018) and to efforts to increase receptivity to RJ.

This paper proceeds by reviewing the extant literature on justice outcomes, justice processes, and offender stereotypes regarding redeemability and decision-making competence. It then connects the literature on stereotypes with beliefs about outcome goal importance, perceived effectiveness and appropriateness of RJ processes, and willingness to participate in RJ processes. After describing the methods used, it presents the results of the data analysis using the responses of 207 participants who completed an online survey. It concludes by discussing the implications of the findings for both research and practice in restorative justice.

Attitudes Toward Justice Outcomes and Processes

In the West, offensive behavior tends to spark calls for justice to be brought against the wrongdoer, conventionally in the form of negative consequences, in order to teach the offender a lesson and provide

victims a sense of closure and affirmation (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017; Kelley, 2016; Okimoto et al., 2009; Roche, 2003; Tsui, 2014; Waldron & Kelley, 2008; Wenzel & Okimoto, 2010). RJ advocates, however, argue that conventional justice is ineffective at accomplishing those goals and does little to reduce the likelihood of recidivism (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007; Braithwaite, 2001; Rodriguez, 2007; Johnstone, 2001; Morris, 2002; Zehr, 2002). Instead, they argue that a more constructive response involves attending to offenders' and victims' needs tangible and intangible needs. For offenders, this includes addressing the root causes of problematic behavior, learning better behavior, and being accountable for repairing the harm done (Wachtel & McCold, 2001; Zehr, 2002). For victims, this includes receiving material and symbolic reparation (e.g., restitution, apology, and answers) from the offender, experiencing closure, and feeling a renewed sense of safety (Borton, 2009; Coates & Gehm, 1989; Umbreit et al., 2004; Wachtel & McCold, 2001). The parties may also wish to pursue reconciliation, though this is not a requirement of RJ (Armour & Umbreit, 2006; Braithwaite, 2016; Fehr & Gelfand, 2012). In all, RJ processes aim to accomplish multifaceted restoration for victims, offenders, and the wider community through dialogic processes that identify and address the parties' tangible and intangible needs.

Not everyone, however, wants to participate in RJ processes. A conflict goals perspective (Canary & Lakey, 2006; Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2013; Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2012; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007) suggests that desire to participate is driven by parties' particular, sometimes competing goals (Hansen & Umbreit, 2018). For example, VOC participation and participation willingness have been associated with people's desire to share their story, ask questions, and help their offender experience restoration (Paul, 2015, Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2018; Borton, 2009; Coates & Gehm, 1989; Peachey, 1989; Rugge & Cormier, 2005; Umbreit et al., 2004). Moreover, if parties believe that VOCs are effective at helping them accomplish their restorative goals, they are even more likely to be willing to participate (Paul, 2016).

One question that arises from these findings, then, is what shapes perceptions of goal importance and process effectiveness. Situational factors no doubt play a role, with offense severity and length of time between the offense and the RJ process influencing people's desired outcomes and participation interest (Paul, 2015; Wyrick & Costanzo, 1999; Zebel, Schreurs, & Ufkes, 2017). Beliefs about the other party also likely play a role, as they do in other types of conflict situations (Adair et al., 2009; Lewicki et al., 2006). These beliefs, which people attribute to offenders through the process of stereotyping, are particularly salient for RJ processes that are designed to be more personal than conventional justice processes. For example, if people believe that offenders are scary and violent, they may be less willing to meet in a VOC with their own offender (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2018). Moreover, conventional justice processes tend to do little to change victims' stereotypes of offenders (Umbreit et al., 2004). Thus, negative stereotypes people hold about offenders may reduce people's willingness to participate in VOCs, which in turn means that they will go through a conventional justice process that tends to reinforce those beliefs.

Redeemability and Decision-Making Competence

Given the importance of goals such as offender restoration and information-gathering on willingness to participate in VOCs (Paul, 2015, Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2018; Borton, 2009; Rugge & Cormier, 2005; Umbreit et al., 2004), two such beliefs about offenders are particularly relevant: redeemability of offenders and decision-making competence of offenders. Belief in redeemability, or the ability for someone to change for the better (Maruna & King, 2009), is at the heart of the goal of offender restoration. In their study of parolees in Australia, O'Sullivan, Williams, Hong, Bright, and Kemp (2018) observed that the parolees held a rather positive belief in their own redeemability. However, if victims or other community members do not share that belief, they may not perceive the prospect of offender restoration to be realistic, important, or worth pursuing.

Likewise, beliefs about decision-making competence, or the ability to understand and make appropriate decisions, are connected both to offender restoration and information-gathering goals. A conventional assumption is that wrongdoing is a conscious choice or decision that offenders make (Maruna &

King, 2009). If people do not believe that offenders have the capacity to make sound decisions, they may believe that their own offender cannot satisfactorily answer their questions about the offense. Thus, it would be ineffective to even ask an offender what or why they did what they did in a VOC, thereby negatively affecting a key factor that influences VOC participation willingness (Paul, 2015). In sum, redeemability and competence beliefs are connected to two central questions underlying RJ processes: whether the offender is capable of changing their behavior, and whether the offender is capable of understanding why and how their actions were hurtful.

Redeemability, Decision-Making Competence, and Orientations toward Restorative Justice

Working from an ideological perspective of justice attitudes (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017; Perloff, 2010), it is likely that beliefs about redeemability and competence are associated with people's attitudes toward justice outcomes and their perceptions of justice processes. In terms of justice outcomes, Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, (2017) identified three types of justice outcomes: restorative, which is based on individual and relational growth and learning; restitutive, which is based on making things right through apologizing (symbolic reparation) and restitution (material/financial reparation); and punitive, which is similar to "retributive" notions of justice that respond negatively to wrongdoing. These justice outcomes are evident in desired consequences like not wanting offenders to recidivate, hoping that offenders to learn from their actions, holding offenders accountable to provide restitution, expecting offenders to apologize, and wanting to see offenders punished (Paul & Dunlop, 2014). While punishment tends to be more conventional, the other outcomes tend to reflect restorative justice orientations to varying degrees (Paul & Dunlop, 2014). For example, whereas desires to see offenders learn and grow are more restorative, desires for restitution and apology reflect both conventional and restorative justice ideologies (Paul & Dunlop, 2014, Paul, 2015). Moreover, not only can people want multiple justice outcomes, but those outcomes exert differing influence on people's willingness to participate in RJ processes like victim–offender conferences (Paul, 2015). Thus, it is important to evaluate multiple justice outcomes.

In terms of the influence of redeemability and competence, it is likely that they are positively correlated with support for restorative outcomes such as nonrecidivism (i.e., getting on a better path), learning, and making things right through apologizing. However, they likely are negatively correlated with more punitive outcomes such as punishment and possibly restitution, given that restitution tends to be more impersonal in nature. For example, Maruna and King (2009) observed that people with low belief in redeemability tended to report higher degrees of punitiveness. In short, the more that people perceive that there is room for growth in terms of redeemability, they are more likely to perceive that growth-oriented outcomes also are important. Additionally, perceived competence may also be a signal that people believe that offenders can learn from their situation, making it at least somewhat more likely that they will prioritize growth-oriented outcomes.

Hypothesis 1A. Perceived redeemability will positively influence perceived importance of more restorative outcomes (not recidivating, learning, apologizing) and negatively influence perceived importance of more punitive outcomes (being punished and paying restitution).

Hypothesis 1B. Perceived decision-making competence will positively influence perceived importance of more restorative outcomes and negatively influence perceived importance of more punitive outcomes.

In terms of perceptions of RJ processes, beliefs about offender redeemability and decision-making competence also are likely correlated with people's perceptions of the effectiveness and appropriateness of those processes. For example, people who believe that offending is a matter of not having learned right from

wrong may feel that RJ processes provide an opportunity to teach the offender right from wrong, and thus may look more positively on such processes (Moss, Lee, Berman, & Rung, 2019). Moreover, if people believe that offenders are redeemable, they may look at dialogic processes like victim–offender conferences, which they may already view as opportunities for growth (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017), as mechanisms that facilitate redemption, thereby also heightening perceptions of effectiveness and appropriateness as well as support for VOCs and willingness to participate in VOCs. In short, it is likely that beliefs about offender redeemability and decision-making competence are associated with a number of factors related to support for VOCs, including orientations toward justice outcomes, perceptions of VOC effectiveness and appropriateness/evaluation, support for VOCs, and willingness to participate in VOCs.

> *Hypothesis 2.* Perceived redeemability and decision-making competence will positively influence ratings of (a) VOC effectiveness, (b) VOC evaluation, (c) support for the use of VOCs, and (d) willingness to participate in VOCs if the victim of an offense.

Perceptions of Adult and Youth Redeemability and Decision-Making Competence

Moreover, these beliefs likely vary based on whether offenders are youths or adults. Theories of cognitive and moral development (e.g., Gibbs, 2009; Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969) hypothesize that people's behavior and evaluative frameworks evolve over time. Kohlberg, for example, identifies three stages of moral development—preconventional, characterized by largely egocentric concerns of avoiding punishment and gaining something; conventional, characterized by a more relational emphasis on harmony and approval from others; and postconventional, characterized by overarching values. Development corresponds (at least roughly) with age and human experience, with adolescence being "a developmental period of increased moral sensitivity owing to more abstract thinking skills, greater perspective-taking abilities, and greater knowledge about social issues" (Krettenauer, 2017, p. 581). It is likely, then, that people expect adolescents to be less developed and mature than adults, who "should know better." One implication of this belief is that people may believe that youth are more capable of changing—that is, that youth are more redeemable than adults. Moreover, even though people tend to overestimate youth decision-making competence (Haegerich et al., 2013), people also are likely to believe that youth have less decision-making competence than adults. Relatedly, then, it also is likely that there are differences regarding support for the use of VOCs for first-time youth and adults, with people being more supportive of using VOCs for youth given their greater believed potential for redeemability and competence growth.

> *Hypothesis 3.* Participants will perceive youth offenders as being more redeemable and as having less decision-making competence than adult offenders.

> *Hypothesis 4.* Participants will be more supportive of the use of VOCs and will be more willing to participate in a VOC in cases of youth offending than adult offending.

Materials and Methods

The study reported on here is also described in Paul & Swan (2018). The following provides a summary of the information outlined in that article.

Sample

Using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), participants were recruited to participate in an online survey assessing perceptions of justice outcomes and justice processes. As noted by Mason and Suri (2012)

and Burhmester, Kwang, and Gosling (2011), using MTurk provides a way to obtain a more externally valid and diverse sample than does relying on convenience sampling on higher education campuses.

After eliminating three responses for noncompletion and three responses of participants located outside the United States, the final sample consisted of 207 participants. The sample was largely male ($n = 129$, 62.3%) and Caucasian ($n = 159$, 76.8%), with an average age of 33.84 (between 18 and 70 years old). As noted by Paul & Swan, (2018), participants in the sample had varying political affiliations, religious affiliations, levels of education, marital statuses, and employment statuses. The sample tended to be unfamiliar with RJ ($m = 1.74$, $SD = 0.75$) and victim–offender conferences ($m = 1.32$, $SD = 0.53$).

Procedures

People who agreed to participate through MTurk were directed to a Qualtrics website which hosted the online questionnaire. Participants were asked to think about their justice attitudes in the context of a first-time offending youth (between 10 and 17 years old) and a first-time offending adult who had committed an offense such as theft, simple assault, vandalism, or robbery. The purpose of providing these offenses was to help give people a more concrete situation to contextualize their responses. The specific offense types were chosen because they are commonly addressed in victim–offender conferences (VOCs) (Peachey, 1989; Umbreit et al., 2004; Wyrick & Costanzo, 1999).

Participants first completed a series of items pertaining to youth outcome importance and stereotypes of youth offenders before completing items pertaining to adult outcome importance and stereotypes of adult offenders. They were then shown the following neutrally worded description used in previous research (Paul, 2015, Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2018) to provide them some background and information about VOCs:

> In some situations, like burglary, vandalism, theft, and simple assault, first-time offenders and their victims can volunteer to participate in a process called victim–offender conferencing (VOC) run by a neutral facilitator after the offender has pleaded guilty in court. Before the VOC, the facilitator works with the victim and offender to ensure they are ready to participate and that it is safe to meet. In the VOC, the offender and people close to him/her meet with the victim and people close to him/her in a neutral setting, and the offender is encouraged to apologize. After the facilitator begins the meeting and lays ground rules, the offender tells their side of the story. The victim then asks the offender questions. The victim then shares their side of the story, and the offender then asks questions. Then, the two sides try to work out how the offender can (if possible) "make things right," such as by financial restitution, working off what is owed, etc. They then decide what relationship (if any) they would like to have with each other going forward. Any agreement they come to is written down and given to the court.

The wording of this description highlighted key VOC components to distinguish VOCs from conventional justice practices such as trials. It also took into account participants' potential preexisting beliefs about VOCs (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017) to clarify the purposes and processes used. Upon reading the description, participants then completed measures pertaining to (a) perceived effectiveness of VOCs at accomplishing those outcomes for both youth and adult offenders; (b) perceived appropriateness, effectiveness, and safety of VOCs; (c) support for court districts using VOCs in cases of first-time offending as described above for both youth and adult offenders; and (d) willingness to participate in a VOC if they were the victim of such a first-time offense by youth and adult offenders.

Variables and Measures

Stereotypes of Offenders
Ten items were selected from the Juvenile Offender Stereotype Scale regarding redeemability (seven items) and decision-making competence (three items) (Haegerich et al., 2013). These selected items, rather than the entire subscales, were used out of design validity concerns centering on participant

mortality. JOSS items were selected based on the extent to which they directly addressed the constructs of competence (e.g., "Most youths who commit crime are able to tell right from wrong," "Most youths who commit crime are not very mature decision-makers") and redeemability (e.g., "Most youth offenders can change," and "Hoping that most youth offenders can change is pointless"). Separate sets of items were used to measure stereotypes of youth offenders and stereotypes of adult offenders. Using confirmatory factor analysis and inspecting reliability estimates led to the exclusion of three items pertaining to redeemability and one item pertaining to decision-making competence. The final model had appropriate fit to the data ($\chi^2(8) = 4.77$, $p = .78$, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.00) and sufficient reliability ($\alpha_{youth\_redeemability} = .79$, $\alpha_{youth\_competence} = .74$, $\alpha_{adult\_redeemability} = .84$, $\alpha_{adult\_competence} = .83$). All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Scores for each subscale were added together.

Outcome Importance
Single-item measures were used to assess perceived importance of five offender outcomes: recidivism prevention, learning, restitution, punishment, and apology. These outcomes were chosen based on previous literature (Paul & Borton, 2017; Bolívar et al., 2013; Borton & Paul, 2015; Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2005; Shapland et al., 2006) and based on the measure developed by Paul (2015). Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important). Outcome importance was assessed with separate items for youth and adult offenders.

VOC Effectiveness
Similar to Paul (2016), effectiveness at accomplishing the offender outcomes identified above was assessed using single-item measures as well. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all effective, 5 = very effective). As with outcome importance, VOC effectiveness was assessed with separate items for youth and adult offenders.

VOC Evaluation
Evaluation of conventional and restorative justice processes was measured using 7 items assessed on a 5-point semantic differential scale (Paul & Swan, 2018). Items were selected based on a previous belief elicitation study (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017). Items were grouped together into three factors—appropriateness, fairness, and safety—based on factor loadings in exploratory factor analysis.

Support for VOC Use
Support for court districts using VOCs in cases of first-time youth or adult offending was measured with a single item for youth offending and a single item for adult offending. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = very unsupportive, 5 = very supportive).

Willingness to Participate in a VOC
Following Paul (2015), willingness to participate in a VOC if the victim of a first-time youth or adult offense was measured with a single item for youth offending and a single item for adult offending. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = very unwilling, 5 = very willing).

Control Variables
Given their potential influence, three demographic factors were included as control variables in the analyses: sex, age, and parent status. Sex and age were included given previous research suggesting that they might influence beliefs about justice and openness to participating in RJ processes (Borton, 2009). Parent status (i.e., whether the participant was a parent) also was included to account for potential differences in beliefs about youth.

Results

Influence of Offender Stereotypes

Hypotheses one and two addressed the influence of perceived redeemability and decision-making competence on outcome importance (Hypotheses 1A and B) and on perceptions of VOCs in terms of effectiveness, appropriateness, support, and willingness to participate (Hypothesis 2). To control for the influence of sex, age, and parent status, separate hierarchical regression tests were used to examine possible influence for youth and adults, with redeemability and competence added to the model in step 1 and the control variables being added in step 2 to see whether the addition of the control variables significantly changed the model. The discussion of results below, as well as the summary tables (see Tables 1 and 2), provides the statistics regarding redeemability and competence from step 2.

Stereotypes and Outcome Importance

In terms of outcome importance (Hypotheses 1A and B), five multiple regression tests each for youth and adult offenders suggested that both perceived redeemability and decision-making competence were influential. In terms of degree of influence, redeemability was the more influential factor shaping outcome importance for youth whereas competence was the more influential factor shaping outcome importance for adults (see Table 3). In terms of the importance of preventing recidivism, for example, redeemability ($\beta = .32$) was more influential than competence ($\beta = .22$) for youth, but competence ($\beta = .46$) was more influential than redeemability ($\beta = .03$) for adults. As hypothesized, redeemability negatively influenced perceived importance of restitution ($\beta_{youth} = -.15$; $\beta_{adult} = -.08$) and punishment ($\beta_{youth} = -.21$; $\beta_{adult} = -.25$) for youth and adults. In other words, the more redeemable people believed youth and adult offenders to be, the less important it was to them for offenders to pay restitution or be punished. In contrast, competence was positively related to restitution ($\beta_{youth} = .34$; $\beta_{adult} = .33$) and punishment ($\beta_{youth} = .18$; $\beta_{adult} = .27$) importance. In sum, for youth, redeemability was positively associated with perceived importance of restorative outcomes of nonrecidivism, learning, and apology, but was negatively associated with perceived importance of more conventional outcomes of restitution and punishment. For adults, redeemability was similarly associated with outcome importance, but less strongly. In terms of competence, again, similar influence patterns emerged for youth and adults, with competence being positively associated with importance of all outcomes, but particularly nonrecidivism, restitution, and punishment. Overall, while Hypotheses 1 A was supported in that redeemability was positively associated with more restorative outcomes and negatively associated with more restitutive and punitive outcomes, Hypothesis 1 B was not supported, with competence positively influence restorative, restitutive, and punitive outcomes.

