

*Societal Emotional Process:
Implications for Leaders Functioning in Triangles*

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Presentation to

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Member of faculty of the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family since 1993.

Focus: applications of Bowen family systems theory to the study of emotional process in society.

“Retired” in 2007 after nearly 35 years of service with the Federal Government at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, & the Department of State. A lawyer by training. Practiced nuclear energy law for several years between NRC & State Department service.

Experience includes negotiation of bilateral & multilateral agreements & development of regulations, standards & guidance regarding peaceful uses of the atom.

Independent consultant, post-retirement.

Active engagement in volunteer work, including as member of board of directors & vice president of Leaders for Tomorrow, & a member of Land Use Committee of the League of Women Voters Mid-Shore, where she is engaged in a study of energy & electricity on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

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Overview of Presentation-1

- Overall approach for the day: lay out a methodological approach grounded in Bowen theory for addressing societal level issues, particularly in cases of significant regression.
- Implications of Bowen's Societal Regression Hypothesis for the Study of Human Behavior
 - Part 1: General Background
 - Current thinking about effort to apply Bowen theory to study of emotional process in society & to developing a beginning theory of society as an emotional system; centrality of triangle to doing so
 - Context in which evolution of thinking is taking place
 - Concluding remarks/Points for pondering/Discussion
 - DISCUSSION & BREAK

Overview of Presentation-2

- Implications of Bowen's Societal Regression Hypothesis for the Study of Human Behavior (continued)
 - Part 2:
 - Theoretical framework for developing natural systems theories
 - Quick overview of Bowen family systems theory ("Bfst")
 - Moving toward a beginning theory about society as an emotional system (see Bowen, 1978, p. 386-387)
 - Marshaling the evidence for a beginning theory
 - Concluding remarks
 - DISCUSSION & BREAK

Overview of Presentation-3

- Part 3: A Case Study of the Triangle in Diplomacy (a work in progress, based on a draft manuscript that is not yet complete & considerations addressed in Parts 1 & 2)
 - 2 of 3 primary triangles are examined. (The myriad of interlocking triangles dynamically influencing functioning in the primary triangles is addressed in Part 4).
 - Triangle #1 examines suicide terrorism based on work of Robert Pape of the University of Chicago. Pape concludes that territorial impingement is implicated in suicide terrorism. It consists of a “source” society associated with suicide campaigns directed by a 2nd party (a terrorist organization) against a 3rd party (“targeted” society).

Outline of Presentations-4

- Part 3 (continued)
- Triangle #2 examines societal regression involving land acquisition & usage practices in Palestine during the last quarter of the 19th century & early 20th century based on the work of Amy Dockser Marcus's 2007 study, *Jerusalem 1913*. The 3 parties constituting the triangle are Jewish settlers in Palestine, Arab landowners who sold the land to the Zionist purchasers, and Arab workers of the land owned by the settlers.
- Discussion of triangle #3 about constituting a “new” triangle to try to interrupt or end a regression & get to the negotiating table to address underlying threats satisfactorily & conclude a peace agreement is deferred until Part 4.
- **DISCUSSION & BREAK**

Overview of Presentations-5

- Part 4: Conclusion of The Triangle in Diplomacy: “New” Triangles
 - A 3rd triangle is examined; namely, a triangle specifically constituted to interrupt a regression & to move the parties to the negotiating table for purposes of concluding a peace agreement.
 - Touches upon questions related to functioning of the 3rd party introduced into a relationship between 2 parties in persistent regression associated with a co-created threat environment; includes discussion of observational blindness & role/issue conflation.
 - Of particular interest is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an asymmetrical struggle marked by campaigns of suicide terrorism, & the larger context of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
 - DISCUSSION & WRAPUP

Part 1: General Background-1

- 8th concept of Bowen theory (“emotional process in society”) extends theory to cover totality of human emotional systems.
- Extension permits examination of all human relationship systems using any & all of the concepts originally developed to examine family functioning.
- Within-system examinations & between-system examinations are possible, irrespective of composition, size or complexity.
- Examinations are challenging, given sketchiness of how Bfst concepts might be applied to examining societal level questions.

Part 1-General Background-2

- Societal regression hypothesis, if accurate, would extend Bowen theory to cover the totality of human emotional systems as part of all life on Earth. Operating assumption: hypothesis is accurate.
- Extension would permit examination of all human relationship systems using concepts originally developed to examine family functioning, AND provide a way to examine interactions & interdependencies between human emotional systems & nonhuman systems that humans are connected to, part of, included in, or that otherwise affect or are affected by human functioning, irrespective of composition, size or complexity.
- CAVEAT: Evidence not fully marshaled & is constrained by availability of science regarding life on Earth & Earth as part of the universe.

