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## Improv in International Diplomacy: Creating a Cooperative Narrative

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**IMPROV IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY:  
CREATING A COOPERATIVE NARRATIVE**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

By

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**2017**  
Wright State University

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY  
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July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Preston J. Eberlyn ENTITLED Improv in International Diplomacy: Creating a Cooperative Narrative BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

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## Abstract

Eberlyn, Preston J. M.A., Department of Political Science, International and Comparative Politics Graduate Program, Wright State University, 2017. *Improv in International Diplomacy: Creating A Cooperative Narrative*.

The utilization of improvisation theatre in businesses and organizations to revolve conflict began to be used at the turn of the century. This new and growing tool has helped with company mergers and internal disputes. Thus, why not use these same improv theatre elements in international conflicts? The analysis of three distinct cases of track two diplomacy and improv theatre has shown the possibility of a new tool for diplomacy mediators to utilize.

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## **List of Acronyms**

ANC – African National Congress

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party

IDASA – Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa

IRA – Irish Republican Army

NGO – Non-governmental organization

PFP – Progressive Federalist Party

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization

SAF – South African Foundation

SDLP – Social Democratic and Labour Party

UN – United Nations

UUP – Ulster Unionist Party

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

On a humid Florida night in late February 2012, an event occurred which sparked a cultural conversation in the United States that continues to this day. The death of Trayvon Martin on February 26, 2012 and the acquittal of Martin's killer, George Zimmerman, sparked protests and outrage in the United States. Two years later, the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, further exacerbated tensions within the United States regarding race and class. In the United States the kind of conversations which resulted from these conflicts has taken place in myriad ways: online blogs, print media, protests, private conversations, political rallies.

But what about in other nations? The fact that Israeli leaders refer to Israel as “the Jewish State” is indicative of the cultural divide between the Jewish and non-Jewish citizenry within its borders. In 1993 and 1995, the Oslo I and Oslo II Accords were signed and marked an attempt at peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ultimately, the cultural divide between the two was too strong, and the peace was dissolved in 2000 (Barak, 2005). Yemen is currently engaged in a civil war after more than a decade of conflict. While many peace agreements were negotiated in the 2000s between the Yemeni government and the Northern Houthi group, all agreements were broken resulting in the nation being engulfed in a civil war that cost over 5,000 lives as of March 2015 (Sharp, 2015).

Israel and Yemen are only two of many examples in which official diplomacy has failed. If official diplomacy is failing in these conflicts, what about “citizen diplomacy” or track two diplomacy (Jones, 2015)? Track one diplomacy is what most people think of when they hear that states are engaging in diplomacy with other states. Track one or “official diplomacy” takes place between people of authority and power within states (Mapendere, 2005). The engagement in diplomacy by citizens and other non-official individuals who are affected by a conflict is known

as track two diplomacy. In engaging in track two diplomacy citizens, former officials, and other players seek to find solutions which might lead to a resolution of conflict within their nation or region.

Track two diplomacy is a broad concept that focuses on the process of the engagement between various individuals with no state power or authority (Jones, 2015). When citizens are able to harness the power of track two diplomacy they have the ability to create a narrative. This narrative is an outward expression of the nature of the conflict within their nation. In other words, the narrative explains the conflict within the nation in a way that more people both inside and outside the nation can understand. Narratives can envision what lasting peace looks like. Further, while process is key to track two diplomacy, there is no set of rules or procedures for those citizens and individuals who wish to engage in track two diplomacy and create this narrative. Some practitioners of track two diplomacy have provided various roadmaps for successful track two diplomacy engagement, but there is a lack of principles to guide the engagement. For example, Kaye (2007, p. 33) provides a set of stages: “socialization, filtering, and policy adjustment,” but within the context she explains that “these stages are not necessarily sequential.” A new method or tool is needed to steer the process that citizens are attempting to create when they engage in track two diplomacy.

Whether performance or visual, every form of art exhibits a narrative. Art is often known as the universal language that can speak across cultures and generations. There is an understanding within art, that anyone can engage in an artistic endeavor to create a narrative. Similarly, track two diplomacy inherently sets a foundation of an equal playing field because there are no officials present. While there may be facilitators from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) present, the overall narrative is created by the citizens themselves.

Improvisational theatre companies often are set up in much the same way, where no one person is the lead or the star. Rather, they are a single company trying to solve a single problem by creating a narrative together (Hough, 2011). Thus, we can ask, are individuals who engage in track two diplomacy more likely to succeed by utilizing improvisational theatre elements? The melding of these two disciplines may find an overlap, which would present practitioners of track two diplomacy a new tool.