Stereotypes and Process Perceptions and Support

Two process perceptions—VOC effectiveness and VOC evaluation—were evaluated. In terms of process effectiveness, again, several multiple regression tests were run for youth and adults. For both youth and adults, people perceived VOCs as being more effective at accomplishing nonrecidivism ($\beta_{youth} = .41$; $\beta_{adult} = .40$), learning ($\beta_{youth} = .41$; $\beta_{adult} = .52$), restitution ($\beta_{youth} = .25$; $\beta_{adult} = .35$), and apology ($\beta_{youth} = .51$; $\beta_{adult} = .22$) the more they perceived offenders as being redeemable (see Table 4). Perceived competence, however, was limited in its influence, significantly shaping only perceived effectiveness of VOCs at promoting youth learning ($\beta = .13$) and adult apologizing ($\beta = .15$). Thus, redeemability was a significant factor influencing perceived effectiveness of VOCs at accomplishing restorative outcomes for youth and adults.

   Second, in terms of evaluation of VOCs' fairness, appropriateness, and safety, multiple linear regression tests indicated that both redeemability and perceived competence were jointly influential (see

Table 1

Correlations among Youth-Related Outcome Importance, Process Effectiveness, Process Evaluation, Support for VOCs, and Willingness to Participate

	Red	Comp	IRec	ILrn	IRst	IPun	IAp	ERec	ELrn	ERst	EPun	EAp	App	Fair	Safe	Supp	Part
Red		.21**	.35***	.45***	-.09	-.19**	.30***	.40***	.55***	.28***	.05	.52***	.54***	.58***	.39***	.53***	.49***
Comp			.31***	.22***	.33***	.14*	.24***	.06	.25***	.19**	.02	.19**	.11	.16*	.02	.16*	.17*
IRec				.56***	.28***	.24***	.39***	.23***	.28***	.11	.03	.22***	.37***	.33***	.24***	.26***	.22**
ILrn					.25***	.21**	.39***	.29***	.47***	.20**	.08	.27***	.30***	.35***	.29***	.47***	.37***
IRst						.44***	.36***	.08	.14*	.23***	.15*	.02	.00	.09	.05	.11	.04
IPun							.35***	-.10	.03	.07	.12	-.02	-.05	.05	.01	-.00	.03
IAp								.22***	.37***	.28***	.15*	.25***	.25***	.27***	.21**	.31***	.31***
ERec									.64***	.40***	.31***	.49***	.44***	.46***	.42***	.50***	.49***
ELrn										.49***	.26***	.59***	.47***	.50***	.37***	.54***	.45***
ERst											.45***	.38***	.28***	.34***	.17*	.35***	.32***
EPun												.17*	.21**	.15	.15*	.22**	.27***
EAp													.36***	.42***	.14*	.42***	.41***
App														.74***	.60***	.43***	.43***
Fair															.55***	.47***	.45***
Safe																.37***	.37***
Supp																	.69***
Part																	
m	4.01	3.55	4.41	4.42	3.88	3.50	4.18	3.72	4.12	3.78	3.23	4.29	3.87	3.95	3.59	3.93	3.92
SD	0.73	0.92	0.83	0.89	1.05	1.11	0.99	0.98	0.99	1.06	1.06	0.86	0.81	0.89	0.94	1.12	1.19

Notes. App, VOC Appropriateness; Comp, Decision-Making Competence; EAp, Apology Effectiveness; ELrn, Learning Effectiveness; EPun, Punishment Effectiveness; ERec, Recidivism Effectiveness; ERst, Restitution Effectiveness; Fair, VOC Fairness; IAp, Apology Importance; ILrn, Learning Importance; IPun, Punishment Importance; IRec, Recidivism Importance; IRst, Restitution Importance; Part, Willingness to Participate in a VOC; Red, Redeemability; Supp, Support for the use of VOCs; VOC, VOC Safety.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 2

Correlations among Adult-Related Outcome Importance, Process Effectiveness, Process Evaluation, Support for VOCs, and Willingness to Participate

	Red	Comp	IRec	ILrn	IRst	IPun	IAp	ERec	ELrn	ERst	EPun	EAp	App	Fair	Safe	Supp	Part
Red		.21**	.11	.42***	-.03	-.21**	.19**	.39***	.42***	.36***	.20**	.26***	.27***	.29***	.36***	.42***	.34***
Comp			.46***	.17*	.33***	.20**	.15*	.03	.08	.13	.01	.17*	.17*	.24***	.13	.16*	.11
IRec				.50***	.52***	.38***	.28***	.16*	.13	.11	-.02	.10	.35***	.36***	.26***	.18**	.08
ILrn					.24***	.07	.40***	.36***	.36***	.29***	.18**	.13	.29***	.31***	.32***	.41***	.31***
IRst						.58***	.33***	.00	.04	.12	.02	-.02	.15*	.21**	.16*	.10	-.03
IPun							.31***	-.10	-.15*	.01	.07	-.05	.03	.09	.06	-.04	-.11
IAp								.15*	.15*	.11	.11	.00	.12	.15*	.13	.17*	.17*
ERec									.69***	.51***	.45***	.47***	.33***	.28***	.32***	.52***	.53***
ELrn										.51***	.39***	.47***	.25***	.32***	.27***	.44***	.46***
ERst											.46***	.39***	.25***	.30***	.30***	.36***	.29***
EPun												.33***	.19**	.16*	.18**	.36***	.30***
EAp													.20**	.20**	.12	.31***	.34***
App														.74***	.60***	.35***	.25***
Fair															.55***	.30***	.20**
Safe																.39***	.25***
Supp																	.66***
Part																	
m	3.40	4.20	4.42	4.03	4.30	3.90	3.94	3.14	3.59	3.63	3.03	3.91	3.87	3.95	3.59	3.56	3.37
SD	0.83	0.85	0.84	1.04	0.97	1.11	1.13	1.02	1.07	1.11	1.09	0.94	0.81	0.89	0.94	1.20	1.28

Notes. App, VOC Appropriateness; Comp, Decision-Making Competence; EAp, Apology Effectiveness; ELrn, Learning Effectiveness; EPun, Punishment Effectiveness; ERec, Recidivism Effectiveness; ERst, Restitution Effectiveness; Fair, VOC Fairness; IAp, Apology Importance; ILrn, Learning Importance; IPun, Punishment Importance; IRec, Recidivism Importance; IRst, Restitution Importance; Part, Willingness to Participate in a VOC; Red, Redeemability; Supp, Support for the use of VOCs; VOC, VOC Safety.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 3

Influence of Perceived Redeemability and Decision-Making Competence on Importance of Offender Outcomes

Offender Type	Criterion	Predictors	B	SE	t	β	F
Youth	Nonrecidivism	Redeemable	0.37	0.07	5.05***	.32	$F(5, 198) = 10.2, p < .001, R^2 = .20$
		Competence	0.19	0.05	3.37***	.22	
	Learning	Redeemable	0.52	0.07	6.73***	.43	$F(5, 198) = 11.8, p < .001, R^2 = .23$
		Competence	0.11	0.06	1.86†	.12	
	Restitution	Redeemable	−0.21	0.09	−2.30*	−.15	$F(5, 198) = 7.84, p < .001, R^2 = .16$
		Competence	0.38	0.07	5.07***	.34	
	Punishment	Redeemable	−0.31	0.10	−3.02**	−.21	$F(5, 198) = 3.65, p = .004, R^2 = .08$
		Competence	0.21	0.08	2.58*	.18	
	Apology	Redeemable	0.37	0.09	4.04***	.27	$F(5, 198) = 6.93, p < .001, R^2 = .14$
		Competence	0.18	0.07	2.49*	.16	
Adult	Nonrecidivism	Redeemable	0.03	0.06	0.46	.03	$F(5, 198) = 11.8, p < .001, R^2 = .23$
		Competence	0.47	0.06	7.30***	.46	
	Learning	Redeemable	0.51	0.08	6.06***	.39	$F(5, 198) = 10.2, p < .001, R^2 = .20$
		Competence	0.13	0.08	1.69†	.11	
	Restitution	Redeemable	−0.09	0.07	−1.18	−.08	$F(5, 198) = 6.1, p < .001, R^2 = .13$
		Competence	0.37	0.07	4.86***	.33	
	Punishment	Redeemable	−0.33	0.09	−3.68***	−.25	$F(5, 198) = 5.7, p < .001, R^2 = .12$
		Competence	0.35	0.08	4.02***	.27	
	Apology	Redeemable	0.24	0.09	2.54*	.17	$F(5, 198) = 5.0, p < .001, R^2 = .11$
		Competence	0.16	0.09	1.76†	.12	

Note. †$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Table 5). However, the extent to which they were influential varied between youth and adult offense situations. In youth offense situations, redeemability was the only significant factor, positively influencing perceptions of appropriateness ($\beta = .54$), fairness ($\beta = .60$), and safety ($\beta = .40$). In adult offense situations, not only did redeemability positively influence perceived appropriateness ($\beta = .37$), fairness ($\beta = .25$), and safety ($\beta = .29$), but competence also was positively associated with perceived appropriateness ($\beta = .16$) and fairness ($\beta = .18$). Overall, redeemability and, to a lesser extent, competence positively influenced evaluations of VOCs' appropriateness, fairness, and safety.

Finally, in terms of support for VOC use (general ripeness) and willingness to participate in VOCs (situational ripeness) in cases of youth offending and adult offending, tests again indicated that redeemability and competence together significantly influenced all variables (see Table 6). However, redeemability was the only factor that significantly shaped such general and situational ripeness, positively influencing both support for the use of VOCs ($\beta_{youth} = .52$; $\beta_{adult} = .40$) and willingness to participate in a VOC ($\beta_{youth} = .48$; $\beta_{adult} = .34$).

Overall, hypothesis two was partially supported. Although the influence of decision-making competence is muted, the influence of redeemability was pervasive, positively influencing perceptions of VOC effectiveness and effectiveness, support for VOC use, and willingness to participate in a VOC.

Stereotypes of Youth versus Adult Offenders

Hypothesis three predicted that participants would perceive youth as being more redeemable but as having less decision-making competence than adults. To control for the potential influence of sex, age, and parent status, a repeated measures ANCOVA was used. Analysis revealed a significant difference in perceived redeemability ($F(1, 200) = 4.34, p = .038$) and competence ($F(1, 200) = 5.28, p = .023$). There was no significant interaction by any of the control variables on either dependent variable. Participants

Table 4

Influence of Perceived Redeemability and Decision-Making Competence on Perceived VOC Effectiveness

Offender type	Criterion	Predictors	B	SE	t	β	F
Youth	Nonrecidivism	Redeemable	0.55	0.08	6.28***	.41	$F(5, 198) = 8.93, p < .001, R^2 = .18$
		Competence	−0.03	0.07	−0.48	−.03	
	Learning	Redeemable	0.71	0.08	8.82***	.52	$F(5, 198) = 19.7, p < .001, R^2 = .33$
		Competence	0.14	0.06	2.28*	.13	
	Restitution	Redeemable	0.36	0.09	3.71***	.25	$F(5, 198) = 4.93, p < .001, R^2 = .11$
		Competence	0.14	0.07	1.83†	.12	
	Punishment	Redeemable	0.06	0.10	0.65	.04	$F(5, 198) = .55, p > .05$
		Competence	0.01	0.08	0.17	.01	
	Apology	Redeemable	0.60	0.07	8.36***	.51	$F(5, 198) = 16.7, p < .001, R^2 = .29$
		Competence	0.08	0.05	1.49	.09	
Adult	Nonrecidivism	Redeemable	0.49	0.08	6.11***	.40	$F(5, 198) = 9.02, p < .001, R^2 = .18$
		Competence	−0.04	0.07	−0.58	−.03	
	Learning	Redeemable	0.54	0.08	6.32***	.41	$F(5, 198) = 8.96, p < .001, R^2 = .18$
		Competence	−0.01	0.08	−0.01	−.01	
	Restitution	Redeemable	0.48	0.09	5.30***	.35	$F(5, 198) = 6.50, p < .001, R^2 = .14$
		Competence	0.06	0.09	−0.67	.04	
	Punishment	Redeemable	0.27	0.09	2.85**	.20	$F(5, 198) = 1.94, p > .05$
		Competence	−0.00	0.09	−0.07	−.00	
	Apology	Redeemable	0.26	0.08	3.24**	.22	$F(5, 198) = 3.96, p < .001, R^2 = .09$
		Competence	0.17	0.07	2.26*	.15	

Note. †$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

rated youth ($m = 4.01$, $SD = 0.73$) higher in redeemability than adults ($m = 3.40$, $SD = 0.83$) (see Tables 5 and 6 for descriptives and correlations). They also rated adults ($m = 4.20$, $SD = 0.85$) higher in decision-making competence than youth ($m = 3.55$, $SD = 0.92$).

Support for VOCs for Youth and Adult Offenders

Hypothesis four predicted that participants would be more supportive of using VOCs for first-time youth offenders than they would be of using VOCs for first-time adult offenders. It also predicted that VOC participation willingness would be higher in cases of first-time offending by youth than in cases of first-time offending by adults. Repeated measures ANCOVAs were used to test these hypotheses. With regard to support, although a significant difference emerged without the control variables between support for youth VOCs ($m = 3.93$, $SD = 1.12$) and support for adult VOCs ($m = 3.56$, $SD = 1.20$) ($F(1, 205) = 35.1$, $p < .001$), the difference became nonsignificant after including the control variables, $F(1, 199) = 0.20$, $p = .65$. A similar pattern emerged with regard to participation willingness. Although a significant difference emerged without the control variables between youth VOC participation willingness ($m = 3.92$, $SD = 1.19$) and adult VOC participation willingness ($m = 3.37$, $SD = 1.28$) ($F(1, 206) = 55.9$, $p < .001$), the difference became nonsignificant after including the control variables, $F(1, 200) = 2.55$, $p = .11$.

Discussion

Stereotyping is a common practice when encountering or interacting with someone perceived to belong to a different social group (Adair et al., 2009; Lewicki et al., 2006). Offensive situations are no different, as victims tend to stereotype their offenders (Haegerich et al., 2013; Shapland et al., 2006; Zehr, 1990),

Table 5
Influence of Perceived Redeemability and Decision-Making Competence on Evaluation of VOCs

Offender type	Criterion	Predictors	B	SE	t	β	F
Youth	Appropriate	Redeemable	0.60	0.06	9.08***	.54	$F(5, 198) = 18.6, p < .001, R^2 = .32$
		Competence	0.04	0.05	0.75	.04	
	Fair	Redeemable	0.72	0.07	10.34***	.60	$F(5, 198) = 23.2, p < .001, R^2 = .37$
		Competence	0.00	0.05	0.16	.00	
	Safe	Redeemable	0.51	0.08	6.10***	.40	$F(5, 198) = 8.60, p < .001, R^2 = .17$
		Competence	−0.07	0.06	1.14	−.07	
Adult	Appropriate	Redeemable	0.37	0.06	5.72***	.37	$F(5, 198) = 9.97, p < .001, R^2 = .20$
		Competence	0.16	0.06	2.54*	.16	
	Fair	Redeemable	0.27	0.07	3.69***	.25	$F(5, 198) = 5.74, p < .001, R^2 = .12$
		Competence	0.20	0.07	2.74**	.18	
	Safe	Redeemable	0.34	0.07	4.36***	.29	$F(5, 198) = 5.49, p < .001, R^2 = .12$
		Competence	0.06	0.07	0.80	.05	

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Table 6
Influence of Perceived Redeemability and Decision-Making Competence on Support for VOCs and Willingness to Participate in VOCs

Offender type	Criterion	Predictors	B	SE	t	β	F
Youth	Support	Redeemable	0.79	0.09	8.54***	.52	$F(5, 198) = 16.8, p < .001, R^2 = .29$
		Competence	0.04	0.07	0.62	.03	
	Willingness	Redeemable	0.77	0.10	7.74***	.48	$F(5, 198) = 14.5, p < .001, R^2 = .26$
		Competence	0.09	0.08	1.19	.07	
Adult	Support	Redeemable	0.59	0.09	6.21***	.40	$F(5, 197) = 10.0, p < .001, R^2 = .20$
		Competence	0.11	0.09	1.25	.08	
	Willingness	Redeemable	0.53	0.10	5.14***	.34	$F(5, 198) = 8.54, p < .001, R^2 = .17$
		Competence	0.10	0.10	0.99	.06	

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

especially when they do not know who offended them. The findings of this study suggest that stereotypes of youth and adult offenders have wide-ranging influence on attitudes toward justice goals and processes. The more people believe that offenders are redeemable and competent with regard to making decisions, the more important they find restorative outcomes to be, the more effective and appropriate they find restorative processes to be, and the more supportive they tend to be of restorative processes.