Part 1-General Background-3

- Further implications of regression hypothesis, if accurate:
 - Facilitates moving more readily between & among levels of functioning, which is particularly important to understanding the nature of threat & response to threats, particularly chronic, sustained threats & responses thereto.
 - Specifically, facilitates moving between behavioral/psychological levels, including political levels, where much of societal decision making takes place, & biological level, where threats affecting human survival, security &/or well being often materialize, whether or not recognized.

Part 1-General Background-4

- Further implications of regression hypothesis, if accurate (continued):
 - Life on Earth appears to be regulated through relationship processes. Further, it appears that in both human & non-human social systems, regulation at the societal level is essential to sustaining group survival, security & well being, even to the detriment of some group members.
 - Observable variation in degree of regulation, which is influenced by context, among other factors.
 - Dysregulation of social groups (maladaptive striking of individuality/togetherness balance in a manner that is threatening at group level & detrimental to both societal AND individual survival, security or well being; e.g., recent economic & financial collapses.

Part 1-General Background-5

- Evidence supporting admission of each concept consisted largely of observations of behavioral & psychological functioning. However, as Bowen explained in his “odyssey toward science”:
 - Begin Quote: “The concept of ‘differentiation of self’ [&] its companion concept, ‘the emotional system,’ are essential in family systems theory. . . . The “self” is composed of *constitutional, physical, physiological, biological, genetic* [&] *cellular reactivity factors, as they move in unison with psychological factors*. On a simple level, it is composed of the confluence of the more fixed personality factors as they move in unison with rapidly moving psychological states. *Each factor influences [&] is influenced by the others*. The psychological is the easiest to be influenced by the individual. . . . The psychological includes relationship factors from the past [&] the present that

Part 1-General Background-6

- Quote (continued):
 - “influence the individual. . . . Many people are completely dependent on evolution to raise or lower ‘differentiation’ in a lifetime. Family systems theory contains several concepts through which psychological states can be modified. These include the concepts of the ‘emotional system,’ ‘triangles,’ [&] the ‘multigenerational transmission process.’ ” (Kerr & Bowen, 342, emphasis added)
- Bowen urged that theory be kept open through continuing process of contact with growing body of science addressing human functioning, the human as part of all life on Earth, other forms of life on Earth, & the Earth as one planet in a vast universe.
- Consideration of implications of societal regression hypothesis facilitates this.

Part 1 Closing Remarks/Points for pondering & discussion

- Cannot emphasize too strongly:
 - Human's destiny is inextricably tied to the planet's health . As part of life on Earth, the human sustains itself as a species through functioning in a set of physical & social relationships of astounding complexity, understanding of which continues to grow.
 - Human behavior & functioning –to be understood & fully appreciated—must be understood in the context of inter-dependencies involving many other life forms, habitats & ecosystems in which there is an ongoing process of dynamic interaction & influencing among all the elements comprising the natural systems of which the human is but one part.

Part 1 Closing remarks/points for pondering & discussion (continued)

- Cannot emphasize too strongly (continued):
 - When societal regression hypothesis examined, it becomes clear that postulated drivers of regression are clearly & emphatically related to “biological part” of man & “biological part” of other life forms co-existing & co-creating the environments in which they all live & try to solve basic problems of living, reproducing, surviving.
 - All living organisms must solve basic life problems:
 - Procure resources necessary to sustain life & reproduce.
 - If social organisms, acceptably distribute resources among group members, thereby promoting both individual & group survival, security & well being.
 - Ensure survival of sufficient number of members needed for reproduction & successful rearing of next generation & reproduction in that generation.

Part 1 Closing Remarks/Points for pondering & discussion (continued)

- Note: not all members of a social group must survive in order for group to survive.
- However, if sociality is a product of natural selection, then group survival may be necessary to individual survival. Expectations:
 - Environmental context in which adaptation takes place would be important factor influencing striking of individuality/togetherness balance.
 - Some degree of group-level regulation of individual functioning , perhaps significant, would be expected.
 - More environmentally challenged groups would be more likely to regulate individual functioning more strongly in order to ensure group's survival, security & well being.
 - When a social group fails to regulate individual functioning appropriately, self-regulation at individual or sub-group level might prove insufficient to ensure group level survival, security or well being.

Part 2-Theoretical Framework for Developing Natural Systems Theories

- Distinguish between larger theoretical framework in which Bowen family systems theory (“Bfst”) developed & Bfst as an applications framework & starting point for theory extension
- Theory building & extension takes place in larger theoretical framework:
 - Naturalistic observations of human & other species & physical & social environments of which they are a part;
 - Marshaling evidence for incorporating each concept into Bfst
 - Incorporating experience & new facts into applications of Bfst & testing adequacy of fit between theory & fact
 - Building bridges between Bfst & the natural sciences
 - Marshaling evidence for a beginning theory of society as an emotional system.
- Framework for understanding human behavior & emotional functioning from a systems perspective
 - Bfst largely, but not exclusively, especially at societal level, where application is largely undeveloped
 - Societal concept starting point for building a beginning theory of society as emotional system.