In recent years, there has been an influx of new programs and professional development opportunities that provide an opportunity for growth in organizations and the individuals within the organization. Consulting organizations and companies such as ImprovAsylum, Business Improv, and ImprovEdge are just a few of the improvisation theatre companies that have popped up in recent years. These consulting organizations seek to provide executives, line workers, and various other employees of small to large companies a new way of thinking about work and their interactions with their internal and external stakeholders (Hough, 2011).

What many of these improvisational theatre organizations have found to be key in solving organizational conflict are a set of processes that propel an organization past its hostile and dysfunctional work environment. Consequently, a wide variety of the efforts provided by organizations such as ImprovEdge are a set of prescriptions and methods derived from the tenants of improvisation theatre to combat the fear and conflict within the organizations they consult (Hough, 2011). Within improvisation theatre there is an indication of a space where the only limit to a solution is the participant's imagination. This presents an intersection of these two disparate concepts. What Jones (2015) calls "group explorations" in track two diplomacy, Crossan (1998) terms "building blocks" in improv theatre.

The structure of current track two diplomacy practices and the lack of formal process is a result of the absence of a standard set of practices which participants can follow to create a coherent narrative. Therefore, by looking to improvisational theatre as several corporations have done in the modern era, there might be a basic guide that can be replicated for track two diplomacy practitioners.

Thus, by utilizing improvisational theatre techniques in track two diplomatic missions, would the engagement be made more successful? This is the question I will be exploring further in my research, as it is a unique blend of an underappreciated form of conflict resolution and an equally under represented art form. Track two diplomacy is so often seen by state officials as ill-equipped to handle real world conflict in a growing divergent world. However, with the right tools for those who engage in track two diplomacy, the possibility of a peaceful narrative being created is much more likely.

Notably, the scope of what I am looking at are intrastate conflicts that persist in a state of physical and psychological feuding. The conflicts should present two ideologically, religious, or ethnic differences between the feuding factions. This scope is key to first examining possible expansion of improvisational theatre elements into the realm of international conflict resolution. Improvisational theatre is used often within companies for internal professional development and growth between existing departments and co-workers. Likewise, by looking at conflicts within a state that persist due to ideological, religious, or ethnic feuding there is a parallel of principles. In other words, the scope of this inquiry is most represented by the tool that is being examined for efficacy, improvisational theatre. The scope of inquiry is important to note because it provides the richest cases to examine due to the nature of intrastate conflicts, which is conflicts that are more likely to be rooted in historical disagreement.

## **Section 1.1: Significance**

In order to create a coherent narrative that will affect change in their nation, citizens who engage in track two diplomacy need more effective guidelines. By looking at art forms, specifically improvisational theatre, I hope to find guidelines that coincide with the concept of track two diplomacy. It is clear that an overlap is present in the basic tenants of each. What is not clear is what effect the introduction of a new tool, improvisational theatre, has on creating a more effective narrative of the citizenry within track two diplomacy engagements in intrastate conflicts. Thus, by looking at cases and instances where possible improvisational theatre elements were present in track two diplomacy of intrastate conflicts, I hope to find a new more effective tool for track two diplomacy practitioners to utilize. The overall significance of what this analysis will attempt is to find a more effective tool to be used in conflict resolution and, more specifically, track two diplomacy practice.

## **Section 1.2: What is Success?**

The overall success of any intrastate conflict resolution is set by the two sides of the endeavor as to whether or not each side will accept the terms of an agreement that is reached through negotiations and diplomacy. However track two diplomacy, in and of itself, does not provide a clear description of success (Mapendere, 2005). In many instances the success is judged by what is accomplished. It is the hope that within intrastate conflicts the nature of the talks of track two diplomacy allow for a freeing dialogue about more systemic and culturally relevant topics that create a narrative of change within the society. The change created could be a narrative of tolerance, acceptance, or any such endeavor that the participants wish to manifest. Thus, an overall successful track two diplomacy endeavor would result in the creation of some

sort of joint narrative from the two opposing sides, which would provide a set of next steps to the transfer the negotiations to an “official” track (Jones, 2015). This joint narrative would be expected to drive the conflict into the other levels of success.