Influence of Redeemability and Competence on Outcome and Process Perceptions

While both redeemability and decision-making competence are influential, redeemability appears to exert a wider and stronger degree of influence over perceived outcome-related perceptions in terms of importance of outcomes and effectiveness of VOCs at accomplishing those outcomes. Table 7 summarizes the findings regarding influence of redeemability and competence on outcome importance and process effectiveness in youth and adult offense situations. Three elements of those findings stand out. First, redeemability exerted a wider range and generally higher degree of influence than did decision-making competence. Generally speaking, the more participants believed that a youth or adult offender was redeemable the more important they perceived restorative outcomes such as learning and apologizing to be and the more effective they perceived VOCs to be at accomplishing those outcomes. Second, for

Table 7

Summary of Standardized Beta Weights of Redeemability and Competence on Outcome Importance, Process Effectiveness, Process Evaluation, VOC Support, and VOC Participation Willingness

Outcome	Outcome belief	Redeemability		Competence	
		Youth	Adult	Youth	Adult
Nonrecidivism	Importance	.32***	.03	.22***	.46***
	Effectiveness	.41***	.40***	−.03	−.03
Learning	Importance	.43***	.39***	.12†	.11†
	Effectiveness	.52***	.41***	.13*	−.01
Restitution	Importance	−.15*	−.08	.34***	.33***
	Effectiveness	.25***	.35***	.12	.04
Punishment	Importance	−.21**	−.25***	.18*	.27***
	Effectiveness	.04	.20**	.01	−.07
Apology	Importance	.27***	.17*	.16*	.12†
	Effectiveness	.51***	.22**	.09	.15*
VOC	Appropriateness	.54***	.37***	.04	.16*
	Fairness	.60***	.25***	.00	.18***
	Safety	.40***	.29***	−.07	.05
	Support	.52***	.40***	.03	.08
	Willingness to Participate	.48***	.34***	.07	.06

Note. $^{†}p < .10$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

several outcomes, redeemability positively influenced both outcome importance and process effectiveness. For example, redeemability was positively associated with importance of learning and perceived VOC effectiveness at accomplishing learning for both youth and adults. The same pattern is evident with regard to apologizing and, at least for youth, nonrecidivism. This suggests that redeemability may have a type of compounding effect that in turn may influence support for VOCs and willingness to participate in a VOC. Third, compared to redeemability, perceived decision-making competence had a narrower range and degree of influence. The more competent people believed youth and adult offenders to be, the more important they perceived restitution and punishment to be. (Conversely, redeemability was negatively associated with restitution and punishment importance.) One reason for this may be that participants believe that offenders who are competent should know better and thus should face the unpleasant consequences for their actions. In all, belief in redeemability tended to be more influential than belief in decision-making competence.

Influence of Redeemability and Competence on General and Situational Ripeness

In terms of general ripeness, redeemability again was the primary factor influencing perceived appropriateness of VOCs and support for VOCs for both youth and adult offenders. The more redeemable participants felt offenders to be, the more they perceived VOCs to be appropriate, fair, and safe, and the more they supported the use of VOCs in their communities. One reason for this may be an underlying belief that offenders are capable of changing, that their behavior may make them ripe for change, and that VOCs are an effective way to help that change come about. This might apply to perceptions of certain offenders as simply being "wayward," defined by Greene, Duke, and Woody (2017) as "a fundamentally good person who, as a victim of impoverished social and economic environments and lacking peer and family support and educational opportunities, strayed into delinquency" (p. 4). Another reason may be rooted in a general ideology of restoration that underlies a more hopeful, positive orientation toward offenders and toward processes that can help realize those hopes (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2018). Thus,

if people tend to see offenders more as wayward individuals than as "superpredators" (Greene et al., 2017), they likely will be more receptive to RJ processes such as VOCs.

The differences in support for VOCs in cases of youth and adult offending are also noteworthy. The higher support for use of VOCs in youth cases as opposed to adult cases likely corresponds to beliefs about the development and redeemability of youth as well as to reasons that people have for participating in VOCs. If VOC participation (at least in cases of youth offending) is driven to some extent by the desire to help the offender learn, it may be that people believe that adult offenders already should know proper ways of behaving and that VOCs would not do them any good. Thus, people may be more supportive of VOC use for youth cases because of the compounding effects of belief in redeemability regarding key justice outcomes such as offender learning, offender apology, and prevention of offender recidivism.

Implications for Research and Practice

In all, the findings have a number of implications and raise a number of questions for RJ researchers and practitioners moving forward. From a research and theory perspective, one of the more interesting questions surfaces a chicken-and-egg issue with regard to RJ participation. One hoped for outcome of RJ involvement is that victims (and offenders) will be able to reality-check the assumptions and stereotypes they have made about each other. For example, victims will be able to check their assumptions about how unsafe, scary, and threatening their offenders are. RJ advocates argue that participating in restorative processes tends to break these assumptions as victims interact with their offenders. The results of this study, in turn, suggest that those stereotypes might influence someone's willingness to participate in RJ processes to begin with, perhaps filtering out those people who would make uncharitable assumptions about offenders. So, is it that RJ processes are effective at removing negative assumptions? Is it that people who self-select into RJ processes already likely do not hold those assumptions or at least do not hold those assumptions strongly? These questions are particularly relevant if people are more likely to meet with offenders they consider to be merely wayward and not "hardened criminals." They also are relevant when it comes to assessing the effectiveness of RJ processes. If self-selection bias is at work, how much of the observed outcomes of RJ participation should be attributed to that participation? Would those outcomes have been observed regardless? Does RJ participation simply speed up the realization of those outcomes?

Additional research also can examine how stereotypes influence victim–offender interaction when they meet. Is there a significant difference in assumptions victims make about offender redeemability prior to and immediately following VOC participation? What are the implications of those assumptions for people's interactional practices and language choices? These questions help to shed light on why (and whether) RJ processes work the way they do. Arriving at a theory of restoration driven by systematic examination of components parts of processes of restoration can help practitioners and researchers to design RJ processes that work for all and that build support for the use of those processes in multiple contexts.

In terms of practice, the findings have implications for facilitation, outreach, and evaluation. When working with victims during preconference meetings, facilitators should work to surface underlying stereotypes of offenders' redeemability and competence held by those victim. Doing so can help facilitators to understand why certain outcomes are important to victims and can help facilitators assist victims in meeting those goals. In terms of outreach, RJ advocates would do well to address assumptions made by the public about offenders' redeemability and competence. If part of the effort of growing the use of RJ involves ripening the context for it within communities, then advocates should be addressing beliefs about redeemability and decision-making competence, while also being mindful that stereotypes can be difficult to change. This likely represents a long-term effort that involves developing narratives that demonstrate that offenders can, in fact, change. Finally, practitioners' assessment practices likely need to be more sensitive when evaluating the effectiveness of RJ participation on changing stereotypes.

Conducting pre- and postparticipation evaluations can help organizations get a better handle on whether or not process involvement is changing people's stereotypes of offenders.

Limitations and Conclusion

As noted in Paul & Swan, (2018), limitations to this study should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings. While previous conflict research has used hypothetical scenarios (e.g., Paul, 2015; De Cremer & Tyler, 2007; Feng & Burleson, 2008; Gollwitzer & Bucklein, 2007; Pereira, 2017; Witvliet et al., 2008; Wohl & McGrath, 2007), how people say they would act in a scenario may not match how they actually would act. It would be helpful to explore the influence of offender stereotypes with people offered the opportunity to participate in a VOC through a field experiment. Another limitation concerns the external validity of the sample (Paul & Swan, 2018). While using MTurk diversified the sample, the sample may not reflect particular communities or contexts. Thus, findings may not be generalizable to other more diverse populations. A third limitation pertains to the measurement of decision-making competence. The attempt to improve design-related internal validity by lowering participant mortality likely led to limitations in measurement-related internal validity associated with selecting only certain items rather than using the entire subscale. While the data indicate that the measure used in this study was reliable, it would be helpful for future studies to use the more robust and complete version of the JOSS subscale to measure decision-making competence and see whether similar results are obtained. Finally, as with survey research in general, common method biases such as leniency biases, social desirability, and the use of common scale anchors might be at work (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Use of Harman's single-factor test, a widely used (and notedly "insensitive" test), suggests that such biases may not be evident in the data, at least to a problematic extent. Even so, while the study attempted to address these potential biases by maintaining participant anonymity and using neutral wording for items and VOC descriptions, concerns related to social desirability and leniency are still possible and can be explored as future studies use other data sets and methods to examine attitudes toward justice outcomes and processes.

Altogether, the findings of this study help to advance research on receptivity to RJ processes and participation. This study draws attention to the influence of people's stereotypes of offenders on their perceptions of outcome importance, process appropriateness and effectiveness, and support for RJ processes. In particular, beliefs about offender redeemability and decision-making competence play a meaningful role in shaping situational and general ripeness. Understanding the influence of these and other stereotypes not only can help to improve our understanding of the restoration process of victims and offenders, it also can help to address barriers to restoration for individuals, relationships, and communities.

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Readiness Theory: A New Approach to Understanding Mediated Prenegotiation and Negotiation Processes Leading to Peace Agreements

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Abstract

Two main theoretical strands suggest causal explanations for the shifts in the de-escalation dynamics of conflicts, in which parties that had been unwilling to sit together at the negotiating table ultimately agreed to do so and eventually signed an agreement. The first is the ripeness strand which embodies three loosely related subtheories, and the second, a corollary of it, is the readiness strand which is based on readiness theory. By applying readiness theory to two case studies of mediated negotiations which ended in agreement in Aceh (2005) and Sudan (2005), this study illustrates the value of the readiness strand as an integrative analytical framework for examining the negotiation process from prenegotiation to negotiation and agreement. This type of multicausal and dynamic analysis, which considers gradual changes in the variables throughout the process, offers insights for researchers as well as for practitioners.

This article illustrates the value of readiness theory in elucidating the multiple causal effects and movements underlying mediated negotiations which conclude with the parties reaching an agreement. By applying readiness theory to two case studies in which third parties were engaged in mobilizing the adversaries to negotiate and come to agreement, the article explains how readiness theory and its hypotheses can contribute, as a single analytical framework, to our understanding of the dynamics which influence parties to negotiate and come to a mutually accepted understanding.

Two main theoretical strands in the conflict resolution field suggest causal explanations for the shifts in the de-escalation dynamics of conflicts, in which parties that had been unwilling to sit together at the negotiating table ultimately agreed to do so and eventually signed an agreement (Schiff, 2020). The first of these two is the "ripeness strand." This strand, which originates in ripeness theory (Zartman, 1985, 2000, 2008, 2012), embodies three loosely related subtheories. It includes the original ripeness theory, which centers on the Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS) and the Way Out (WO) conditions as well as the notions of "Soft Stalemate" (S5) and Turning Points to explain prenegotiation dynamics in internal conflicts (Zartman, 1995, 2012). The ripeness strand also incorporates a third subtheory, the "Push and Pull Theory" (Zartman, 2008, 2012) which applies the basic logic of ripeness and the perception of Mutually Enticing Opportunity (MEO) to explain the successful conclusion of negotiations. This strand

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has dominated the discourse in the field of conflict resolution with respect to the opportune timing for the inauguration of negotiations.

The second, newer, readiness theoretical strand is based on readiness theory (Pruitt, 1997, 2005, 2007, 2015a, 2015b; Schiff, 2014a, 2014b; Schiff, 2020) which is a derivative of ripeness theory. Readiness theory lays out the processes underlying the movement toward settling conflicts. It explains what drives parties which are immersed in conflict, especially in intractable conflict, to engage in dialogue for the purpose of reaching an agreement to resolve their conflict. Though originally focused on exploring prenegotiation dynamics that foster readiness for negotiation (Pruitt, 2005, 2007), recent studies have extended readiness theory's reach and confirmed its efficacy in the bargaining phase as well, to assess the elements which influence the parties' readiness to make concessions and arrive at an agreement, beyond the prenegotiation stage (Schiff, 2020, 2014a, 2014b).

The main argument in this study is that the unique features of the readiness theory strand make it a useful analytical framework for the exploration of the origins of peace agreements (Schiff, 2020). These features include its richness in the manner in which it outlines the multiple antecedents of negotiation, and its discussion of multiple variables which can assist in screening the gradual movement in the parties' perceptions, which lead them to the negotiation table. Another singular feature of readiness theory is that it is integrated or unified as it discusses the same variables as antecedents of both entry into negotiation and progress within it, including the various forms of third-party engagement (Pruitt, 2005, 2007; Schiff, 2020, 2014a, 2014b). The qualities inherent in readiness theory contribute to illuminating the complex interrelationships among the factors at play in peace processes, allowing researchers to isolate more causes and causal effects in dynamic processes that are not necessarily linear and often have multiple sources (Pruitt, 2005, 2007; Schiff, 2020). These traits also enable readiness theory to elucidate multiple effects and movements in de-escalation processes in a wide range of historical cases, whether interstate or internal, bilateral or mediated, thus revealing the mechanisms through which third parties influence the dynamics and outcome of the process.

This article presents the efficacy of readiness theory by applying its analytical framework to an examination of the factors which affected the outcome of prenegotiation and negotiation episodes in the Aceh conflict, which led to the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), and in the Sudan conflict, which culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In these two intractable conflicts, third-party engagement was intensive and successful: first, in bringing the parties to the table, and then, in helping the parties to reach agreement. Three questions guided the investigation of both cases: Which factors influenced the parties' readiness to negotiate and brought them to the negotiating table? Which factors drove the parties toward agreement once negotiations had begun, or influenced the parties' readiness to reach an agreement? And finally, what was the third party's role during the prenegotiation and negotiation stages?

The empirical evidence derived from intractable conflicts shows repeated attempts to end these conflicts through negotiations, with third parties often both pushing and pulling the parties to the table, and these attempts nevertheless often resulting in nonagreement or in failed negotiations (Faure, 2012; Faure & Zartman, 2012; Hopmann, 2012). It seems that many elements must be in place to enable the process to succeed in bringing the parties to the table and ensuring that they agree to demonstrate the flexibility required for agreement to be reached. The situation in Cyprus since 1974, in which Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have repeatedly started and ended the negotiation process in disagreement; the failure to reach a final status agreement in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict since the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) in 1993; and the failure to reach a peace agreement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict since 1994 are but a few examples of peace initiatives which continue to flounder. However, peace negotiations can sometimes bring the parties in an intractable conflict to agree on the details of the formula for a solution and to sign a peace agreement, as was the case in Aceh and in Sudan. It is therefore important to decipher the factors and mechanisms which led to the successful negotiation outcomes in these cases.

In both cases studied in this article, the negotiation episodes concluded in peace accords signed in 2005. The peace process undertaken in Aceh between the government of Indonesia (GoI), under then-president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), and the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or GAM) led to the signing of the MoU in August 2005. This MoU, a broad framework agreement for peace, ended three decades of intractable violent conflict in Aceh, where there was an ongoing armed struggle for Aceh's independence from Indonesian rule. The negotiation process, mediated by Martti Ahtisaari, the president of the Crisis Management Initiative, a nongovernmental organization, with the active backing of the international community, produced the MoU in the relatively short space of seven months (Schiff, 2020). The success of this process is especially noteworthy in light of previous failures to reach an agreement. The second case study involves the peace talks between the government of Sudan (GoS), under Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir's administration, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), headed by John Garang, which represented the southern part of Sudan. These talks lasted two and a half years and culminated in the CPA signed in January 2005. Third parties featured prominently in this process, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) organization, the U.S. and other state actors, and the mediator, General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, who played a particularly crucial role. The agreement officially ended the second civil war between forces from the south and the northern-based government—a war that had raged for more than 22 years—and paved the way for the establishment of an independent South Sudan (Schiff, 2020).

The examination of the case studies is conducted through a qualitative content analysis of the statements by the leaders of the two parties, media interviews with the various actors who played a role, official reports from third parties, and input from secondary sources concerning the processes studied. The article is divided into three parts. The first section presents a theoretical review of the two strands which discuss factors influencing prenegotiation and negotiation outcomes—the ripeness strand and the readiness strand. In this context, emphasis is placed on the necessity of moving beyond the ripeness strand to consider an analytical framework which elucidates the complex relationships among the different factors and the dynamics which affect international negotiation processes, with special emphasis on third-party intervention and influence. In the second section, the concepts of readiness for negotiation and readiness to reach an agreement are subjected to empirical rigor through the examination of the prenegotiation and negotiation episodes undergone by the parties to the intrastate conflicts in Aceh and in Sudan. Conclusions and thoughts for future research are presented in the final section.

Two Theoretical Strands for Understanding the Timing and Outcome of Negotiation

As previously stated, the ripeness strand and the readiness strand both shed light on the elements which convince rivals to change their approach and embark on the bilateral track and even to sign an agreement.

Ripeness as a Theoretical Strand

Zartman's ripeness theory, first outlined in the mid-1980s (Zartman, 1985), was an original idea which seeks to explain why, and thus when, parties to a conflict will commence negotiation toward resolution (Zartman, 2000). It addresses two necessary (albeit insufficient) elements required for the parties to agree to bilateral or mediated negotiation and for "the productive inauguration of negotiations" (Zartman, 2001: 9): a MHS, optimally associated with an impending, past, or recently avoided catastrophe, and a WO (Zartman, 1985, 1999, 2000). The theory asserts that negotiations take place when both parties lose confidence in their chances of winning and see an opportunity for minimizing their losses and reaching a satisfactory solution through accommodation (Zartman, 1995: 9). It stresses that unless the two necessary elements for a ripe moment exist, "the search for an agreed outcome cannot begin" (Zartman, 2000:

227). Both elements (MHS and WO) are perceptional and subjective, are aided by objective evidence, and must exist (though not necessarily at the same level) in both parties (Zartman, 2008; Zartman & de Soto, 2010). In this context, a stalemate is referred to as a painful deadlock between two equal and checking powers, in which both are suffering (Zartman, 1995). This situation must be perceived as such by the parties to the conflict or by a third-party mediator who can try to nurture the ripeness of the conflict (Zartman & de Soto, 2010).