Part 2-Quick Overview of Bowen Family Systems Theory

- From perspective of development, elaboration & extension of a natural systems theory about human emotional functioning
- Initial Development: Mid-1960s:
 - Bowen operationalizes understanding of *triangle* & which permits integration of first 6 concepts into a coherent theory:
 - Differentiation of self, triangle, nuclear family emotional process
 - Nuclear family projection process, multigenerational transmission process, sibling position
- Further Elaboration & Extension: Mid-1970s
 - Concept of emotional cutoff clarifies & elaborates; concept of emotional process in society extends
 - Societal regression hypothesis postulated
- Toward a beginning theory of society as an emotional system (& other possible extensions)?: 21st century

Part 2-Moving toward a *beginning* theory of society as an emotional system-1

- For each concept of Bfst, Bowen marshaled evidence, largely at behavioral & psychological levels of functioning, to support admission (see Comella 2006, for discussion)
- Societal concept proceeds “in logical steps from the family to larger and larger social groups, to the total of society” (Bowen 1978, Chapter 16, 386-387)
- “... the theoretical concepts of [Bfst] do permit logical extension into a beginning theory about society as an emotional system” (387, emphasis added)

Part 2-Moving toward a *beginning* theory of society as an emotional system-2

- Triangle
 - Basic building block of human emotional systems
 - Human emotional systems can be understood in terms of properties & functions of triangles & interlocking triangles
 - Operationalizing knowledge of how the triangle operates is essential
- 4 predictable moves seen in emotional systems under threat or tension, alone or in combination:
 - Distancing
 - Conflict
 - Reciprocal under-/over-functioning
 - Projection to a 3rd party
 - Note: Importance of triangle to stabilizing tension in 2-party relationship systems & (discussed in Part 4) to interrupting regression

Part 2-Moving toward a *beginning* theory of society as an emotional system-3

- Emotional Process in society
 - All human relationship systems are emotional systems
 - Triangles operate same in all human relationship systems
 - Chronic, sustained anxiety is necessary to fuel societal regression (gradual erosion of functioning, evidenced by, *inter alia*, increasingly emotionally driven decisions, inadequately supported by relevant & reasonably available facts)
 - Don't forget: "Anxiety" is defined as response to threat, real or imagined. A society in regression is a threatened society. Some threats may have biological implications.

Part 2-Moving toward a *beginning* theory of society as an emotional system-4

- Societal Regression Hypothesis about human's disharmony with rest of nature
 - Population explosion
 - Disappearance of new habitable land to colonize
 - Approaching depletion of raw materials necessary to sustain life
 - Growing awareness that "spaceship earth" cannot indefinitely support human life in the style to which man & his technology have become accustomed
- Reference: Bowen, 1978, Chapter 13, 272.
- Note: These constitute biological level threats to survival, security, well being at societal, family, individual levels. Yet, societal level decisions about human survival, security & well being are made at the political level most likely. Bowen theory can facilitate "seeing" biological level threats at political levels.

Part 2-Marshaling Evidence for a Beginning Theory-1

- A work in progress
- *Societies, Families & Planet Earth: Exploring the Connections* (Spring Conference, April 2009)
 - Began a synthesis of science about reciprocal relationships mutually influencing human societies & families & the planet on which they sojourn & from which basic resources sustaining human societies are derived in interdependent ecological niches they occupy & share with other life forms
 - Considered family as emotional unit & as economic unit for procurement & distribution of resources necessary for survival & well being
 - Postscript: Make it “survival, SECURITY & well being.”

Part 2-Marshaling Evidence for a Beginning Theory-2

- Spring 2009 Conference examined:
 - Family & society as interdependent economic units, inextricably bound to the Earth
 - Interdependencies between human & other life forms, including the soil (Hillel: “crucible of life”) & water
 - Dynamic mutually influencing relationship between human & soil; ditto for human & water
 - See presentations of Joanne Bowen, Daniel Hillel, Alice Outwater
 - Links between biological levels of functioning & behavioral/psychological levels of functioning

Part 2-Marshaling Evidence for a Beginning Theory-3

- 2009 Conference (continued)
 - Regulation of individual behavior at group level; importance of regulation to long-term survival of group (L. Lassiter, D. Papero, I. Krupnik)
- Post-Conference Explorations
 - Examining interconnectedness among ecosystems of which human societies are members
 - Examining challenges to moving from mega-, super-society levels of contemporary human societies to biological levels