### **Subsection 1.2.a: Levels of success.**

For the purposes of my research, I define success through a series of levels, each of which denotes another step in the overall success of a track two diplomatic mission to bring about some sort of official recognition and progress to a solution to the problem.

1. The creation of a shared narrative between participants.
2. The acceptance of the narrative by the constituencies of both sides.
3. “Official” or track one progress towards a settlement that was a result of the narrative.

The third and final level of success denotes the success of the track two diplomatic effort, but not necessarily the success of the overall conflict resolution effort. As track two diplomacy shifts into track one or “official” track, the efficacy of the narrative created is no longer testable because of the change in the method of delivery (Jones, 2015).

### **Section 1.3: What is Next?**

Throughout all the sections there will be a prevailing concept that continues to emerge: narrative as a form of conflict resolution and storytelling is key to the efficacy of improvisational theatre elements as a tool in track two diplomacy. The literature review is presented in sections focused on conflict resolution and improvisational theatre, with a concluding section of synthesis. The literature review begins with the large area of study, conflict resolution, and is slowly funneled to track two diplomatic endeavors within intrastate conflicts. Likewise, in the

improvisational theatre section, broken into the larger area of improvisation and then moves to the usage of improvisational techniques in business and conflict management. Following the literature review is the methodology and research design section which outlines a case analysis approach to examining track two diplomacy and the efficacy of improvisational theatre elements in successful resolution of a conflict. Also, there is further explanation of the scope of conditions I will be examining. The concluding section of the research design is my overall outline for the remaining parts of the case analysis and examination of evidence. This section also includes further justification of my research method and the overall impact that this method will have on the research done.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

In beginning to answer whether the utilization of improvisational theatre techniques in track two diplomatic missions promotes more successful engagement, the various sections will explain what the current literature says on the scope of conflict resolution within intrastate conflict, track two diplomacy, improvisational theatre, and intersections between these elements. The following sections are organized in such a way that presents each concept's theoretical backing, followed with the practical application and the current state of knowledge about the efficacy of the application.

### **Section 2.1: Conflict Resolution of Intrastate Conflict**

Conflict resolution is a complex and nuanced field of study. In examining the field, there are many different terms that express very similar points. Throughout the process of conflict resolution there is a prevailing notion of “conflict transformation” versus “conflict settlement.” The latter provides a good understanding of how a conflicting group is perceived to have conceded to the opposing side. However, it is more likely that conflict transformation provides the same concessions under a different name (Babbitt & Hampson, 2011). In terms of narrative, though, conflict transformation is more likely to accept a new narrative that is created by the various sides of a negotiation. Within conflict settlement there is an intrinsic understanding that both sides are “settling” for the outcome of the negotiations rather than finding a solution that works with all sides. The distinction of terms helps to shape the narrative created through the resolution process, and it is that narrative that helps to determine the efficacy of the conflict resolution (Crocker, Hampson, & Aall, 2011).



In focusing on intrastate conflict resolution, there has been a shift since the Cold War in the involvement of third party actors in conflicts. The focus on third party actors, on an intrastate level, is chiefly found when the conflict has created consequences for surrounding regions and areas (Babbitt, 2009). Further examination of such interventions by third party advocates find there is an important social-psychological component to the conflict resolution. Dermidögen examined the efficacy of Herbert C. Kelman's intervention in the pre-negotiations between Israel and Palestine in reaching the Oslo Agreement. What Dermidögen found that was key to the success of the workshops Kelman held between Israeli and Palestinians was the ability to effectively and openly express the concerns of the narratives each side was used to hearing and experiencing (2011).

Further, within the research of intrastate conflict Barbara F. Walter provides a multitude of literature on why in many cases even getting combatants on either side of the conflict to the "bargaining table" does not suggest a guaranteed peace. Solving the overall issues of the conflict is not the issue, as Walter argues, rather the issue is the implementation of the policy agreement that is being proposed and signed (2002, p.5). Walter's theory of why conflicts can be resolved through an agreed deal but never implemented, taps into the notion of "conflict transformation" vs. "conflict settlement." While combatants are likely to find tangible pieces that they want or do not want conceded, the more important aspect is the underlying issues that can only be resolved through a successful conflict mediation process. What's more, Walter explains that most civil or intrastate conflicts are fought along ethnic lines, and when the government is involved in the conflict the conflict has historically gone on for longer and caused more casualties (2009, p. 6). Walter argues that ethnic differences within countries promote conflict based on the notion of self-determination, and thus more conflict is likely to break out on the basis of such

determination and the governments want to show strength against other groups that might want to succeed (2009, p. 131).