In the framework of the evolving discourse about the ripeness strand, the conditions identified in ripeness theory have been studied and revised to help explain why parties decide to engage in negotiation in internal intractable conflicts, and also to help explain why negotiations succeed or fail (Zartman, 1995, 2008, 2012). Thus, the concepts of S5 and turning points were embraced as elements which may explain changes in the antagonists' political positions vis-à-vis negotiation in intractable intrastate conflicts, including ethnonational struggles, and prod them toward negotiation (Zartman, 1995). Studies have indicated that these conflicts tend to lack the ripeness that creates pressure to negotiate (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2018; Zartman, 1995, 2005) and that in these conflicts, both the insurgents and the government might at best find themselves in an S5 situation—a soft, stable, self-serving stalemate, a no-win situation for both sides, which is constant, viable, and bearable. As a result, the parties to the conflict do not experience pressure to seek alternatives to their situation (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2018; Zartman, 1995, 2005, 2008). In these circumstances, some turning points are required to encourage the parties to "change their estimate of future potentialities" (Zartman, 1995: 18) and search for alternatives to the unilateral track.

The concept of turning points as essential elements for pushing and enticing the parties in intrastate conflicts to negotiate draws our attention to the influence of the threat of a worsening situation and the prospect of new opportunities that may be accessed through negotiation, on the parties' willingness to negotiate in internal conflicts (Zartman, 1995). In this framework, the theory suggests a possible role for a third-party mediator in convincing the parties that the stalemate they are experiencing "is neither soft nor stable nor satisfactory in comparison to the benefits that could be obtained from a settlement" (Zartman, 2005, 60).

Another analytical framework which emerged in the ripeness discourse, in response to the challenge of extending ripeness theory beyond the prenegotiation phase and into the bargaining phase, is the previously mentioned Push and Pull Theory (Zartman, 2008). This theory postulates dynamics which include two prerequisites for a positive outcome of negotiation ending in agreement—MHS as a push factor that impels the parties to negotiation and MEO as a pull factor that "draws negotiation to a successful conclusion" (Zartman, 2012: 304). Studies have found that in order for the parties to reach an agreement in the negotiation stage, the perception of MHS must be maintained throughout the course of the negotiation itself. That is, to prevent the parties from reassessing their positions and abandoning negotiation in hope of finding a unilateral solution through escalation, the perception of ripeness must be maintained (Zartman, 2000, 2008, 2012). Furthermore, during the negotiation, the perception of WO must be transformed into a solid formula for a solution that will create a perception of MEO "that the parties perceive as a way out of their problem" (Zartman, 2012: 306). As a pull mechanism in negotiation, the perception of MEO is defined as a resolving formula seen by the parties as the most attractive option, which entices the parties to end the conflict. Though an enticing formula can at times be developed by the negotiating parties themselves, studies indicate that third-party mediators often play a pivotal role in developing an enticing formula during the negotiation. This enticing formula should be perceived by the parties as serving their needs and interests better than the status quo, thus fostering hope for a change in the conflict (Zartman, 2008; Zartman, 2012).

To recap, while ripeness theory, together with the S5 and turning point notions, presents the necessary elements to encourage the parties to embark on negotiations, each of these subtheories is mutually exclusive. Thus, ripeness theory may aptly explain the parties' decision to negotiate in tragic no-win symmetrical situations, when both sides to the conflict have no hope of escalating their way to victory, yet it fails

to shed light on the process leading to negotiation in cases where at least one of the parties does not experience painful deadlock. In such cases, the parties may decide to pursue the path of negotiation due to other factors—for example, when at least one of the parties is motivated to negotiate because of perceptions of threats, rising costs, opportunities, and other reasons rooted in third-party engagement—rather than due to a perception of painful deadlock. This drawback limits ripeness theory's prescriptive value for third parties and adversaries, who seek to understand when and how to pursue the negotiation option in situations that do not clearly meet the condition of MHS perceptions.

The negotiations between Israel and Jordan in 1993–1994, which culminated in the signing of the "Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in October 1994, exemplify the inadequacy of the ripeness strand. In this example, the condition of MHS was absent, which limits the applicability of ripeness theory as a conceptual framework for analyzing the parties' agreement to negotiation and further casts doubt on the usefulness of the Push and Pull Theory, which is also based on the MHS element as a pushing condition in the negotiation process (Schiff, 2020).

The Israel–Jordan negotiations were conducted against the backdrop of the parties' perceptions of threats and opportunities rather than a perception of a painful deadlock and no-win situation in Israeli–Jordanian relations. After three decades of secret contacts between King Hussein and Israeli leaders, and bilateral negotiations in the Madrid framework in 1991–1993 between Israeli and Jordanian delegations, Israel and Jordan signed two agreements (the Israel-Jordan Common Agenda on September 1993 and the Washington Declaration in July 1994) which paved the way to a peace treaty concluded under American patronage (Shamir, 2012). Jordan's perception of the threats posed by its deteriorating economic situation following its support of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and fears about the kingdom's precarious geopolitical standing in the wake of the DOP signed by the Israelis and Palestinians in September 1993, underlined its need for a peace agreement with Israel at that time (Indyk, 2009; Schiff, 2020; Shamir, 2012; Zak, 1996).

In the early 1990s, Jordan sought to secure the financial, political, and strategic support of the United States, the only global power which conditioned its support for Jordan on progress in the Jordanian–Israeli peace process (Indyk, 2009). Hussein realized that an agreement with Israel, a U.S. ally that had influence on the administration and Congress, would pave the road to Washington (Indyk, 2009) and offset the negative repercussions of his support for Saddam Hussein in the Gulf crisis of 1991 (Shamir, 2012). Beyond American economic support, a peace treaty with Israel offered Jordan potential economic gains from bilateral relations with its neighbor (Zak, 1996). Israel, like Jordan, had major interests in a formal mutual agreement, based on an assessment of its potential benefits. A peace agreement with Jordan was perceived as an opportunity to improve Israel's strategic situation on its eastern front by creating a buffer between Iraq and Israel. Furthermore, the Israeli leadership recognized the web of economic and political interests that connect Israel and Jordan. Such an agreement offered the promise of realizing the huge economic potential inherent in collaboration and would also grant Israel strategic depth, as it made a breach in the wall of Arab enmity. Israel also hoped that the normalization of relations with Jordan following the peace agreement would be a positive example for other Arab states to follow (Shamir, 2012).

This analysis of the perceptions of threats and opportunities which drove both parties to embark on formal negotiations and sign the Israeli–Jordanian peace agreement further illustrates the need for an additional analytical framework to assist in the understanding of the elements which underlie the complex dynamics of success in reaching peace agreements between longtime rivals—one that is more helpful than the ripeness strand in addressing a variety of factors and causal effects (Schiff, 2020).

The exploration of the complex dynamic which led to the de-escalation processes in the violent crisis that arose following the December 2007 presidential elections in Kenya serves as another example of the need to move beyond the theories included in the ripeness strand. The process which led President Mwai Kibaki and ODM leader Raila Odinga to embark on formal negotiations and put an end to the crisis in Kenya in 2007–2008 was characterized by the intensive engagement of third parties in the framework of preventive diplomacy (Lund, 2009). The situation in which the parties found themselves in 2007–2008

might be described as an S5 situation. They were compelled to negotiate without making a clear commitment to the process and intermittently reverted to violence during the first stage of negotiation. Thus, the role played by third parties' pressure during the short prenegotiation phase may also be viewed as the role played by third parties to create the "turning point" required in this situation for the parties to embark on negotiations. At the same time, the critical role which third parties continued to play in facilitating the opposing parties' agreement to negotiate and to reach an agreement against the backdrop of escalating violence (Brown, 2009: 398) reveals the need for a unified conceptual framework to address the complex dynamics of cause–effect interrelations of third-party involvement in the context of various structural conditions, ranging from the prenegotiation phase all the way to agreement.

The violent crisis which arose shortly after the December 2007 presidential elections, when both the president, Mwai Kibaki, and the opposition leader, Raila Odinga, claimed victory, lasted two months and threatened to plunge the country into ethnic civil war. During the two-month crisis, more than 1,000 people were killed and more than 300,000 were internally displaced and the crisis brought to the surface deep divisions within Kenyan society (Juma, 2009). With the intensive engagement of the international community, a national accord for a unity government in Kenya was signed between the parties on February 29, 2008. The "Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government" formed the basis for a power-sharing deal between the ruling Party of National Unity (GoK/PNU) and the top opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM).

The international community responded very quickly, fearful that Kenya, considered one of the most prosperous and stable nations in Africa, might sink into chaos (Juma, 2009). A few days following the eruption of the violence, multiple shuttle diplomacy efforts began, involving senior African figures, the UN, the United States, and the UK, each separately exerting pressure on the leaders to negotiate an agreement (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009; Moix, 2009). However, during the first weeks of the crisis the leaders did not agree to endorse these initiatives or to engage in dialogue. This changed when the African Union (AU) offered its official auspices, putting together a panel of distinguished African figures led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The AU mediation team enjoyed the legitimacy of both parties (Juma, 2009) and received coordinated international backing from the UN, United States, EU, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre) nongovernmental organization (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009; Moix, 2009).

In a coordinated international effort led by Annan, various international actors applied a series of facilitative and manipulative strategies to soften the parties' positions in the prenegotiation and negotiation stages. The United States, EU, and its member states, especially the UK, ". . . forced PNU and ODM officials to meet and accept the AU-led mediation process, using targeted sanctions (mainly travel bans on senior government and opposition figures) and threats of lower aid flows . . . threatening to review their foreign aid to Kenya in light of the crisis" (Brown, 2009: 396). Though the adversaries agreed to start formal negotiations on January 22 and to hold a face-to-face meeting between the leaders two days later, violence escalated during the first week of formal negotiation. "Progress in the negotiations was very slow and moved only in fits and starts" (Brown, 2009). It soon became clear that the parties were not fully committed to the process and that "in the same way the parties took one step forward, they could just as easily take two steps back" (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009: 9).

In the face of escalating violence in the streets during the first week of the negotiations, international pressure mounted, urging the parties to end the violence and reach a political solution (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009). The aim of the international community was to end the violence at all cost, and it viewed power sharing as the only viable strategy. This international pressure led to two major agreements during the first week of February (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009) that seemed to move the parties toward a peaceful solution.

However, the parties still could not agree on possible solutions. In the face of reports of the danger of re-emerging large-scale violence should the talks fail (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009), the international pressure increased. Threats were issued again that financial support and aid would be reviewed and that

anyone who blocked a power-sharing deal would be punished (Brown, 2009; Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009). Former UN Secretary-General Annan chaired the talks and skillfully steered them to their successful outcome. He personally took steps to accelerate the process, which included formulation and manipulation strategies and a negotiating style of bluntness and urgency, "...exerting relentless pressure on the parties, repeatedly reminding them of their responsibility to return Kenya to peace" (Juma, 2009: 418).

As an inherently normative field which aims to generate practical insights for managing and resolving conflicts constructively, conflict resolution would benefit from a single analytical framework that addresses the different factors affecting the gradual movement or decision by adversaries to take de-escalation steps on their way to the table and then on toward agreement (Schiff, 2020). Rather than focusing primarily on conditions, this framework would explain the complex dynamics and the variety of causal effects that lead parties to resolve their conflicts, and serve as a single construct that goes beyond the several separate theories comprising the ripeness theory strand.

Readiness Theory, a New Theoretical Strand

Readiness theory is a further restatement and elaboration of ripeness theory (Pruitt, 2007). It asserts that "readiness to settle the conflict" is a characteristic of a party to a conflict which reflects its leaderships' thinking with regard to the conflict (Pruitt, 2007, 2015b). Readiness fosters a wide range of conciliatory behaviors, dependent on the readiness level (Pruitt, 2007). A low level of readiness fosters moderate conciliatory gestures. As the readiness level rises, the party's behavior becomes more conciliatory and may take the form of agreement to a ceasefire or to enter into negotiations. For the parties to continue negotiating and make concessions, an additional increase in readiness is needed; thus, the greater the readiness on both sides, the more likely they are to negotiate (Pruitt, 2005: 9–15, Pruitt, 2007: 1525) and reach an agreement (Schiff, 2020).

According to the theory, readiness is dependent on two necessary psychological variables: "motivation" and "optimism." These may vary in intensity (Pruitt, 2015b, 276–277), and both must be present to some degree for any conciliatory behavior to be enacted. Motivation can derive from any or all of the following: a sense that the conflict is unwinnable, a sense that the conflict generates unacceptable costs or risks, and pressure from a powerful third party (Pruitt, 2005, 2007). Optimism, on the other hand, refers to the possibility of concluding negotiations toward an agreement that is acceptable to both sides. It requires a certain degree of faith that the final agreement will "... satisfy one's goals and aspirations without too much cost" (Pruitt, 2007: 1529), as well as the perception that the negotiator on the other side can in fact make a binding commitment on behalf of that side (Schiff, 2020). In the initial stage, when considering the option of negotiations, optimism reflects a conviction that the other side is serious about escaping the conflict and willing to make concessions to that end. Preserving the optimism requires a belief that a formula acceptable to both sides can be achieved to bridge the parties' opposing positions. The greater the apparent distance between the parties, the lower the level of optimism will be (Pruitt, 2005: 8).

Optimism derives from three states of mind (Pruitt, 2005) including lower aspirations; working trust, or the belief that the other side is also motivated to settle the dispute and will work hard and make concessions; and a state of mind that perceives a "light at the end of the tunnel," which means that an acceptable agreement is taking shape and that the other side is prepared to make the necessary concessions. This third state of mine leads to a higher level of optimism (Pruitt, 2007: 1529).

The theory further argues that motivation and optimism are related in a number of ways (Pruitt, 2005, 2007; Schiff, 2014a, 2014b) and that motivation to end the conflict can foster optimism through a number of mechanisms which have the potential to generate a confidence-building cycle which may lead to negotiations (Pruitt, 2005: 19–21, Pruitt, 2007: 1529). These mechanisms encourage optimism about the success of negotiations and generate new thinking about the rival. The first mechanism, motivation, influences the parties' willingness to be more flexible with respect to their demands, thereby encouraging

greater optimism regarding reaching an agreement. The second mechanism is the accumulation of information which challenges preexisting states of mind. The third mechanism is wishful thinking. In seeking information, wishful thinking plays a part; that is, there is a tendency to find selective evidence of the other side's logic or motivation to end the conflict. Fourth, when a party is interested in ending a conflict, it sends conciliatory signals or seeks clandestine contact with the opposing party. If the latter is also motivated, it will respond to these signals, thereby increasing the first party's optimism, which then sends conciliatory signals which are even more meaningful. The result is a cycle of conciliatory gestures and an increase in optimism. Fifth, a party's motivation to end a conflict is often discerned by a third party, making the latter more optimistic about ending the conflict. Thus, the motivation of a third party to end the conflict can encourage it to take the initiative in bringing the disputing parties to negotiation (Pruitt, 2007: 1530). Such third-party efforts may increase optimism on both sides and eventually lead to full negotiations.

Optimism may also develop through direct contact with people on the other side—for example, through problem-solving workshops. And another way in which optimism and motivation are related in the context of readiness theory is through the postulation that each variable, motivation, or sense of optimism on either side can compensate for the shortcomings of the other. Although some level of both variables is necessary for negotiations to commence, a greater degree of one element can compensate for a lesser degree of another (Pruitt, 2005, 2007). The third manner in which motivation and optimism are related is through the ability of optimism to determine the extent to which the motivation to de-escalate shapes behavior (Pruitt, 2007, 2015a; Pruitt, 2015b).

Recent studies (Schiff, 2020) have confirmed the validity of the basic hypotheses of readiness theory in explaining the readiness of adversaries to reach an agreement. First, both variables—motivation and optimism—must be present and develop in order for the parties to agree on a resolving formula. In addition, more than one of the three motivation-inducing conditions cited by readiness theory is essential for the parties' to reach the necessary level of readiness to reach an agreement. Studies have also emphasized the central role third parties can play as a source of motivation and optimism during negotiations (Figure 1).

The unique features of the readiness theory strand make it a valuable analytical framework by which the origins of peace agreements may be explored (Schiff, 2020). First, to a greater extent than the ripeness theory strand, readiness theory specifies multiple antecedents to negotiation and agreement. Thus, readiness theory offers a different set of filters, which are richer than those set so far by the ripeness strand for
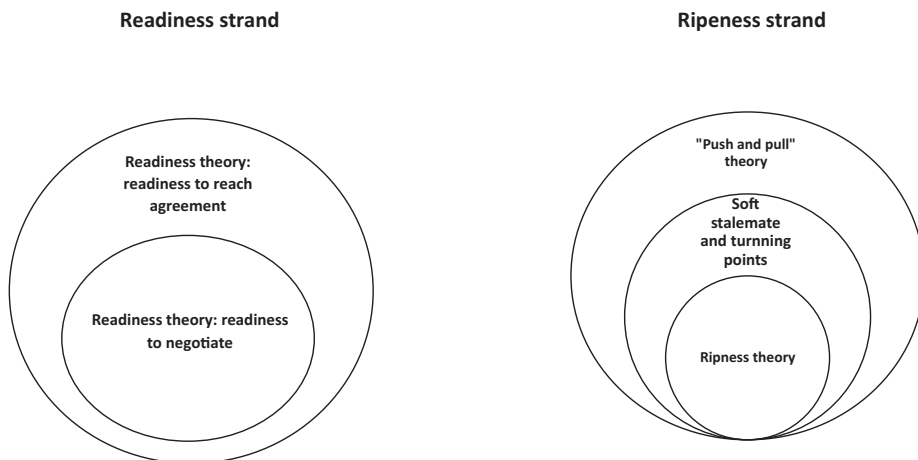

Figure 1. Two theoretical strands; ripeness and readiness.

processing case material (Pruitt, 2015b). This could be of great assistance, as was demonstrated in the process which led to the Israel–Jordan agreement in 1994. Furthermore, the filters suggested by the readiness strand should not necessarily apply symmetrically to both adversaries, as suggested by ripeness theory. This feature of readiness theory is potentially useful for researchers seeking to better understand the complexity of the conflict resolution phenomenon in a wide range of historical cases of negotiations (Pruitt, 2005) and even in negotiation in the framework of preventive diplomacy aimed to ensure that the adversaries do not sink into chaos, as was seen in the de-escalation of the crisis in Kenya (Schiff, 2020). In this regard, it can illuminate the mechanisms through which third parties influence the dynamics and outcome of peace processes starting at the prenegotiation stage and extending to the negotiations themselves, and can generate broader practical insights relevant to mediators.