Part 2-Marshaling Evidence for a Beginning Theory-4

- Post-conference explorations & developments (continued)
 - Examining biological implications of economic collapses:
 - moving from financial instruments, etc. to considerations of soil, air, water, subsistence, survival, security
 - interconnectedness of rural & urban societies; biological regression toward subsistence when market economies disrupted (F. Braudel)
 - Societal regulation: striking balance between individuality & togetherness
 - D.S. Wilson & selection at the group level (*Darwin's Cathedral*)
 - Preliminary thinking about dysregulation of social groups (maladaptive striking of individuality/togetherness balance in a manner threatening to group survival, security or well being); e.g., 2010 Gulf oil spill
 - For further description of the conference, developments & references , see <http://societalstudieswithbowentheory.blogspot.com>.

Part 2-Concluding Remarks

- A work in progress
- Follows methodology outlined in Bowen's "Odyssey toward Science" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) & in Bowen 1978; discussed in Comella 2006, "A Case Study in Observational Blindness"
- Societal regression hypothesis:
 - Identifies human-created induced threats operating at biological level;
 - Confirms that a theory of society as an emotional system requires consideration of biological level of human functioning & human interconnectedness with the Earth & rest of life on Earth
- Discussion & Break

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-1

- Primary Triangle #1 (based on Pape's empirical studies of many suicide terrorism campaigns):
 - Asymmetrical relationship between politically &/or militarily powerful "targeted society" & weaker "source society" that cannot prevail in conflict, either can't or won't migrate, & is unable to prevent the stronger party from impinging on territory or resources the weaker society claims as its own.
 - A terrorist organization sympathetic to the weaker party's claims emerges & resorts to violence to try to coerce the stronger party to stop impingement.
 - Suicide terrorism emerges as 3rd phase of escalating violence when lesser forms have not been effective.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-2

SUICIDE TERRORISM CAMPAIGNS & ATTACKS ON WHICH PAPE'S ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC LOGIC OF SUICIDE TERRORISM IS BASED (SOURCE: PAPE, 2006, APPENDIX I)

- #1. Hezbollah vs. US/France: 5 attacks (4/18/83-9/20/84)
- #2. Hezbollah vs. Israel: 11 attacks (11/11/82-6/15/85)
- #3. Hezbollah vs. Israel & South Lebanon Army: 20 attacks (7/9/85-11/20/86)
- #4. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) vs. Sri Lanka: 15 attacks (7/10/90-10/24/94)
- #5. LTTE vs. Sri Lanka: 54 attacks (4/19/95-10/23/00)
- #6. **Hamas vs. Israel: 2 attacks (4/6/94-4/13/94)***
- #7. **Hamas/Islamic Jihad vs. Israel: 9 attacks (10/19/94-8/21/95)***
- #8. BKL vs. India: 1 attack (8/31/95)
- #9. **Hamas vs. Israel: 4 attacks (2/25/96-3/4/96)***
- #10. **Hamas vs. Israel: 3 attacks (3/21/97-9/4/97)***
- #11. Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) vs. Turkey: 3 attacks (6/30/96-10/29/96)
- #12. PKK vs. Turkey: 11 attacks (11/11/98-8/28/99)

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-3

Suicide terrorism campaigns used in Pape's studies (continued)

#13. LTTE vs. Sri Lanka: 6 attacks (7/24/2001-11/15/2001)

#14. Al Qaeda vs. U.S.: 21 attacks (11/13/95-12/28/2003, in Saudi Arabia, Kenya/Tanzania, Yemen, Afghanistan, U.S., Tunisia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Morocco, Turkey)

#15. Chechen Separatists vs. Russia: 19 attacks (6/7/2000-12/09/2003)

#16. Kashmir Separatists vs. India: 5 attacks (12/25/2000-12/25/2003)

#17. Hamas/Islamic Jihad vs. Israel: 92 attacks (10/26/2000-12/25/2003)*

#18. Iraqi Rebels vs. U.S. and Allies (through 2005): 194 attacks (3/22/2003-12/26/2005)

Isolated Attacks, some unclaimed: 14 (12/15/81-12/29/99, in Lebanon, Kuwait, Jaffna Penin, Egypt, Algiers, Pakistan, Gaza, Turkey).