Further argument and research suggests that governments that are more open and readily able to talk about the underlying issues are more likely to end conflict (Walter, 2004). The leaders within the government also possess a large amount of soft power. This power is in their messaging and narrative creation and can positively or negatively affect the country's population (Tingley & Walter, 2011). The aforementioned factors of leader messaging, historical ethnic conflict with the government, self-determination within intrastate conflicts and civil wars play an important role in how to best resolve the conflict. The importance of transforming the conflict and narrative to fit both sides is key to the overall success of the agreement and implementation of the agreement. Supplementary analysis of the competing theories on why some agreements succeed and some don't point to the power of those creating the agreement. Kydd and Walter find that when groups are attempting to derail the peace process they are focusing on "fostering mistrust" in the moderate groups and their narrative for an agreement (2002, p. 264).

Furthermore, the overall goal of conflict resolution is to solve the conflict that is happening. This requires successful implementation of the agreement that is finalized by the official parties that are doing the negotiation, but what Walter finds is far too often the sides fail to implement the agreement (2002). The failure to implement is the key portion of conflict resolution that must be worked to fix as it is the part that truly determines whether or not a conflict resolution was successful or whether the endeavor was not successful in addressing the underlying issues that caused the failure to implement.

In order to better find and fix the underlying issues within conflict, a space is needed for safe and open communication between sides. Herbert C. Kelman promotes the notion of

“intergroup techniques” and “workshops” to converse and share ideas about what conflict means to the participants. The earliest account of these workshops was in 1971 wherein Kelman, Stephen P. Cohen, Frederick D. Miller, and Bruce L. Smith engaged in a pilot program between Israeli and Palestinians (1977). Cohen et al. (1977) explain the workshop’s success and failures. One failure or shortcoming that is expressed is that there were no government officials or anyone of consequential power involved in the workshop (Cohen et al., 1977, p. 168). However, this was, by its very nature one of the first documented forms of track two diplomacy, because it involved citizens discussing issues and topics of conflict in a safe and open environment. Nevertheless, true to track two diplomacy’s root, the workshop did not end in a joint narrative nor any clear narrative, but what this workshop did was to lay the foundation for further third party intervention and facilitation of workshops in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 1994, Kelman, along with Nadmin N. Rouhana, published an article revitalizing the idea of joint thinking in conflicts. Rouhana and Kelman argue that the effects of “interactive problem solving,” while minimal and time consuming, have an effect on the overall efficacy of the agreement’s that are reached in those conflicts (1994, p. 159). Kelman (1998, pp. 191-192) present’s five assumptions that are key to acceptance of the efficacy of interactive problem solving and those are:

1. The individual is key as a unit of analysis in international conflict.
2. International conflict must also be viewed as intersocietal conflict.
3. Conflict is by definition an interactive process that is dynamic.
4. Conflict resolution on the international level must employ more diverse influential processes.
5. Conflict has the possibility to change.

Kelman's assumptions are important in the examination of the efficacy of track two diplomacy as an interactive problem solving tool because otherwise the analysis will be weighted by the importance of the interactions of divergent groups with little to no influential power. A key point that Kelman examines is the movement of micro solutions to macro or country sized conflicts. Kelman argues that interactive problem solving and citizen involvement on the micro level has a tremendous effect on the overall efficacy of state sponsored solutions to issues (2000).

Equally, the issue within conflict resolution is controlling or removing differing narratives that promote the conflict, rather than work to resolve the conflict. The conflict is often exacerbated due to missed cues and misinterpretations of the other side's actions. As Kaufman explains, the accepted narrative by each side can greatly skew the overall truth of a narrative, because the symbols and stereotypes of a certain side are not accurately portrayed (2009). Kaufman's theory of symbolic politics further explains the possible causes of intrastate ethnic conflicts. Kaufman establishes his theory on the notion that group myths are formed by opposing groups, which promotes hostile symbols and narratives between the groups (2006). By utilizing Kaufman's symbolic politics theory as foundation of intrastate ethnic conflict, there is an understanding that the two opposing sides will need to create a narrative together to resolve the conflict, but the question becomes what tools are available for such an undertaking?