The second unique feature is related to readiness theory's use of variables. All the concepts presented by readiness theory are variables which describe the antecedents or conditions which convince parties to switch from pursuing the unilateral track to the bilateral track. The use of variables in readiness theory facilitates tracking changes over time, that is, movement toward negotiation and toward agreement, which enables researchers to monitor changes in the cases studied (Pruitt, 2015a), to understand the sources of the transformation of conflicts, and to compare the changes in these variables both within and between the cases (Pruitt, 2015b). Conversely, ripeness theory and the two other subtheories in the ripeness strand use the language of states, which does not allow the researcher to monitor changes in these variables throughout prenegotiation and negotiation processes (Pruitt, 2015a).

The third point concerns the integration trait or the unified trait of the readiness strand as compared to the loosely related subtheories structure of the ripeness strand. The readiness theory strand is more succinct in comparison with the ripeness strand, as it uses the same variables as an antecedent of both entry into negotiation and progress in negotiation toward agreement. For example, according to the Push and Pull Theory, the perception of WO originating in the prenegotiation phase must be transformed into a solid formula for solution or for MEO if negotiations are to succeed. As stated, readiness theory uses the same variables to explain movement during prenegotiation and negotiation and postulates that the optimism originating in the prenegotiation phase "must increase during successful negotiation or the parties will drop out at some point."

Two Case Studies: Readiness Theory Analysis

The following section demonstrates the benefit of readiness theory in both elucidating and eliciting practical insights about the elements which influence the prenegotiation outcome (readiness to negotiate) and the negotiation outcome (readiness to reach an agreement) in two cases of mediated peace processes in intractable conflicts.

The Aceh Peace Process (2005)

Does readiness theory explain the process that resulted in the Helsinki MoU? What can we learn by applying this analytical framework to the factors and dynamics that lead parties to agreement in mediated processes? Using the lens of readiness theory to examine the conflict resolution process in Aceh, we see that the readiness of GAM insurgents and the GoI to negotiate gradually increased between mid-2003 and January 2005, during which both parties became more motivated to end the conflict. The personal commitment of the GoI leadership—president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and vice president Jusuf Kalla—to settle the conflict peacefully, the inability of the Indonesian Army to win the war, the high costs for both sides of continuing the fight, and the new circumstances created by the tsunami which devastated Aceh and increased third-party pressure to resolve the conflict peacefully, all combined to trigger some slight optimism that the ensuing negotiations might be more productive than the previous attempts (Schiff, 2020).

The significant increase in motivation on both sides peaked with the tsunami of December 2004 and its disastrous humanitarian consequences. Both parties reached the conclusion that, under the circumstances, the conflict was not winnable and that it posed unacceptable costs and risks (Schiff, 2020, 2014a, 2014b). Timely third-party pressure on both parties played a prominent role in boosting motivation and some sense of optimism and, consequently, readiness to negotiate. The aftermath of the disaster attracted international attention and brought additional pressure to bear on both sides to seize this limited-time opportunity to end the conflict with a peace agreement and to focus on exploring the option of negotiation and the reconstruction of the province. Thus, the parties' perceptions of unacceptable costs and risks were further manipulated by the international community following the tsunami and generated strong motivation among both parties to resolve the conflict. With the assistance of third parties, the international community, and Ahtisaari, the mediator, both sides came to realize that the bilateral track might better advance their interests. Furthermore, from the perspective of GAM and the GoI, the engagement of a prominent figure like Ahtisaari, a former Finnish president with international prestige and connections, along with the international community's commitment to back the process, helped boost both parties' optimism that this process had better chances of success than previous failed attempts (Djuli & Rahman, 2008; Johansson, 2005; Schiff, 2020). This third-party involvement or mobilization mechanism, as it is referred to by the theory (Pruitt, 2007), was consistent with GAM's interest in internationalizing the conflict and the Indonesian leadership's determination to pursue its peaceful resolution (Aguswandi & Large, 2008; Djuli & Rahman, 2008).

Thus, third-party involvement encouraged motivation and the hope that it might be possible to reach an agreement with the other side. In this regard, the strategies applied by the international community in the prenegotiation stage, as reflected in the days following the tsunami, were critical in engendering both motivation and some minimal uptick in the optimism of the parties concerning the new possibilities the negotiations offered (Schiff, 2020). The change in the optimism variable, cultivated by third parties, together with the strong rise in motivation, was sufficient to create the dynamics that brought the parties to the negotiating table at the end of January 2005 (Schiff, 2020).

During the negotiations that took place between January and August of 2005, the readiness of both parties to reach an agreement increased (Schiff, 2020, 2014a, 2014b). The Aceh case study shows that both variables, motivation and optimism, grew as the parties proceeded with their discussions, leading to their readiness to reach an agreement. The same multiple sources of motivation which influenced the parties' readiness to negotiate continued to apply in the negotiation phase and third-party engagement played a particularly crucial role. Several international actors intervened during the various stages of the peace process in Aceh. As noted, their involvement not only brought the parties to the negotiating table, but also induced them to be more conciliatory during negotiations, when the mediator, Ahtisaari, and the international community, played a major role in boosting the readiness of the sides to reach an agreement, particularly with respect to GAM. The international community saw the resolution of the conflict as essential for the success of the post-tsunami recovery efforts and made it clear that the reconstruction process depended on progress toward peace (Biswas, 2009: 12; Gaillard et al., 2008; Keizer, 2008).

Third parties, the mediator, and the international community also played a major role in raising the level of optimism by encouraging a reduction in the parties' aspirations, and facilitating the creation of working trust, by increasing their perception of "light at the end of the tunnel." Ahtisaari brought substantial experience and authority to the role of mediator (Aspinall, 2005; Djuli & Rahman, 2008; Johansson, 2005; Schulze, 2007). Through his international connections, he secured the necessary international backing to increase his political leverage. His management of the negotiating process led both parties to make more moderate demands and to compromise (Aguswandi & Large, 2008; Herrberg, 2008). From the start of negotiations, third-party involvement led GAM to set more modest goals, and Ahtisaari convinced GAM that independence for Aceh was an unrealistic dream. Following GAM's agreement to withdraw its previous demand for Aceh's independence and to discuss a political framework for self-rule

(Aspinall, 2005; Schulze, 2007), the GoI gradually became more optimistic about the possibility of reaching an agreement with GAM (Schiff, 2020).

In addition to the third-party pressure exerted on GAM, pressure was also applied by the GoI through two avenues. From the perspective of Kalla and SBY, who since 2003 have been seeking, unsuccessfully, to engage in dialogue with GAM leadership toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Aceh, the tsunami catastrophe highlighted the urgency of reaching an agreement and thus presented a one-time opportunity to realize their interests (Awaludin, 2009; Kingsbury, 2006; Schiff, 2020). As a result, in the wake of the tsunami, Kalla made a special effort to mobilize the international community to pressure GAM to exhibit flexibility, and the threat of continued military operations was also emphasized (Aspinall, 2005; Cheow 2008; Kemper 2007).

Although most of the pressure exerted by third parties in the negotiations was directed at GAM, whose initial concession enabled the first significant breakthrough in the process, Indonesia also faced pressure to compromise (Kingsbury, 2006). Even though the peace agreement was drafted under conditions the GoI had dictated—for example, autonomy as the basis for discussion and the integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) (Biswas, 2009)—pressure was also exerted by the international community on the GoI, to convince it to pursue a peace settlement. The GoI realized that failure to reach an agreement would disrupt the supply of international aid necessary for continued post-tsunami reconstruction, and thus recognized the need to make concessions (Aspinall, 2008; Awaludin, 2009). The fact that pressure was brought to bear on both sides eventually resulted in an agreement that included mutual concessions.

The pressures exerted by the skilled mediator and other third parties as negotiations proceeded, as well as the progress in negotiations and the concessions made by both parties due to this pressure and the mediators' tactics (Schiff, 2020, 2014a, 2014b), together with confidence-building tactics, the willingness of third parties to oversee the agreement, and pressures exerted by Indonesia on GAM—all combined to strengthen the parties' perception of the possibility of realizing their interests through the agreement. In this respect, the willingness of the EU and ASEAN to oversee the agreement contributed to the growth in the optimism variable among both parties which propelled them toward an agreement. It influenced the changes in the cost–benefit calculations of the adversaries during the negotiations and increased both parties' sense of optimism that the emerging agreement could ultimately serve their goals.
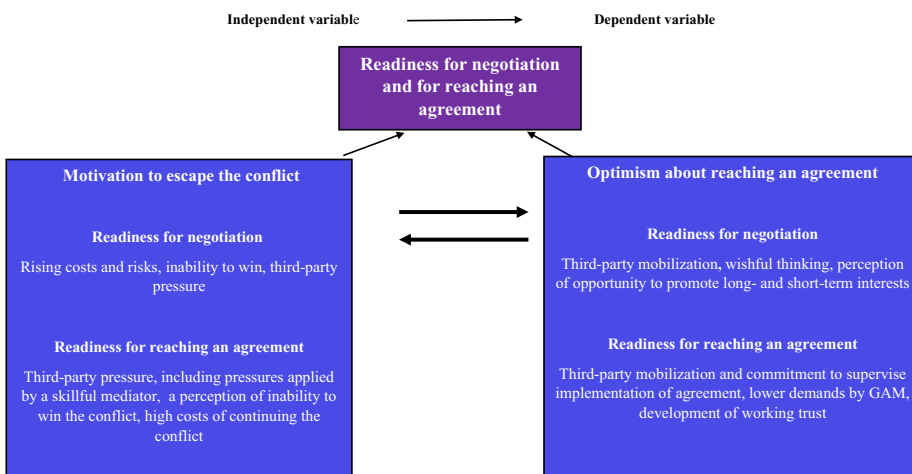

Figure 2. Readiness for negotiation and for reaching an agreement in the Aceh Case Study: the GoI. GoI, Government of Indonesia.
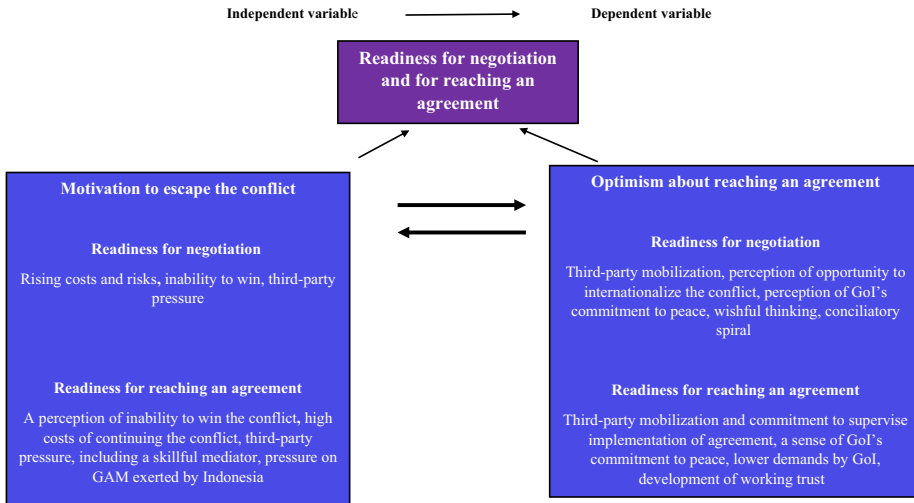
Figure 3. Readiness for negotiation and for reaching an agreement in the Aceh Case Study: the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM).

Sudan Peace Process (2002–2005)

The analysis of the Sudan peace process by means of readiness theory suggests that the adversaries' readiness to negotiate and reach an agreement increased throughout the process. Motivation was the salient variable in the prenegotiation period, generating the readiness of the GoS and SPLM insurgents to return to negotiations in 2002 on the basis of IGAD's peace initiative. The parties' consideration of the negotiation option was driven by strong motivation and some limited change in the optimism level; the motivation compensated for a low level of optimism in cultivating the parties' readiness for negotiation.

Similar to the sources of motivation found in the Aceh case, the GoS and the SPLM's motivation in the prenegotiation stage in the Sudan conflict derived from several antecedents: perceptions of rising costs and a no-win situation, and intensive third-party pressure. All three components were necessary to convince the parties to embark on negotiation. In early 2002, the relations between Sudan's government and the SPLM in southern Sudan reached an unprecedented low. There was deep mistrust between the parties in the wake of failed regional peace initiatives since 1999, and the military struggle had escalated with no solution in sight. In light of the rising costs of continuing the military struggle, especially following the 9/11 terror attacks and the diminishing chances of ending the conflict unilaterally, both parties felt that the conflict was unwinnable in the current circumstances and that the costs and risks of continuing the military struggle were unacceptable (Schiff, 2017). In the context of mounting third-party pressure, these perceptions created an atmosphere which both sides perceived as conducive for conducting peace talks.

Here as well, third-party pressure was a major factor that persuaded the GoS and the SPLM to return to the peace process. A troika of the United States, Britain, and Norway, under American leadership, together with the IGAD organization, exerted heavy pressure on the adversaries. Both sides were clearly eager to improve their image in the international community and particularly in the eyes of the United States. Sudan's government feared the severe political and economic damage it would likely suffer if it failed to improve relations with Washington. This realization gradually sank in during the late 1990s and was further reinforced after the 9/11 terror attacks, when ending the conflict in Sudan became a key foreign policy objective of the Bush administration (Antwi-Boateng & O'Mahony, 2008; Wennmann, 2009; Woodward, 2006; Young, 2007). Moreover, in early 2000, Sudan's government became increasingly

concerned about the possibility of additional massive support for the SPLM and other armed groups in Sudan by the United States, which was at the peak of its international power (Antwi-Boateng & O'Mahony, 2008; Woodward, 2006; Young, 2007). A significant element in the array of pressures the United States exerted on Sudan's government was the threat to push the Sudan Peace Act (SPA) through Congress. The fear that this legislation would be enacted hovered in the background from the time Bush took office. By wielding this threat, the United States was able to induce Khartoum to cooperate, enter into negotiations, and make progress in them (Carney, 2007; Woodward, 2006).

The SPLM's motivation to begin negotiating with the government stemmed from a realization that the costs of continued fighting were higher than the costs of terminating the warfare (Young, 2007). Until September 2001, in the framework of the first process conducted by the IGAD organization in 1993, the SPLM had very little motivation to reach a peace accord with the government. The SPLM received support from the United States (under the Clinton administration) and exercised full control on the ground, including control over aid deliveries and most of the population in southern Sudan. This situation suddenly changed when the United States declared its war on terror after the events of September 11, 2001 (Terlinden & Debiel, 2004). From the SPLM's perspective, the continued military campaign depended on external support, which was dwindling. After the terror attacks in the United States in 2001, Garang was told that the Bush administration did not intend to continue its massive military support for the SPLM (Carney, 2007) and the Americans began to pressure the organization on the issue of terrorism. The United States made it clear to the SPLM that it would no longer support insurgent groups, fearing that they would serve as a breeding ground for organizations like Al-Qaeda (El-Talib, 2004). Regional actors like Kenya and Uganda, each in pursuit of its own interests, joined the United States in pressuring the SPLM, despite having shown affinity for the SPLM in the past (Antwi-Boateng & O'Mahony, 2008). Moreover, from the perspective of the SPLM, the United States was no longer neutral (Jok, 2007). A positive relationship developed between the governments of the United States and Sudan; the government in Khartoum quickly sought to win support from the U.S. administration and signaled its readiness to cooperate more closely with it. The SPLM began to realize that its military position was weak in the long term (Antwi-Boateng & O'Mahony, 2008; Wennmann, 2009; Young, 2007).

During the prenegotiation phase, both sides—induced by third parties and wishful-thinking mechanisms—increasingly recognized that the path of negotiation would entail lower costs and provide more benefits than continuing the conflict (Schiff, 2020). After taking office in 2001, the Bush administration convened representatives of IGAD, the United States, Britain, and Norway in New York in an effort to coordinate an effective effort to initiate peace talks (Carney, 2007; Iyob & Khadiagala, 2006). The January 2002 peacemaking effort of President Bush's special envoy to Sudan, John Danforth, further served as a basis for a comprehensive ceasefire agreement and the renewal of the IGAD talks (Martin, 2006).

Furthermore, during the prenegotiation stage the third parties proposed working toward an agreement which involved only two parties—the NCP representing the GoS (the north) and the SPLM representing southern Sudan—which was an attractive option to both sides. The framework of the proposed negotiations offered the two sides an opportunity to preserve their political power, and both preferred not to involve additional parties in the negotiations and agreement. In addition, the government's belief in the strength of Garang's leadership also played a part in its assessment of the feasibility of reaching an agreement with the SPLM that could be implemented. Thus, a certain degree of faith that the final agreement would satisfy both parties' goals and aspirations at not too high a cost was developing during the prenegotiations (Pruitt, 2007). Against this backdrop, the conflicting parties—the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the SPLM—realized that they should be pragmatic and commence negotiations, since this was in their best interest under the circumstances (Schiff, 2020).