In database of Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism of University of Chicago, "" -entries are shown as part of Palestinian Resistance vs. Israel Campaign. The database, updated through the end of 2004, shows 143 attacks in the campaign, with 15 attacks added in 2004. 48 of the attacks are shown as taking place within Occupied Palestinian Territory & remainder in Israel. Database can be accessed through <http://cpost.uchicago.edu>.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-4

- Observations about Primary Triangle #1 based on Parts 1 & 2 considerations:
 - Territorial impingement constitutes a chronic, sustained biological level threat to survival, security or welfare of a society.
 - Chronic, sustained anxiety would be expected response to a chronic, sustained threat.
 - Chronic sustained anxiety fuels regression in functioning.
 - As 3rd phase in escalating violence that has failed to coerce stronger party into stopping impingement, suicide terrorism would be a marker of significant regression in weaker party's functioning, both from impingement itself & from the stronger party's reaction to acts of suicide terrorism directed against it.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-5

Observations about Primary Triangle #1 based on Parts 1 & 2 considerations (continued):

- Suicide terrorism would also be a marker of regression in stronger party, which experiences chronic, sustained anxiety in expectation of future acts of suicide terrorism.
- In the chronic sustained threat environment fueled by expectations of acts of suicide terrorism & retaliation thereto, both stronger & weaker parties continue to regress in functioning.
- Each sees the threat as residing in the other, particularly when the terrorist organization is a component of the weaker society.
- Neither party sees its own role in co-creating the threat environment.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-6

Observations about Primary Triangle #1 based on Parts 1 & 2 considerations (continued):

- Each wants & demands that other cease & desist. Weaker party wants impingement to stop. Stronger party wants suicide terrorism to stop. Weaker party has compromised capability at best to provide for its own security, especially given retaliations. Stronger party is unable to destroy terrorist threat either.
- Finally, neither party is able to stop the terrorism or interrupt the regression on its own. Their fate remains inextricably intertwined, but they are blind to that functional fact.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-7

Primary Triangle #2 (based primarily on *Jerusalem 1913* by Amy Dockser Marcus):

- Using primary sources, Marcus examines how relationship processes during later years of Ottoman hegemony, particularly changing patterns of land ownership, acquisition & use in Palestine, shaped fundamentally conditions that underlie present Arab-Israeli relationship.
- Examination supports Pape's analysis regarding territorial impingement.
- Bowen theoretical framework permits inference that threat from foreign occupation operates at biological level.
 - Characterization of threat in political terms appears inadequate: threat from foreign occupation that renders a society unable to exercise adequate control over or access to resources within its territory might well constitute a biological threat to that society when the society deems the resources to be necessary for its survival, security or well being. See Comella 2009 & 2010a.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-8

Bowen theoretical framework permits inference that threat from foreign occupation operates at biological level (continued):

- Biological nature of such threats becomes more readily apparent when impact on subsistence capacity of the family, the basic economic unit of a society, is considered. See references for J. Bowen.
- For traditional agriculturalists & pastoralists, such as displaced Palestinian workers of the land, such threats would profoundly disrupt their fundamental connection to the soil. See references for Hillel.
- Observations about Primary Triangle #2, based primarily on Marcus (continued):
 - Marcus' study captures reciprocal functioning between & among the parties as they regress to relationships where each regards the other as the source of threats co-created in the relationship.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-9

- Observations about Primary Triangle #2 from Marcus (continued):
 - During phase of impingement documented, primary institutional triangles involved Jewish settlers of Zionist-purchased land acting in accordance with Zionist land use policies; Arab landowners, many of whom had participated in land transfers facilitating Jewish immigration; & Arab workers of the land, who once may have been landowners themselves, but now faced possible displacement & loss of economic security.
 - Critical shift started when increasing number of Jewish landowners became farmers themselves rather than rely on Palestinian workers. Displacement had economic consequences for the affected Palestinian families. Families function as basic societal units for production & distribution of resources necessary for security, well being & survival. Increasing displacement would constitute an intensifying societal threat with potentially biological consequences.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-10

- Emergence & escalation of violence (drawn from Marcus):
 - By 1905, Zionist nationalist positions increased fears about Palestinian Arabs about Zionist intentions in Palestine & increasing number of Jews in Palestine
 - Concern that instead of a focus on building power base through economic development with non-Jewish businessmen, Zionists openly debated question of whether Jewish settlers should employ non-Jewish workers—particularly threatening to Palestinian Arab workers who faced potential displacement from lands their families had worked, sometimes for generations.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-11

- Emergence & escalation of violence (continued):
 - Jewish settlement practices also triggered anxiety that a mini-State might be in the making , as indicated by consolidation of land,/power/arms
 - Heightened physical security of settlements was noted (e.g., by purchasing contiguous plots of land & taking security precautions), as was
 - building infrastructure like hospitals & schools to serve contiguous settlements,
 - national infrastructure for advanced agricultural education &
 - replacement of Arab with Jewish workers in settlements.

Part 3-Case study of the triangle in diplomacy-12

Emergence & escalation of violence (continued):

- By 1908, increases in Jewish landholdings were triggering more violent outbursts.
- Observers were questioning the wisdom over the long-term of settlers' focus on amassing political strength rather than building economic strength.
- Observers were also noting the failure of the Zionists to understand relationship milieu in Palestine.