## **Section 2.2: Track Two Diplomacy in Theory**

The hope and use of track two diplomacy is to create a tool in which a truthful narrative emerges. The idea of a "truthful narrative" is a misnomer because the overall truth is determined and accepted by both sides. Therefore, the truthfulness of the narrative is judged by those two sides who created it together and those two decide its efficacy in resolving the conflict. Track

two diplomacy can be a messy form of diplomacy to define, as it is often portrayed in the incorrect context. Further, there has only been one comprehensive book written on track two diplomacy, and within the book Peter Jones expresses the intricacy of track two diplomacy in one line, “track two is complex and multifaceted” (Jones, 2015). Too often track two diplomacy is marginalized to a set of negotiations by non-official actors that amount to no significant change (Notter & Diamon, 1996).

True track two diplomacy involves negotiations between non-state actors that have the possibility to transfer what is discussed in the track two talks to track one negotiations or negotiations that contain official state actors. This definition allows for fluidity of the goals and objectives for which track two diplomacy is attempting to find solutions, but it does not provide clear and concise methods to engage in the negotiations (Jones, 2008). As Jones explains, the strength of track two diplomacy is how loose the rules and end goal are. However, he further explains this strength is also its greatest weakness, as it does not allow for objective repetition of solutions (2015).

Additionally, it should be noted that track two diplomacy theory is predicated on the idea that members from two conflict sides are willing to engage. The willingness of these members to participate in track two diplomacy is much easier, though, when engaging with other non-state actors. Also, the conflicting narratives are easier to mend and bypass with non-state actors than those engaged in the official narrative creation. This is a result of how official actors in negotiations are perceived to act in official negotiations, whereas in track two diplomacy there is no need for such perceptions as everyone is, by virtue of track two, equal in their own right (Kaufman, 2004). This equity of participants is important to the overall success of track two diplomacy as an interactive problem solving tool in the international conflict realm because the

members are more likely to get involved when such ground rules are set (Kelman, 2000). Track two diplomacy is truly citizen diplomacy in its engagement of non-state actors as means of micro to macro level change in a conflict. The idea of track two diplomacy as a means of conflict resolution is more concurrent with official diplomacy than it may suggest, but it is also a means to start. In other words, track two diplomacy endeavors can begin at any stage of an international conflict and they can work in parallel with diplomatic endeavors by state officials (Jones, 2015). This measure of working concurrently is more likely to produce favorable outcomes in the end as minds are being changed at the base level of the conflict and thus there is less likelihood of attempted demonstrations to end the official diplomacy (Walter, 2009).

Further, the notion of engaging in track two diplomacy may be difficult for members of opposing sides to want to engage, but the act of engaging in track two diplomacy between these opposing sides often is a way to empower them with the confidence to continue (Burgess & Burgess, 2010). Burgess and Burgess go on to explain that the empowerment of these non-state and low-power individuals often helps to transfer to or embolden others within their respective groups to feel empowered for change (2010). Generally, the notion of empowering calls back to the importance of collective narrative creation and collaboration between sides. The empowered individuals are more likely to promote the positive joint narrative that was created, and push official actors in the conflict to pursue a peaceful narrative as well. The overall efficacy of a track two diplomacy venture is the creation of a narrative that is both shared and centered in truth that allows for possible “transfer” to higher power levels in the respective groups involved (Jones, 2015).

### **Subsection 2.2.a: Track two diplomacy's efficacy.**

Jones explains the importance that “transferring” plays in the efficacy of track two diplomacy negotiations (2015). “Transferring” is the ability to shift what is discussed in track two negotiations into official negotiations between persons of power. The ability to transfer these talks is grounded in a few leading principles, such as members who engaged in the track two negotiations having influence with official actors, becoming official actors in the future, or some variation of those two. However, the overall success of track two diplomacy is hard to assess or track (Mapendere, 2005). One of the chief reasons is because the idea of “transferring” is centered around the idea of having what is negotiated within track two diplomacy reach the official level. The process of current track two diplomacy does not have a concrete set of rules or steps to create the narrative that will drive the official discussions (Chigas, 1997). The lack of any concrete and solid foundational rules or steps for promoting success and the overall efficacy of track two diplomacy is an obstacle. It may be important to look to another discipline of study altogether to find that solution needed to plug the gap in the track two diplomacy efficacy problem.

### **Section 2.3: Improvisational Theatre**

Track two diplomatic engagements are only as successful as the willingness of the participants are in working and listening to each other. The key to a successful improvisational theatre troupe is their ability to work together on finding the truth of a scene (Halpen, Close, & Johnson, 1994). The truth of a scene is a solution to a problem, it is a key to a lock, it is the essential answer that bonds the actors together in a performance. A troupe's ability to read an audience and play off the emotions and feelings of the crowd often determines if the troupe will

create a funny or memorable narrative. Many improvisation shows open with the performers asking for topics from the audience, and the success of the performance is based on the performers' ability to find the truth of the topic.