The parties' readiness to advance toward agreement once negotiations had begun derived from a major increase in motivation and a slight increase in optimism during the negotiations. Third-party engagement in the peace negotiations provided critical input to boost the parties' readiness to sign interim accords and ultimately sign the CPA. The trio of the United States, Britain, and Norway, among

which the United States wielded the greatest influence, were the driving force behind the process, exerting massive political and military pressure on the sides at various stages of the negotiations (Schiff, 2020). Their involvement reinforced the adversaries' sense that they were mired in a costly no-win situation and helped to generate their readiness to reach an agreement. For example, the compromises made by the parties in the first protocol to be signed, the Machakos Protocol in July 2002, were largely attributable to international pressure, especially from the United States (ICG, 2002; Iyob & Khadiagala, 2006; Jok, 2007). Furthermore, even during the preparatory discussions for the first official meeting of the parties in Machakos in May 2002, the mediator, General Sumbeiywo, faced a wall of distrust and suspicion on both sides and the talks ran aground (Waihenya, 2006; Young, 2007). However, U.S. pressure led the parties to ultimately agree to move forward. The Sudan Peace Act approved by the U.S. Congress in October 2002 was a significant means of pressure on the GoS (Carney, 2007; Terlinden & Debiel, 2004). This legislation mandated additional economic sanctions against Sudan's government and a downgrading of diplomatic relations between the United States and Sudan if the Bush administration could not affirm every six months that the regime in Sudan was indeed negotiating in good faith. At the time, Sudan was carrying a national debt of $22 billion, and there was a real threat that the International Monetary Fund would deny additional loans (Terlinden & Debiel, 2004). The GoS expected, therefore, that the peace agreement would lead to normalization in its international relations and an end to the American sanctions (ICG, 2002; Iyob & Khadiagala, 2006; Young, 2007). Sudan's vice president later admitted that these pressures ultimately convinced the government's representatives to sign the Machakos Protocol (ICG, 2002). At the same time, Washington assured the SPLM that as long as it refrained from acting provocatively as a "spoiler," no direct sanctions would be imposed, while also warning that a unilateral rejection of the peace process would have severe consequences (Terlinden & Debiel, 2004).

The mediator, Sumbeiywo, played a critical role in the process as a facilitator and in formulating the points of agreement, while leveraging the power of the international community to pressure the sides. The tactics employed by Sumbeiywo at different stages of the process also helped prod the parties toward agreement (Martin, 2006). For example, the GoS agreed to renew the Machakos process only after Sumbeiywo threatened to report to the international community that the NCP was backtracking from the process (Martin, 2006). Another example of his effective mediation tactics occurred three days prior to the deadline for concluding the Machakos talks, when Sumbeiywo brought the senior negotiators from each side into a room, closed the door, presented them with draft documents and demanded that they reach an agreement within an hour (Schiff, 2020). Three hours later, the negotiators announced their agreement to everything written in the documents (Martin, 2006).

Furthermore, as noted, the way the negotiation process was constructed by the various third parties, starting in the prenegotiation stage, gave the SPLM and the NCP reason to expect that the potential agreement would satisfy their needs. Thus, the prenegotiation process began with the parties' perceptions of their inability to resolve the conflict unilaterally (following the failure of the first IGAD process) and continued with the two sides sitting at the negotiation table, encouraged by perceptions of opportunity shaped by the third parties (Schiff, 2020).

The methods employed by the third parties were critical in gradually increasing confidence on both sides, that is, the optimism that the emerging agreement could ultimately serve their respective goals. The third parties, primarily the mediator Sumbeiywo, and the United States, orchestrated the peace process in a way that addressed the central needs of the two parties sitting at the table, the SPLM and the NCP, and emphasized the benefits the agreement would bring to both, focusing on finding common ground between them. Both parties believed that if they indeed reached and implemented an agreement, it would lead to peace, prosperity, and development, boosting oil revenues that would allow them to control Sudanese politics for at least another decade. Thus, the peace process offered both sides a chance to achieve in negotiations what was impossible to win on the battlefield (El-Talib, 2004; Young, 2007). In terms of readiness theory, this helped to develop some optimism by creating a mood in which the two parties could see "light at the end of the tunnel" (Schiff, 2020). Therefore, during the negotiations, every

time the optimism of the parties declined and they became trapped in negative dynamics, the third party exerted pressure on them by extending some "carrots." The adversaries' desire to use the opportunity to reach an agreement (under third-party pressure) together with progress in the dialogue (which created a perception of "light at the end of the tunnel") combined to overcome their mistrust.

Throughout the process, third-party involvement had a decisive influence on the parties' readiness to make concessions and reach an agreement. In light of the mutual mistrust during the negotiation stage, the third-party pressure that shaped the negotiation framework and pushed the adversaries to demonstrate flexibility became the most significant factor (Young, 2007). As in the Aceh case, this attests to the important role third parties can play when working in collaboration to assist the parties to overcome the impediments in resolving conflicts (Schiff, 2020).
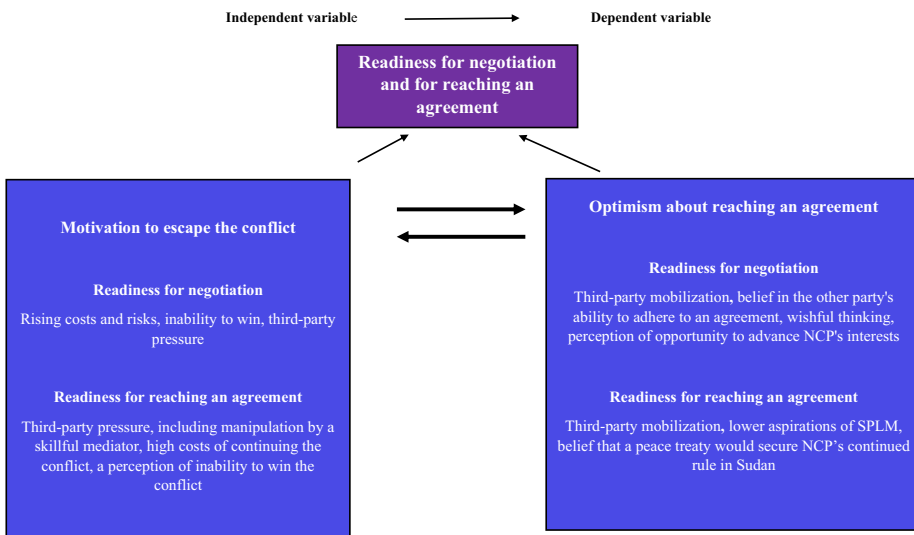

Figure 4. Readiness for negotiation and for reaching an agreement in the Sudan Case Study: the GoS. GoS, Government of Sudan.
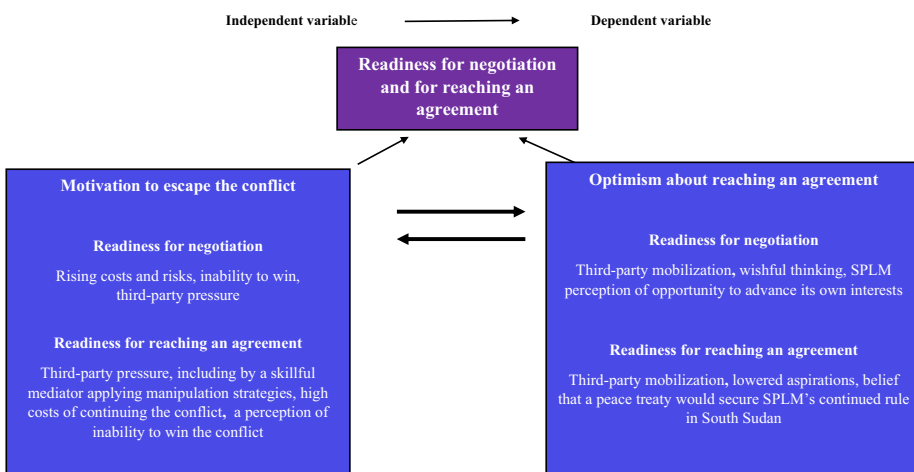

Figure 5. Readiness for negotiation and for reaching an agreement in the Sudan Case Study: the SPLM. SPLM, Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

Conclusions

The analysis shows that readiness theory enables us to identify and map numerous factors which influence and reinforce each other within the dynamics which change adversaries' perceptions about the option of negotiating and reaching an agreement with the other side. The study exemplifies how parties' cost–benefit calculations, together with third-party facilitation, pressure, and incentives, influence the antagonists' political stance vis-à-vis negotiation and agreement. This kind of multicausal and dynamic analysis, which considers gradual changes in the variables throughout the process, offers insights for researchers in the field of conflict resolution who wish to further contribute to the readiness theoretical discourse, as well as for practitioners who seek to successfully assist adversaries on their path to settling their conflict peacefully (Schiff, 2020).

The following points are affirmed, which have implications for both theory and practice, and present substantial observations and conclusions which refer explicitly to lessons for third parties. First, the study validates readiness theory's basic hypotheses concerning the necessity for the two variables of motivation and optimism, their compensatory nature, and the effect that motivation can have on optimism, which leads the parties to *readiness to negotiate*. It also confirms that both variables—motivation and optimism —should be present during the negotiation and should grow or compensate for one another in order for the parties to agree on a resolving formula and its details, that is, *readiness to reach an agreement*. Second, the research finds that in the cases of Aceh and Sudan, the basic hypotheses of readiness theory with respect to motivation and optimism, including their existence, growth, and compensational relations, can explain the dynamics which led to the parties' readiness to reach an agreement and to make concessions during negotiations.

The central role played by third parties—mediators and the international community—in the success of the two peace processes examined is another major finding of this study. In both Aceh and Sudan, third parties took advantage of the circumstances to influence the adversaries' calculations. Thus, throughout the prenegotiation and negotiation process, third-party engagement was seen as cultivating motivation and optimism about reaching an agreement that would better serve the parties' interests in the prevailing circumstances (Schiff, 2020). As stated, third parties wisely manipulated the perceptions and cost–benefit calculations of the adversaries to prod them toward the negotiating table, thus compensating for the minimal level of optimism and assisting in the galvanization of perception of a light at the end of the tunnel, helping to generate *readiness to negotiate*. Throughout negotiations, third parties maintained the pressure and intensified it, extracting concessions from the sides and actively putting together the resolving formula which the parties adopted after recognizing that it served their interests.

The findings of the study have both theoretical and practical implications for third parties engaging in intractable conflicts, which are characterized by the antagonists' mutual mistrust. Third-party pressure was found to be a necessary source of motivation for ending the conflict in the cases studied, where mutual trust was low and the adversaries' positions were far apart. In the case of Aceh, the three sources of motivation cited by readiness theory as essential for concession-making during negotiations remained valid throughout the relatively short negotiation process. The pressure applied by a third party was a significant factor in both sides' realization that the alternative to talks was a return to the bloodshed that had proven to be costly and ineffective. In the Aceh process, the parties' motivation to end the conflict was strong, rooted in cost–benefit calculations of reverting to war and yielding to third-party pressure. This strong motivation compensated for their mutual mistrust and for the gap between their positions when negotiations began, and served to soften their stances during the negotiation and foster the level of optimism necessary to reach an agreement. In the Sudan process too, a high level of motivation influenced by third-party pressure, together with a modicum of optimism fostered by third-party mobilization and wishful thinking, cultivated the parties' perception of "light at the end of the tunnel."

According to readiness theory, this causal effect encouraged the optimism required for readiness to negotiate and to reach an agreement, though mistrust was a prominent component of the process.

The comparative analysis of the factors influencing the Aceh and Sudan peace processes illustrates how important it is for third parties to carefully assess the adversaries' changing cost–benefit calculations before and during the negotiations, seize the right moment, and apply the correct strategies. These considerations include assessing whether structural changes have occurred in the conflict's environment and whether and how third parties can influence the antagonists' calculations. The latter may entail exerting effective pressure or applying positive incentives and supervising the implementation of an agreement. While the readiness of the parties to reach an agreement is not only dependent on the actions of third parties, their effective engagement was a necessary component in the successful negotiation processes in the Aceh and Sudan cases, reminding us that third parties must always proceed in a careful and well-considered manner, while realizing that not everything is in their hands.

The analysis presented in this study illustrated the salient heuristic feature of readiness theory (Pruitt, 2005, 2007, 2015b). Originally outlined for explaining the reasons why parties come to the table (Pruitt, 2005, 2007; Pruitt, 2015a, 2015b), this study demonstrated how readiness theory can be extended to shed light on concession-making and agreement, and how it can assist us in assessing the important role of third parties and the interplay of third-party engagement with other elements influencing prenegotiation and negotiation dynamics (Figures 2–5).

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Investigating the Impact of Racial Diversity in Decision-making Groups: The Moderating Role of Relationship Conflict

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Abstract

To date, numerous research endeavors have documented both the positive and negative effects of racial diversity on numerous group-level performance outcomes. Indeed, a reading of the racial diversity literature would lead one to make one of two contradictory predictions regarding the effects of racial diversity in groups. In the interest of solving this theoretical issue, both perspectives were synthesized, such that racially diverse groups were expected to outperform homogeneous groups when performing a decision-making task, but only when relationship conflict between members was minimized. In addition, the association between racial diversity and decision-making quality was expected to be negative when relationship conflict between members was high. A study is reported which investigates the validity of and finds general support for this proposition (i.e., racial diversity in groups increased the group's ability to make accurate decisions, but only under conditions in which relationship conflict between group members was kept to a minimum). A discussion is offered in which the implications of these results are entertained.

Diversity is defined commonly as "variation based on any attribute people use to tell themselves that another person is different" (Mannix & Neale, 2005, p. 33). In addition, diversity can be further differentiated by distinguishing between surface- and deep-level diversity characteristics (Mohammed & Angell, 2004; Phillips, Northcraft, & Neale, 2006). Specifically, whereas surface-level diversity factors represent visible traits that vary between group members (e.g., ethnicity), deep-level diversity characteristics represent attributes that are not readily noticeable but differ between group members nonetheless (e.g., attitudes). To date, diversity scholars have used this classification to investigate the extent to which numerous types of group-level diversity factors affect group-level dynamics (e.g., cohesion; Webber & Donahue, 2001). Scholars have also used this classification to investigate the extent to which group-level diversity factors impact group-level performance (Bell, 2007; Bell, Villado, Lukasik, Belau, & Briggs, 2011; Webber & Donahue, 2001). To wit, given the ever-increasing trend toward promoting diversity in organizations, understanding how group-level diversity impacts performance and dynamics has become decidedly important (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Phillips & Apfelbaum, 2012).

Although some consistency is beginning to emerge in the diversity literature, scholars remain divided on the reasons responsible for such effects (Roberson, 2019). Whereas some argue for a more *pessimistic view*, in which the effect of diversity on performance is negative because it induces interpersonal conflict, others argue for a more *optimistic view*, in which the effect of diversity on performance is beneficial

because members integrate heterogeneous perspectives when sharing information and making complex decisions. Specifically, scholars that adopt the pessimistic view invoke similarity–attraction and social identity/categorization theories, which predict that dissimilar others are more likely to experience lower levels of cohesion and greater levels of interpersonal conflict (Berscheid & Walster, 1978; Byrne, 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Alternatively, scholars that adopt the optimistic view invoke the value-in-diversity hypothesis, which argues that diversity facilitates performance because groups are better able to draw upon the varied expertise of its members when making comprehensive decisions or working on complex tasks (for a review of this literature, see Fernandes & Polzer, 2015; Guillaume, Dawson, Otaye-Ebede, Woods, & West, 2017; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Phillips & Apfelbaum, 2012; Roberson, 2019; van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

The literature on racial diversity, which is defined explicitly as group heterogeneity in group members' ethnicity, provides a good example of this divide. To date, numerous research endeavors have documented the negative effect of racial diversity on myriad group-level performance outcomes (Jackson & Joshi, 2004; Jehn & Bezrukova, 2004; Kooij-de Bode, Knippenberg, & van Ginkel, 2008). Moreover, numerous meta-analyses have shown that the effect of racial diversity on group performance is generally negative (Bell et al., 2011; van Dijk, van Engen, & van Knippenberg, 2012; Webber & Donahue, 2001). As has been argued elsewhere (Mannix & Neale, 2005), these patterns of results are produced because racial diversity spurs relationship conflict in groups (Pelled, 1996; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999; see also Phillips & Apfelbaum, 2012). Relationship conflict, which is defined as "interpersonal incompatibilities" (Jehn, 1995, p. 258), is problematic because it results in feelings of tension, frustration, and social division (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012; Jehn, 1995; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Solansky, Singh, & Huang, 2014); indeed, extant meta-analyses on this topic show that relationship conflict is decidedly detrimental to group performance (De Drue & Weingart, 2003; de Wit et al., 2012; O'Neill, Allen, & Hastings, 2013). As such, if racially heterogeneous groups are more prone to experiencing relationship conflict, and thus lower levels of performance, then these data would provide support for a more pessimistic view, in which the negative effects of racial diversity are said to occur because such groups are disposed to experiencing relationship conflict, social division, or some other form of bias (Fernandes & Polzer, 2015; Guillaume et al., 2017; O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989; van Dijk et al., 2012; van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

Nevertheless, these findings and theoretical arguments are at odds with some evidence that has shown that racial diversity in groups is beneficial for group performance. Presumably, such benefits come to fruition because such groups are better able to integrate unique member information and expertise. For example, when performing a discussion-based task, Antonio et al. (2004) found that racially heterogeneous groups evidenced higher levels of comprehensive thinking skills when compared to racially homogeneous groups. Similarly, McLeod, Lobel, and Cox (1996) found that ideas generated by racially heterogeneous groups were rated as more effective and feasible, and Sommers (2006) found that racially heterogeneous groups deliberated for longer periods of time and shared more information during group discussion (see also Kochan et al., 2003; Kooij-de Bode et al., 2008; Loyd, Wang, Phillips, & Lount, 2013; Phillips et al., 2006; Richard, 2000; Sawyer, Houlette, & Yeagley, 2006). Ultimately, this body of work bodes well for racial diversity in groups, as numerous studies have indicated the positive effects of comprehensive information sharing behaviors in groups. For example, numerous meta-analyses from the hidden profile and information sharing corpuses suggest that sharing unique information promotes better decision-making practices and outcomes in groups. (see Lu, Yuan, & McLeod, 2012; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009; Reimer, Reimer, & Czienskowski, 2010). Thus, in contradiction to the conclusion drawn previously, these data support a more optimistic view; a view in which the positive effects of racial diversity on group outcomes are predicted to be a function of beneficial decision-making dynamics (Hoffman, Harburg, & Maier, 1962; see also Loyd et al., 2013; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Phillips & Apfelbaum, 2012; van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Although these bifurcated explanations are intuitive, this contradictory narrative remains problematic for those interested in forwarding a priori theoretical predictions. Indeed, in the interest of solving this theoretical problem, diversity scholars have placed a considerable amount of effort on exploring the impact of numerous moderators (see van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016). For example, in their recent review of this literature, Guillaume et al. (2017) conclude that diverse workgroups are expected to outperform homogeneous groups, but only when they are working on decision-based tasks or when they attenuate social bias (see also Roberson, 2019). As is evident, however, the theoretical problem remains if heterogeneous groups are tasked with solving a complex problem but nevertheless experience relationship conflict. In such situations, heterogeneous groups would not be expected to outperform homogeneous groups. Stated differently, it seems reasonable to assume that both optimistic and pessimistic explanations are dependent on one another, that is, as opposed to arguing that it is one or the other. Ultimately, such reasoning may help explain some of the heterogeneity in effect sizes reported in the recent meta-analysis by van Dijk et al. (2012); specifically, they showed that ethnic diversity in groups was associated positively with performance on high-complexity tasks but also showed that extant variance in effect sizes in this condition remained unexplained.