Part 3-Case Study of the triangle in diplomacy-13

- Emergence & Escalation of Violence (continued):
- By 1913, pattern of “other-focused” perception of threat was entrenched:
 - Jewish land acquisitions were growing steadily, often through shady transactions involving transfers of land with clouded titles.
 - Large Arab landowners sometimes defrauded smaller Palestinian landowners & sold that land to a Jewish settlement.
 - Increased number of Arab workers saw their livelihoods threatening through displacement from the land. Sometimes they had been landowners who lost their land through fraud.
 - Tensions heightened in Jewish/Arab relationships & between Arab landowners & Palestinian Arabs who worked the land.
 - Pattern of Arabs & Jews living in mixed communities in Jerusalem’s Old City was giving way to their living in separated neighborhoods.

Part 3-Case Study of the triangle in diplomacy-14

Summing up:

- Marcus' chronology shows pattern of escalating tensions & increasing violence in the primary triangle comprised of Jewish settlers, Arab landowners & Arab workers of the land as territorial impingement & displacement continued to increase up to & beyond founding of Israel in 1948.
- Contemporary observation: rabid anti-Semitism in Europe, persecution in countries of origin & treatment as 2nd class citizens helped to shape Zionist practices in Palestine.

Part 3-Case Study of the triangle in diplomacy-15

Summing up (continued):

- Multi-generational transmission process & fusion of past & present circumstances: Evidence seems to support conclusion that Arab-Israeli regression was shaped in part by importing & applying practices effective under threat conditions adaptive in Europe, but not necessarily adaptive over long-term in relationships between Jews & Arabs in Palestine.
- Question: If accurate, to what degree might threat environment Jews in Palestine perceived been shaped by:
 - past threats & responses thereto ?
 - realistic assessments of actual threat environment in Jewish-Arab relationship?
- **DISCUSSION & BREAK**

Part 4- “New” Triangles in Diplomacy-1

- Part 4: Conclusion of The Triangle in Diplomacy: “New” Triangles
 - Examines a 3rd triangle specifically constituted to interrupt a regression in the relationship between 2 parties & address underlying threats fueling the regression.
 - Considers questions related to functioning of the 3rd party introduced into a 2-party system in persistent regression associated with a co-created threat environment; includes discussion of observational blindness & control of reactivity.
 - Of particular interest is Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an asymmetrical struggle marked by campaigns of suicide terrorism & taking place within the larger context of the Arab-Israeli conflict & relationships.

Part 4- “New” Triangles in Diplomacy-2

- Parts 1, 2 & 3 laid groundwork for Part 4
- Emphasis throughout on methodological approach grounded in framework of Bowen theory & broader theoretical framework in which Bowen theory developed, elaborated & extended
- Part 3 examined suicide terrorism in light of concepts of emotional process in society, multigenerational transmission process & triangles & the societal regression hypothesis
- Part 4 will examine a “new” triangle specifically constituted to interrupt regression & move parties toward effectively addressing underlying threats fueling regression, as well as constraints on achieving this goal.

Part 4- “New” Triangles in Diplomacy-3

Background (from various Wikipedia articles—see reference list:)

- UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 would have created side-by-side Arab & Jewish states in Palestine, with a UN-administered Jerusalem-Bethlehem area.
- Jewish people accepted partition plan through its representative. Palestinian people rejected plan through its representative, with Arab League support.
- On 14 May 1948, the State of Israel came into being. On 15 May 1948, several Arab states went to war against the new State of Israel.
- Many Palestinian Arabs were either displaced or fled during that war. Descendants of some of those who left their ancestral lands remain widely dispersed, including in camps outside of Palestine .
- Other wars followed, with Israel extending territory through either occupation or annexation.

Part 4- “New” Triangles in Diplomacy-4

Background (continued):

- Since 1948, only 2 Arab states (Egypt & Jordan) have concluded treaties of peace with Israel:
 - “Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt,” signed in Washington on March 26, 1979, by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt & Prime Minister Menachim Begin of Israel; witnessed by U.S. President Jimmy Carter;
 - “Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashmite Kingdom of Jordan,” signed on 26 October 1994 at Arava/Araba Crossing Point by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali for Jordan & Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for Israel; witnessed by U.S. President William J. Clinton.
- Making peace is not without costs, e.g.,
 - Assassination of Anwar Sadat by Egyptian army officers on 6 October 1981
 - Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin on 4 November 1995 by Yigdal Amir, who opposed Rabin’s signing of Oslo Accords (1993), a major milestone to resolve Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Part 4- “New” Triangles in Diplomacy-5

- After years of negotiations, facilitated by 3rd parties, no declaration of statehood for Palestine & no Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty
- Bowen theory offers approach to identifying & examining possible impediments, despite 3rd party facilitation, including those related to:
 - Functioning in the “new” primary triangle constituted to interrupt regression in the 2-some, identify underlying threats fueling the regression, including internal threats, & otherwise lay the groundwork for reaching a peace settlement
 - Factors, whether internal to the 2 parties or in the broader relationship system of interlocking triangles, that constrain the parties from concluding a peace agreement, even if the regression has been interrupted & functioning in the 2-some improved through the 3rd party facilitation.
- Bowen 1978 describes constitution of a new primary triangle to interrupt regression in a family (see pp. 478-480). Process described for the family would be applicable in any emotional system.