In the interest of investigating this dynamic, a hypothesis is offered that predicts that when tasked with making decisions, racially heterogeneous groups will outperform homogeneous groups, but only when relationship conflict experienced between members is low. Alternatively, when racially diverse groups experience relationship conflict, the effect of diversity on performance is expected to be negative. Although intuitive, this simple prediction has not been assessed directly in the racial diversity literature. Indeed, despite its intuitive and theoretical appeal, group conflict is rarely considered as a moderator of the effects of diversity on group performance (see Guillaume et al., 2017, p. 295). Moreover, as is noted in a recent review by Roberson (2019), additional research is required to understand the nuanced relationship between workgroup diversity and conflict dynamics. Consequently, such an assessment is expected to provide a contribution of decided value to the group diversity corpus. That is, such an assessment will contribute to the ongoing meta-analytic efforts produced in this arena (Bell et al., 2011; van Dijk et al., 2012) and further contribute to scholars' understanding of how racial heterogeneity in groups impacts objective performance-based outcomes (e.g., decision-making accuracy). This latter contribution is markedly noteworthy, as such assessment is decidedly rare in the racial diversity literature (see van Dijk et al., 2012, p. 45). Ultimately, a critical assessment of this prediction in a controlled laboratory setting is expected to provide a focused and novel set of contributions to the group diversity and performance arenas (Guillaume et al., 2017; Roberson, 2019).

Method

Sample

A convenience sample of undergraduate students at a large Midwestern University signed up to participate in this study in exchange for class credit.[1] A total of 79 three-person groups was sampled (total $N = 237$).[2] Of those that provided information, 55.7% of the sample ($n = 128$) reported being female, and 44.3% of the sample ($n = 102$) reported being male. Additionally, subjects identified as Caucasian (79.6%, $n = 183$), Black or African American (10%, $n = 23$), Asian (8.3%, $n = 19$), and Hispanic (2.2%, $n = 5$).

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[1]These data and procedures were taken from Manata (2016), in which a different study was conducted. Of note, none of the additional measures reported in that study impact the results reported.

[2]Initially, 82 groups were sampled, but 3 groups were given the incorrect information profiles. Because these groups did not have all the information required to make an informed decision, they were dropped from the analysis.

Procedure

Groups were tasked with completing a hidden profile problem (Stasser & Titus, 2003). Hidden profile problems are decision-making tasks that typically occur in two phases. During the first phase, group members are asked to evaluate the favorability of two or more hypothetical alternatives in private (e.g., of two job applicants, choose the most favorable; Cruz, Boster, & Rodriguez, 1997). During the second phase, group members are asked to convene as a group and make a decision regarding the group's preferred alternative (see Wittenbaum, Hollingshead, & Botero, 2004). Of note, candidate profiles are created by assigning both positive and negative characteristics to each of the profiles, and researchers can further designate the optimal solution by assigning a greater number of positive characteristics to one of the candidate profiles.

For groups that can share and pool all the available information, making the correct choice (i.e., choosing the candidate with the most positive traits) is a simple task (see Lu et al., 2012). The hidden profile problem is complicated, however, by the fact that each piece of information is designated as either *shared* (known to all members), *unshared* (known to one member), or sometimes *partially shared* (information that is shared between a subset of members). As a result, group members must share their unique information should they wish to solve the hidden profile problem successfully (i.e., choose the alternative with the most positive characteristics; see Lu et al., 2012). Given this methodological paradigm, hidden profile problems represent an ideal means by which to study the myriad factors that impact information sharing and conflict in groups (Lu et al., 2012; Reimer et al., 2010; Stasser & Titus, 2003; Wittenbaum et al., 2004).

Information profiles were created for three hypothetical candidates—Candidates A, B, and C—all of whom were applying for the same eighth-grade teaching position. Specifically, 30 teacher characteristics associated with either good or bad teaching practices (see Stronge, 2007) were distributed among the three candidate profiles (10 each). Candidate C was assigned the most positive teaching characteristics (six positives v. four negatives, compared to six negatives v. four positives for Candidates A and B) and thereby constituted the optimal decision.[3]

Group members were first asked to evaluate the profiles of all three candidates and make a private choice regarding their preference. As described above, however, each group member received only a portion of the information about each candidate. As a result, Member 1 was led to prefer Candidate A, Member 2 to prefer Candidate B, and Member 3 to prefer Candidate C. Many hidden profile studies employ information distributions that bias all group members toward the same candidate, but this approach was modified to facilitate a more meaningful information sharing task.

Instrumentation

To investigate the predicted interaction effect, three variables were measured. Specifically, *group racial diversity* and *relationship conflict* were treated as the primary independent variables, whereas *decision accuracy* was treated as the main dependent variable.

Group racial diversity

Racial diversity was quantified using Blau's (1977) heterogeneity statistic, which is used to quantify the degree to which a nominal characteristic (e.g., ethnicity) is dispersed within a population. This equation is defined formally as $1 - \Sigma p_i^2$, where p equals the proportion of a nominal variable in group i. For example, in a 3-person group in which each member identifies differently (e.g., White, Asian, and Black),

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[3]Two pilot studies were implemented to create the three candidate profiles. The favorability of 100 positive and negative teaching characteristics was assessed, and three profiles of equal strength were created. For additional information, see Manata (2016).

Table 1

Correlations, Alpha, Means, and Standard Deviations (Listwise N = 79)

	1	2	3	M	SD
Racial diversity	–			0.21	0.26
Relationship conflict	.20*	(.83)		1.77	0.63
Decision accuracy	.18	−.02	–	0.28	0.45

Note. Reliability coefficients are reported within parentheses.

*p < .10.

the coefficient produced is .67 (i.e., $1 - [.33^2 + .33^2 + .33^2]$). Alternatively, if we presume that only one member identifies differently (e.g., 2 Whites and 1 Asian), the coefficient is .44 (i.e., $1 - [.67^2 + .33^2]$). Finally, presuming none of the members identify differently (e.g., 3 Asian), the coefficient produced is 0, which signifies homogeneity. Of note, because the groups sampled were 3-person groups, only three diversity values were possible. Blau's heterogeneity statistic was calculated for each group, with larger values indicating greater group-level racial diversity ($M = 0.21$, $SD = 0.26$).

Relationship conflict

To measure relationship conflict, a 3-item version of Jehn's (1995) classic relationship conflict scale was implemented. Sample items include, "In this group, there was some interpersonal friction among members," and "In this group, personality conflict was evident". All items were positioned on 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*), and individual responses were aggregated to the group-level of analysis, ICC(1) = .35, $F = 2.64$, $p < .001$, $M = 1.77$, $SD = 0.63$, $\alpha = .83$.[4]

Decision accuracy

Performance was operationalized as decision accuracy. Moreover, because Candidate C was assigned more positive characteristics overall, Candidate C was considered the optimal solution. Consequently, groups that chose Candidate C were coded as making a higher quality decision when compared to those that chose Candidates A or B (i.e., 1 = accurate, 0 = inaccurate; see Lu et al., 2012; Reimer et al., 2010; Stasser & Titus, 2003; Wittenbaum et al., 2004), $M = 0.28$, $SD = 0.45$.

Results

To explore these data, a logistic regression was first estimated using the logit command in STATA 14.0 (STATA, 2015) so that the effects of group racial diversity and relationship conflict on decision accuracy could be investigated (see also Table 1). Of note, both independent variables were centered prior to being entered in to the regression equation. Moreover, to test the interaction effect, an interaction term was created by multiplying both independent variables and then entering it in to the logit regression model (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2013).

As is shown in Table 2, group racial diversity produced an effect in support of the value-in-diversity hypothesis, but this effect failed to reach conventional levels of statistical significance ($B = 1.60$, $SE = 0.99$, $p = .11$). Conversely, relationship conflict in groups produced a small negative effect of insubstantial magnitude ($B = -0.20$, $SE = 0.39$, $p = .62$). The interaction term, however, produced an effect of substantial magnitude ($B = -3.14$, $SE = 1.56$, $p = .04$); a likelihood ratio test also confirmed that the interaction term explained a substantial amount of additional variance in decision accuracy ($\chi^2 = 4.42$, $p = .04$).

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[4]For confirmatory factor analysis results, see Manata (2016).

Table 2
Logit Regression Analysis Results

	Odds ratio	*B*	*SE*	*p*	Odds ratio	*B*	*SE*	*p*
Constant	0.37	−0.98	0.26	<.001	0.40	−0.92	0.27	<.001
Racial diversity	4.93	1.60	0.99	.11	6.42	1.86	1.03	.07
Relationship conflict	0.82	−0.20	0.39	.62	0.99	−0.01	0.40	.98
Interaction					0.04	−3.15	1.56	.04

Note. The dependent variable is decision accuracy. Odds ratios were also computed in STATA.
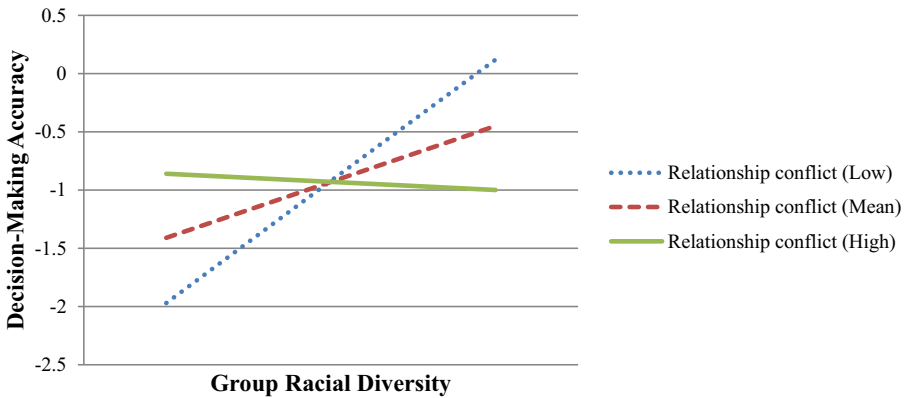

Figure 1. Group racial diversity × relationship conflict interaction. Decision-making accuracy is the dependent variable. Relationship conflict is low: 4.00; mean: 1.86; and high: −.28.

In exploring this interaction effect further, simple slopes were calculated at different levels of relationship conflict (i.e., −1 *SD*, mean, +1 *SD*). As is detailed in Figure 1, racial diversity in groups had a strong positive effect on decision accuracy, but only when relationship conflict in groups was low (*B* = 4.00, *SE* = 1.56, *p* = .01). Conversely, the impact of racial diversity in groups on decision accuracy was virtually nonexistent when relationship conflict was high (*B* = −.28, *SE* = 1.38, *p* = .84). Consequently, these results indicate that the expected positive effect of racial diversity in groups is suppressed when relationship conflict manifests between group members.[5,6]

Discussion

These results indicate that racial diversity in groups is beneficial when such groups are tasked with making complex decisions, but only under conditions in which relationship conflict is kept at a minimum. Stated differently, the presumed benefit of working on decision-based tasks is only beneficial when members of a different race can engage in discussion conflict without taking it personally (see also de Wit et al., 2012). Presumably, this occurred because groups that experienced relational tension were more likely to disengage from the discussion in the interest of terminating the experiment (see also Jehn,

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[5]When this interaction effect is investigated using the alternate procedures described by Ai and Norton (2003) and Norton, Wang, and Ai (2004), results and conclusions are similar.

[6]These results are virtually identical when a measure of task conflict is included as a control variable.

1995). Alternatively, groups that were able to curb relationship conflict experienced the benefits of approaching the problem from different perspectives without disengaging from the conversation, which presumably facilitated the dissemination of unique information (see also Larson, Foster-Fishman, & Franz, 1998). Although theoretically intuitive, scholars are encouraged to confirm these theoretical conjectures with empirical data. Scholars are also encouraged to investigate the extent to which diversity in groups amplifies in/out-group biases when relationship conflict between members is present. Ultimately, such work will continue to expand upon and clarify the current claim that both optimistic and pessimistic views should be synthesized when attempting to explain the disparate effects of diversity in groups (Guillaume et al., 2017; van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016).

Future research

Regarding future research, there are numerous avenues worth exploration. Future replications, for instance, would benefit from investigating the moderating effects of other similar variables that are also presumed to suppress the positive effects of racial diversity in groups (see Guillaume et al., 2017). Group faultlines, for instance, represent group-level divisions that arise due to members' demographic dissimilarities, which are expected to attenuate group-level performance (Lau & Murnighan, 1998). Thus, although this study considered the important moderating impact of relationship conflict, diversity scholars would also benefit from continued exploration of other moderators that also represent social division, bias, or poor interpersonal relations.

In addition, determining precisely *how* some groups attenuate relationship conflict despite engaging in discussion conflict would shed additional light on the reported interaction term. Currently, some research suggests that trust (Simons & Peterson, 2000; see also Peters & Karren, 2009) and open discussion norms (Jehn & Mannix, 2001) are pivotal to facilitating beneficial conflict patterns in groups (see also De Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012; Guillaume et al., 2017). That is, it is possible that some heterogeneous groups preclude relationship conflict by creating open discussion climates that are both trusting and welcoming of others' opinions. Alternatively, it is possible that members' specific personality characteristics facilitate the extent to which group members are able to engage in productive teamwork behaviors (Bell, 2007; Driskell, Goodwin, Salas, & O'Shea, 2006). Indeed, because these results suggest that some heterogeneous groups experience relationship conflict whereas others do not, it will be important to understand the additional moderating conditions that either attenuate or amplify the diversity–relationship conflict association. Moreover, it will be important to investigate whether other variables mediate the effect of the diversity/relationship conflict nonadditive effect. That is, scholars would benefit from investigating the extent to which members in heterogeneous groups with strong levels of relationship conflict are less likely to share unique information, which would thus attenuate performance (see van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016). Such studies would allow scholars to make concrete recommendations to managers and those in leadership positions attempting to negotiate the dynamics of diversity within the workplace or other social contexts.

Finally, future replications will also benefit from assessing whether these results replicate when considering different types of tasks and contexts. For example, although this study made use of a decision-making task, there are other tasks in which the positive effect of racial diversity may also be suppressed or perhaps reversed when relationship conflict is introduced in groups (e.g., decision-making vs. competitive tasks; for additional task types, see McGrath, 1984; Steiner, 1972). The utilization of different tasks would inform whether the effect of racial diversity is produced consistently across contexts, as well as whether relationship conflict plays a moderating role in some contexts by not others. Moreover, different types of diversity in groups and their respective interactions may also be considered (e.g., gender diversity; see Guillaume et al., 2017; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Roberson, 2019), as racial diversity was the only kind of diversity considered in this study.

Limitations

It is important to note that the sample size used in this study was small (group $N = 79$), which is an unfortunate, albeit seemingly unavoidable, characteristic of group-level research (Maas & Hox, 2005; Manata, Miller, DeAngelis, & Paik, 2016). Small sample sizes are problematic because they attenuate statistical power and increase standard errors (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004); furthermore, lower statistical power is problematic because the probability of incorrectly accepting a false conclusion increases (Cohen et al., 2013; Hunter, 1997). Hence, future studies would benefit from replicating these results using larger group-level sample sizes.

As a second limitation, it is important to note that levels of maximum diversity and relationship conflict were restricted. This is problematic because restriction in range attenuates effect sizes (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). Indeed, this may explain why this experiment was unable to establish the predicted negative effect between racial diversity and decision accuracy when relationship conflict was high. Ensuring additional variance in this factor may allow researchers to establish the negative effect of relationship conflict in groups more firmly. Nevertheless, the severity of this general problem is perhaps mitigated by the fact that reported results did not diverge drastically from what has been reported elsewhere, that is, the a priori logic was largely substantiated. Specifically, when tasked with an information sharing task, diverse groups outperformed homogeneous groups (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Moreover, although the effect of relationship conflict on group performance was small and nonsubstantial, this is in line with previous meta-analyses (see Manata, 2016). Nevertheless, future research endeavors would benefit from addressing this limitation by attempting to ensure additional variation in both relationship conflict and other group diversity variables. Likewise, such empirical investigations would benefit from considering the effect of specific diversity compositions on group-related outcomes. For example, in addition to increasing the amount of diversity in one's sample, emphasis could be placed on assessing whether specific group-level combinations of racial ethnicity produce unique results (e.g., two Caucasians and one Asian, vs. two Asians and one Caucasian, vs. two Asians and one Latino). This argument is based on recent research regarding racial positioning, which suggests that different minorities are stereotyped differently (e.g., Latinos are generally stereotyped as being both inferior and foreign, whereas Asian Americans are generally stereotyped as being foreign but not inferior; see Zou & Cheryan, 2017). If it is the case that such dynamics are at play during group interaction, then it is reasonable to suggest that such stereotypes influence group members' identities and thus decision-making dynamics. As such, in addition to ensuring adequate levels of diversity, it is also recommended that such group composition considerations are modeled in future studies. Although, note that such dynamics are expected to become increasingly complicated as group size increases and different diversity characteristics are considered and incorporated into such designs.