Part 4- “New” Triangles in Diplomacy-6

- Within Bowen theoretical framework, a “new” primary triangle would be constituted to:
 - interrupt a regression co-created in relationship between 2 parties;
 - assist the parties to understand that underlying threat environment affecting them has been co-created in their relationship, within , of course, an even larger relationship context;
 - assist the 2 parties to “see” their own contributions to creating & sustaining the threat environment; to “see” that ending or lessening underlying threat conditions requires concerted action by both parties ; to “see” that neither party can terminate the threat(s) unilaterally ; to “see” the broader relationship context influencing functioning within the 2-some;
 - assist each party to define what it NEEDS in order to come to the negotiating table to make enduring peace with each other & eliminate or ameliorate sufficiently the co-created threat conditions.

Part 4-“New” Triangles in Diplomacy-7

- For insights into “new” triangle constituted with current U.S. Special Mideast Envoy George Mitchell as 3rd party to conclude an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, see 6 January 2010 interview of Mitchell by Charlie Rose & Mitchell’s memoirs on his role in negotiating 1998 Northern Ireland Good Friday Peace Accords (Mitchell 1999):
 - A passion for the process
 - What each party NEEDS (vice WANTS) to go to the negotiating table to conclude a peace agreement
 - Parties who have not foresworn violence cannot sit at the table.

Part 4-New triangles in diplomacy-8

Theoretical considerations for constituting new triangles (based on Bowen 1978, pp. 478-480):

- Triangle concept provides theoretical framework to understand *microscopic* functioning of all emotional systems.
- pattern(s) of triangular functioning are same in all emotional systems.
- step-by-step understanding of the triangle provides immediate working answers employable for predictably changing functioning of an emotional system.
- using triangle to do so, including to interrupt a regression, requires understanding of:
 - continuum of variation in emotional functioning as described in differentiation of self concept
 - functioning of triangles & interlocking triangles in relationship system of interest , including broader relationship system influencing functioning within the “new” triangle
 - “requirement” entails knowledge of both process & content in relationship system & how process & content inform each other.

Part 4-New triangles in diplomacy-9

Theoretical considerations (continued):

- Interpretation of evidence marshaled for continuum of variation:
 - Observation of intense & sustained patterns of distancing, conflict, reciprocal over-/under-functioning in a 2-party system (or automatic insertion of a 3rd party into a 2-party system) permits inference of regression in functioning level of differentiation in the 2-party system.
 - Observation of chronic, sustained regression in functioning levels of differentiation in a 2-party system, which neither party appears able to interrupt, permits inference of a co-created threat environment in which each party's reactivity to the other's actions is mutually contributing to intensification of perceived threats.
 - Observation of less intense patterns of functioning permits inference that functioning level of differentiation between 2 parties is higher.
 - Caution: Not all inferences might prove valid upon further scrutiny. Other factors not considered may prove important upon further examination.

Part 4-New triangles in diplomacy-10

Theoretical considerations (continued):

- Level of undifferentiation parties exhibit in their relationship obscures what is being co-created in present relationship. (See Comella 2006 on observational blindness.)
- Observation of intensity of patterns & functioning levels of differentiation permits inferences about importance of relationships.
- Enmeshment:
 - When 2 parties seem unable to make significant progress in a triangle constituted to interrupt a regression, it may be indicative of enmeshment in a larger relationship system that is constraining functioning within the 2-some.
 - When 2 parties seem able to improve relationship in presence of a 3rd party inserted to try to interrupt regression between the 2, but shifts cannot be obtained or sustained in larger system, this may be indicative of enmeshment in a broader relationship system that is constraining the capacity to achieve shifts.

Part 4-new triangles in diplomacy-11

- Observation of high degree of observational blindness concerning reciprocal functioning in a 2-some permits inference that constituting a new triangle with the 2 parties has potential to modify patterns in their relationship & raise functioning levels of differentiation in 2-some & perhaps in larger system.
- Certain of triangle's characteristics lend themselves to efforts to modify functioning levels of differentiation in 2 "observationally blind" parties (from Bowen, 1978, pp. 479-480, close to exact quotes):
 - Emotional forces within a triangle operate as predictably as an emotional reflex.
 - Reactiveness operates in chain reaction, one reaction predictably following another in sequence.
 - Successful insertion of 3rd party is based on 3rd party's being able to see accurately role he/she playing in functioning within the new triangle & working consciously & deliberately to control [& interrupt] automatic (programmed) tendency for emotional reactivity in the new triangle.

Part 4- new triangles in diplomacy-12

- “The observation and control are equally difficult. Observation is not possible until one can control one’s reactions sufficiently to be able to observe. The process of observation allows for more control, which, in turn, in a series of slow steps, allows for better observation. The process of being able to observe is the slow beginning toward moving one small step toward getting one’s self ‘outside’ an emotional system. It is only when one can get a little outside that it is possible to observe and to begin to modify an emotional system.” (Bowen, 1978, p. 480)

Part 4-New triangles in diplomacy-13

- From a process point of view, goal of a 3rd party is to “control his emotional responsiveness and not take sides with either of the other two [parties], and stay constantly in contact with the other two.” If the 3rd party can accomplish this, then “the emotional intensity within the twosome will decrease & both will move to a higher [functioning] level of differentiation.” If the third party can not remain in emotional contact with each of the other two parties, the twosome will find another. (Bowen, 1978, p.480.)

Part 4- New triangles in diplomacy-14

- NOTE: Remaining in emotional contact with each of the other 2 is not a sufficient condition to prevent either from triangling in other 3rd third parties.
- There may be tremendous pressure from parties outside of the newly constituted triangle to disrupt the efforts to interrupt the regression or otherwise change.

Part 4-new triangles in diplomacy-15

- These pressures notwithstanding, task still remains to accomplish:
- Sufficient modification of the triangular emotional pattern in the newly constituted triangle such that level of functioning of each of the 2 parties previously in regression can increase sufficiently for them to make & sustain emotional contact within their own immediate system around core issues of what that party needs to get to the negotiating table.
- When a triangle is constituted for purposes of starting or restarting a negotiation between 2 parties caught in chronic, sustained regression, the 2-some most likely would be extremely other-focused as the source of the threats experienced in the relationship.
- It is possible that within larger relationship system, keeping the focus on each other is desirable; e.g., to deflect attention from other relationship challenges in that larger system; to maintain conflict in the 2-some based on other interests/considerations.

Part 4-New triangles in diplomacy-16

WRAPUP-1

- Parts 3 & 4 attempted to illustrate application of Bowen theory to thinking through complex, societal-level problems, in particular to “parsing” difficult & challenging relationship problems in terms of triangles & interlocking triangles, with a view toward being able to see the dynamic, ongoing process of reciprocal functioning co-creating & driving the intensity of emotional process about the presenting problems.
- I believe such operationalized understanding might facilitate constructive & productive (3rd party) leadership in navigating an emotional system. Even though the triangles selected for illustration were seemingly far removed from the congregational setting, the fact that triangles function the same in all emotional systems made the methodological & analytic approach outlined in the examples potentially transferable to other settings.

Part 4- New triangles in diplomacy-17

WRAPUP-2

- The presentations stressed repeatedly & from different angles the centrality of the triangle to “parsing” complex problems about society as an emotional system. The set of 4 presentations were put together in a way that hopefully allowed participants to see the analytic approach sufficiently well to be able to apply it to problems they might encounter.
- Part 3 presented 2 societal-level triangles that fueled regression. Part 4 addressed constitution of a triangle specifically aimed at interrupting & turning around regression in a 2-party system. (Such a triangle had the potential to influence other interlocking triangles.) Together Parts 3 & 4 attempted to illustrate marshaling of evidence to determine degree of regression, multi-generational transmission process in fueling regression, reciprocal functioning in co-creating threat conditions underlying a regression, biological nature of some threats, & interrupting regression.

Part 4-New triangles in diplomacy-18

WRAPUP-3

- The detail was intended to illustrate the microscopic level at which the “navigator” must observe in order to understand the unfolding functioning. Functioning in that position is functioning as a leader.
- The presentation was also intended to underscore repeatedly the importance of understanding functioning in the broader system influencing whether the negotiating table was ever reached, who would sit at it, & whether a peace settlement was concluded. First, functioning in the “new” triangle took place in a broader context. Second, once regression in the 2-some had been interrupted & functioning improved, success in the larger system was not assured. As the visuals conveyed or implied, shifts necessary to reach settlement would occur in step-wise progression & not automatically without being to sustain the improvements in functioning gained in the “new triangle.”

References

- Will be supplied as a separate PDF file. There are too many to fit well into the Powerpoint format. As this revised presentation is being completed, new information about Israeli-Palestinian negotiations is emerging.
- As mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, visuals & the list of references will be placed on the blog:
- <http://societalstudieswithbowentheory.blogspot.com>