As these limitations and additional theoretical considerations are addressed, it is believed that future research endeavors of this nature will contribute greatly to what is known currently about how racial diversity operates in groups. Indeed, a continued synthesis of both optimistic and pessimistic perspectives that are invoked commonly in the group diversity corpus would be of decided value to diversity scholars' understanding of how diversity operates in both groups and organizations alike (Guillaume et al., 2017; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Roberson, 2019; van Dijk et al., 2012; van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016).

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Robert R. Blake, With Recognition of Jane S. Mouton

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Abstract

This article reviews the life and contribution of Dr. Robert R. Blake, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1994 from the International Association for Conflict Management for his pioneering work and prolific career in the field of conflict management. As a longtime co-author and collaborator, Dr. Jane S. Mouton certainly would have been joint recipient of this award if it were not for her death in 1987: The vast majority of their research was published together. Jane Mouton and Robert Blake became famous for their promotion of the Managerial Leadership Grid and through their work as consultants to a variety of professions and organizations. But there is much more to Robert Blake's career and contributions than the Grid. Together, Blake and Mouton were tremendously influential in their work on managerial leadership and organizational development.

At some point during most leadership seminars, organizational behavior and organizational communication courses, and employee workshops, the Managerial Leadership Grid comes up (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Blake, Mouton, Barnes, & Greiner, 1964). The Grid, as it is often referred to (which is also a registered trademark), is presented as a way of conceptualizing the various approaches managers use in their leadership roles, and it suggests there is one best leadership style for managers to use (Blake & Mouton, 1982c). Blake and Mouton's managerial model is the precursor to a series of two-dimensional *dual concern* models developed to predict conflict and negotiation behaviors proposed by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), Rahim and Bonoma (1979), and Pruitt and Rubin (1986). The original Managerial Leadership Grid posited five different leadership approaches that managers take depending on their concern for the people they manage or the production of their unit (see Figure 1).

The Managerial Leadership Grid was influenced by the body of management and leadership theories that preceded it. Some of the earliest work that influenced the development of Blake and Mouton's Grid of organizational leadership was by Kurt Lewin, whose work in the 1930s and 40s demonstrated the value of using participative over autocratic leadership (Burke, 2017). A series of studies at Ohio State University in the 1940s set out to identify behaviors that leaders use. Another series of studies conducted at the University of Michigan in the 1950s identified two leadership styles based on the whether a leader had an employee orientation or a production orientation (Smith, Helm, Stark, & Stone, 2016). But perhaps the biggest influence on the Grid was McGregor's (1960) *Theory X* and *Theory Y*, which described two managerial leadership styles used to motivate employees based on whether employees are unmotivated and
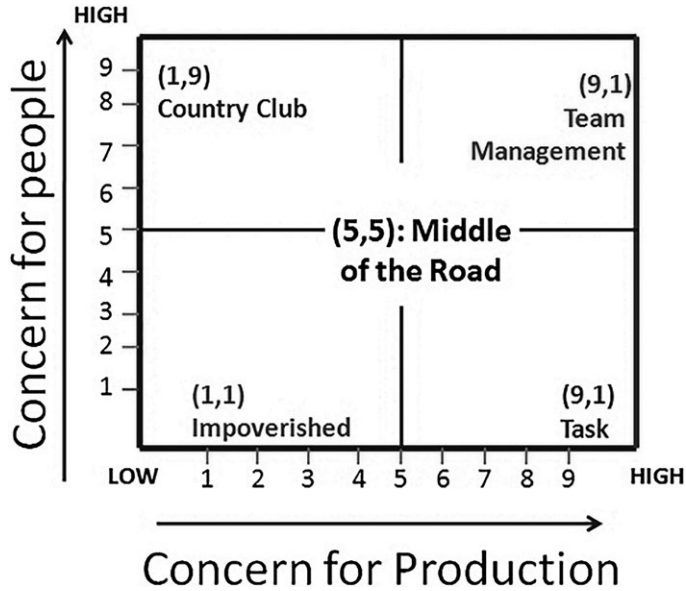
Figure 1. The Managerial Leadership Grid (Google Images, Retrieved January 11, 2019).

dislike work, which requires managers to supervise employees closely, called Theory X, or employees are highly motivated and eager to perform well in their work, which allows managers to lead by creating opportunities for employees to achieve, called Theory Y. The Grid proposed a middle ground, but one that set out to demonstrate the advantages of Theory Y as a leadership style, by proposing styles that emerge from a set of managerial concerns: whether managers have a high or low concern for their employees and whether they have a high or low concern for production. These separate but interdependent concerns lead to five distinct managerial leadership styles.

According to the Managerial Leadership Grid, managers who have high concern for people and for production use a *team* style, encouraging and supporting employees to work as a team to reach optimal productivity. Managers who have high concern for employees but low concern for productivity use a *country club* style, where the work environment is friendly and supportive but not necessarily productive. Managers with high concern for productivity and low concern for people use a *produce-or-perish*–or task–style, in which the manager pressures employees and controls the environment, emphasizing rules and control over a supportive climate in the workplace. The style used when managers have low concern for both people and productivity is referred to as *impoverished*, in which the manager works to avoid problems more than support employees or strive for innovative approaches toward productivity. And a moderate emphasis on people and productivity yields a *middle-of-the-road* approach, or *compromise* style, which provides some support and accomplishes some goals, but not at optimal levels of either.

This original model was published in 1964. Malloy (1998) described the Grid's origin as follows:

Blake, Mouton, Barnes, and Greiner (1964) first described the application of [the Grid] in a manufacturing plant of 4,000 employees in 1963. This was a longitudinal study over 12 months, but without a control group. In total, 800 employees were exposed to the six phase Grid [organizational development] programme, and according to the authors, the results were impressive. At the individual level, they reported major shifts in dominant values, attitudes and behavior patterns. At what could probably be considered the team culture level, they noted improved union, community and parent company relationships and an improvement in team level performance surrogates including items such as boss's work effort, problem liveliness in group discussions, quality

of decisions made and profit consciousness. However, the assessments were made after the study and compared with respondents' retrospective perceptions of the same items prior to the study. (pp. 23–24)

The Grid is primarily conceptual, and Blake and Mouton used it prescriptively to treat managerial issues. Malloy (1998) pointed out that "despite the richness of the Grid model when viewed as a model of leadership culture and the widespread application of Grid . . . , it has not been extensively or rigorously tested" (p. 23).

In 1970, Blake and Mouton proposed the Conflict Grid, which is often overlooked in the progression of dual concern models related to conflict and negotiation. The goal of this model was to identify how people think about conflict as a predictor for the approach they will take. Quite similar to the Managerial Leadership Grid, the conflict grid used a 1 to 9 scale (1 = *low*, 9 = *high*) on each axis, with the horizontal axis representing concern for producing results and the vertical axis representing concern for people. This dual concern model is much closer to the negotiation and conflict models that were to come, with high concern for people and high concern for results (9, 9), which represents an approach that uses problem solving; moderate concern for people and moderate concern for results (5, 5), which yields an approach of comprising; low concern for people and high concern for results (1, 9), which results in an *authority-obedience* approach; high concern for people and low concern for results (9, 1), which yields an approach in which the manager works to smooth over issues and protect harmony; and low concern for people and low concern for results (1, 1), which results in a manager who withdraws.

Between 1964 and 1987, Blake and Mouton co-authored a significant number of journal articles, book chapters, and books directly related to the Managerial Leadership Grid, applying it to the military, to NASA, to health care, to airlines and their cockpits, as well as to organizational management, human relations, and corporate mergers and acquisitions. In 1967, Blake and Mouton added a third dimension to the dimensions of concern for people and concern for production; this dimension was referred to as *thickness*, or the depth of the managerial style.[1] After Mouton's death in 1987, Blake published two more books—in 1991 and 1994—that addressed further developments and applications of the Grid.

Personal Life of Robert R. Blake

Robert R. Blake was born on January 21, 1918, in Brookline, Massachusetts. In 1941, he married Mercer Shipman Blain. They had a daughter, Cary Mercer Blake, and a son, Brooks Mercer Blake. Blake served in the Army during World War II until his discharge in 1945. He retired in 1997, and he died on June 20, 2004, in Austin, Texas.

Education

In 1940, Blake earned his Bachelor of Arts in psychology and philosophy from Berea College, a college for less privileged students who were all required to work on campus as part of their tuition. According to one account, his experience at Berea College was "truly memorable and inspiring" (Obituary of R. R. Blake 2004). In 1941, he earned a Master of Arts degree in psychology from the University of

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[1]A much later version (McKee & Carlson, 1999) of the Managerial Leadership Grid added two managerial leadership styles: *opportunistic* and *paternalistic*. The paternalistic style is characterized by an oscillation between the impoverished and the produce-or-perish styles, in which the manager sometimes praises and supports employees but maintains control and discourages challenges from employees about the way things are done. The opportunistic style also was added as a managerial leadership style, but it does not fit neatly on the grid; it characterizes a manager who uses attempts to lead in a way that will result in greater personal benefits; in other words, in this case, the manager has higher concern for self than for either people or production.

Virginia. His thesis was entitled, "The development of opinions regarding the differences between Negroes and Whites."[2] And in 1947, Blake earned a doctorate in psychology from the University of Texas at Austin; his dissertation was entitled, "Ocular activity during the administration of the Rorschach Test."[3]

Career

Blake continued as a fulltime faculty member at the University of Texas in psychology from 1947 to 1964. In addition to lecturing in the United States (e.g., Harvard University), he also had an international presence, lecturing at Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

Shortly after joining the faculty at the University of Texas in Austin in 1947, Blake spent a year—in 1949—as a Fulbright scholar at the Tavistock Clinic in London, England, where he participated in research related to psychoanalytic approaches to group therapy. From 1950 to 1960, Blake studied group behavior at the National Training Laboratories in Bethel, Maine; this project started as a summer program, but he continued working there for ten years during the summers and serving as a member of the Board of Trustees. He cited his time there as some of the "richest learning experiences" of his life (Blake, 2004). During this decade, Blake worked with Herbert A. Shepard of Standard Oil (later the Exxon Corporation) on a ten-year research project, which was pivotal in Blake's development as a consultant; it was during this project he learned to apply his theory and methods of organizational transformation to corporate settings.

In 1961, Blake was invited to give the Alfred Korzybski Memorial Lecture (AKML) at the General Semantics Institute. Each year since 1952, distinguished individuals were invited to deliver a lecture on a topic of their choosing within the field of general semantics. The annual lecture honors Alfred Korzybski, who created the field of general semantics (not to be confused with semantics) and his goals for human development. Together with Mouton, Blake was invited to again deliver the AKML in 1982 (http://www.generalsemantics.org/our-offerings/programming/alfred-korzybski-memorial-lecture-series/).

In 1994, Robert Blake received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Association for Conflict Management for his pioneering work and prolific career in the field of conflict management. Although IACM does not grant posthumous awards, as a career-long partner and collaborator, certainly Jane Mouton shared credit for his receiving this award. Up until Mouton's death in 1987, Blake and Mouton were close collaborators, and the vast majority of their research was published together.

Jane Srygley Mouton

Because Blake was the recipient of the IACM Lifetime Achievement Award, this review is primarily about him. However, Blake's contributions over his career were developed and co-authored with Jane Srygley Mouton, whose ideas and efforts were highly influential in Blake's career and to his many contributions. In many ways, Blake's career is inseparable from Jane Mouton's. Therefore, we would like to pay tribute to her and her collaboration with Robert Blake (see Figure 2).

In addition to playing a significant role in developing the original Managerial Grid in 1961, Mouton was co-author with Blake on over three dozen books, 460 journal articles, and 290 book chapters (Grid International, Inc., 2016). Together they co-founded Scientific Methods, Inc.—later renamed Grid

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[2]Thanks to Nancy Kechner, Ph.D., RDS Research Software Support, University of Virginia Library Liaison for Biology, Biomedical Engineering, and Psychology, for her assistance in identifying Blake's master's thesis.
[3]Thanks to Victoria Pena, *Ask a Librarian* intern at the Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas at Austin, for her assistance in finding Blake's dissertation.

Figure 2. Robert R. Blake & Jane S. Mouton.

International—where Mouton served in a variety of positions, including vice president, and, eventually, president, between 1961 and 1981.

Born in 1930 in Port Arthur, Texas, Jane Srygley Mouton earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics in 1950 from the University of Texas, a Master of Arts in Science from Florida State University, and a Ph.D. from University of Texas in 1957.

Blake began working on research with Mouton when she was a graduate student at the University of Texas. After she earned her doctorate, Blake and Mouton worked together as organizational consultants at Standard Oil, where they developed what would become the Managerial Leadership Grid. They then worked at National Training Laboratories (NTL), where Mouton was one of few women to lead one of the training groups. In 1961, they formed what would become Grid International, Inc.

Unfortunately, there seems to be little written about Jane Mouton's background and family life. She received several awards for her books, including from the American College of Hospital Administrators (1982), the *American Journal of Nursing* (1982), and the American Management Association (1982). She died of cancer in 1987 (Burke, 2017). In an autobiographical piece written in 1992, Robert Blake wrote the following tribute to Jane Mouton:

> The happiest day in my professional life came in the fall of 1987. Jane Mouton and I had just learned that we were both to be inducted into the Human Resource Development Hall of Fame on December 9. The gratification was made doubly meaningful because of the simultaneous induction; in other words, a recognition that, whatever contribution had been made, it had been made as a team, not as two separate individuals. That gave validity to the operating premise of our entire joint career.

> This moment of great fulfillment was all too soon followed by ultimate sorrow. The ceremony was scheduled in New York, immediately upon our return from a trip to India, where we addressed the International Congress of Training and Development, and then to Athens, where we were scheduled for client activity. The presentation in Delhi went quite well, but at this point a difficulty arose. Jane complained of abdominal pains and, as they grew worse, it was determined she should be hospitalized. She decided to cut the trip short and returned to Austin in late November. I continued to fulfill our commitments, phoning her daily in order to stay apprised of the latest events. Though she remained hospitalized, Jane claimed to be making progress and even thought she

might be able to rejoin me in New York for the Hall of Fame ceremony. She died quite suddenly, two days prior to this event, on December 7, 1987.

This tragedy symbolizes the end of a significant part of my career. Jane and I were partners, working hand in hand for 36 years. Together we formulated the Managerial Grid®, the conceptual framework of which is contained in a book that has already exceeded sales of two million copies, and is available in sixteen languages. We also published *Synergogy*, a book that outlines a radical solution to many of the chronic problems facing teachers and educators today. These were only two of a long line of other books—38 in number—all mutually coauthored by us. Our major effort, however, involved the creation and development of Scientific Methods, Inc., and the leadership we provided that has sustained it for three decades. For all of these reasons, this autobiography can only be written by weaving the centrally important fact of our joint cooperation into the story which follows. (pp. 106–107)

Beyond the Grid

Although Blake and Mouton are known primarily for the Managerial Leadership Grid, their research extends well beyond their focus on managerial leadership.[4] In addition to the many books and articles published on the Grid, Blake and Mouton—and their occasional co-authors—wrote about a number of other subjects related to organizational behavior. They conducted many studies on group conformity and intergroup competition as it occurs in settings with diverse group and individual opinions (e.g., Blake, Helson, & Mouton, 1957; Coleman, Blake, & Mouton, 1958; Helson, Blake, & Mouton, 1958), and they wrote many articles on group dynamics and group development (e.g., Blake, Mouton, & Fruchter, 1962). Blake and Mouton wrote extensively on organizational development, its history, and its value for managers in developing respect and trust (e.g., Blake & Mouton, 1976a, 1979a, 1979b). In addition, they discussed effective management for corporate change, especially during mergers and acquisitions and international mergers (e.g., Blake & Mouton, 1983, 1985). Taking a leave of absence from the University of Texas, Blake went to work as an internal organizational development manager to examine the inner workings of Lakeside (apparently an invented company name), a manufacturing plant with more than 800 employees. He co-authored with Mouton a book that treated his experience as a case study for organizational development practices, entitled *The Diary of an OD Man* (1976a). In addition, Blake and Mouton wrote a number of articles on how to measure organizational training for its effectiveness.

Blake and Mouton's research primarily addressed the Managerial Leadership Grid. They continually wrote in response to questions and challenges to their model (see, for example, Blake & Mouton, 1976b, 1982a) and promoted the value of the Grid. Blake and Mouton argued that the 9,9 approach to leadership was more useful, more preferred by managers, and more effective than the *situational* approach to leadership (Blake & Mouton, 1978, 1981, 1982b, 1982c). They repeatedly competed with Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory (Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979), which argued that the best leadership style varies according to the specific managerial context. Blake and Mouton refuted *situationalism* as an approach to leadership, arguing that it ignores principles of behavioral science and treats concerns for people and production as separate situations.

Conclusion

Together, Blake and Mouton were tremendously influential in the work they did on managerial leadership and organizational development. One of the many tributes to Robert Blake in the memory book for his memorial service shows the kind of person he was:

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[4]For a complete bibliography of the works by Robert R. Blake and Jane Srygley Mouton, go to the list of publications on the Grid International, Inc., website: www.gridinternational.com/publications.html

I first met Bob Blake around 1979, shortly before I attended The Managerial Grid Seminar as a twenty-five-year old. Both Bob and Grid had a profound influence on my professional life, as I ultimately became the international Grid Associate for Ireland. Bob was a truly original thinker and possessed a first rate and constantly enquiring mind. . . . When he visited Ireland he spoke of how he had a strong feeling of recognition in the countryside from his cultural forebears. Bob was truly one of the greats. He leaves a superb testimony to his life and achievements through the countless people who have benefited from Grid. As the old Irish expression has it "May his soul rest on the right hand of God"–"Ar dheis De go raibh a anam." (James Conboy-Fischer, April 6, 2009)

It is no wonder the International Association for Conflict Management selected him to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. This award was clearly well deserved.

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