The first rule many young improv performers are taught is to always accept what another actor gives you with a “yes.” Then, to go one step further add an “and” to that “yes” to create a “yes, and” phrase that will lift the creative narrative to new heights (Halpen et al, 1994). Often many technically trained theatre actors believe improvisation theatre actors are untrained and unrehearsed, but in reality the opposite is true. Improvisation theatre troupes train for hours each day to maintain a close connection with their fellow performers, as well as making sure to create innovative and distinct narratives for the shows with audiences (Hough, 2011). The general creation of a narrative that is created by the actors on the stage marks stark similarities to the way in which track two diplomacy is employed.

### **Subsection 2.3.a: Improv in Business**

Using improvisational theatre methods as a professional development tool for companies is a fairly recent idea. However, workshops and presentations expressing the value of improvisation in business has been around since the late 1980s (Crossan, 1998). Within the workshops and sessions taught by improvisation, facilitators are the core of what make improvisational theatre unique. The idea of a truthful narrative comes into play quickly with the acceptance of a participant's exchange with another person. The same elements that make an improv performance successful translate to successful business development. Hough examines these elements with her company ImprovEdge, and she offers the “secrets” to improv in business (2011):



1. The creation of a “yes” space (Halpen et al, pg. 5, 1994).
2. The ability to build off other participants (Hough, pg. 45, 2011).
3. The equity of all involved in the endeavor (Hough, pg. 81, 2011).
4. Finding success in failure (Halpen et al, pg. 53, 1994).

Within each of the “secrets” or keys to success is an enormous amount of narrative creation potential. The first is the creation of a yes space, which is inherent in any improv enterprise, whether with a business or for entertainment. Acceptance of another person’s idea or suggestions does not mean following through with that idea, but it does mean accepting what that person has offered the situation and seeing if that might help inform the narrative that assists in the situation (Kelly, 2012). The second is an extension of the first, and that is to build off of other people’s contributions. Adding an “and” in with the “yes” to the initial person’s contribution creates another jumping point for the group to continue to explore options for the given situation (Hough, 2011). Third is equity of participants, which focuses on the essence of the narrative creation for the group. This element focuses on each participant being an active participant, both when listening and when speaking (Crossan, 1998). Equity of participants focuses on the idea that everyone has something to contribute and no one person has the solution, so it is important to listen to everyone involved. The fourth and final element is perhaps the critical part to improvisation’s power, and that is finding success in failure or, as Hough puts it “oops to Eureka” (2011, p. 121). This element allows for growth from failure and trying new and divergent things. However, an improv engagement can be successful without this final element. The essence of this element is that even when every element is in focus and the group is working through a situation, the group might find the narrative they were creating is a complete failure.

However, the group's ability to accept this failure and shift it into a successful and productive narrative is what improv focuses on stimulating (Kelly, 2012).

### **Subsection 2.3.b: Improv in Conflict Resolution**

The four elements to successful implementation of improv elements within a business translate to a business or organization's use of improv in resolving conflict. This is another form by which improv is used in businesses and organization, to resolve conflict. Whether this conflict is between two organizations or departments within one organization the same elements are key to the successful resolution of the conflict. An overlap of applicability between the tenants of improvisation and conflict resolution is seen within the four keys presented. Within the realm of track two diplomacy an inherent rule is set that all the participants hold the same equity, which is illustrative of the endeavor in which the participants are willing to engage (Mapendere, 2005). This rule parallels nicely with the third improvisation key of equity of everyone engaged in an endeavor. Further, beyond simple equity of the participants there is a shared, recognized legitimacy to the other participant's involvement in the enterprise. This recognition thus ties with the acceptance of another participant's ideas and contributions to the engagement, and creates a space that allows participants to grow in their respective frames of thought and experience. This overall acceptance melds nicely with the notion of utilizing other participant's ideas as building blocks in the creation of a joint narrative.

### **Section 2.4: Hypothesis**

The creation of a joint narrative is key to the overall success and efficacy of both track two diplomacy and improvisational theatre. Therefore, I hypothesize that track two diplomacy instances that utilize elements of improvisational theatre will be more successful than those that

do not contain such elements. Due to what the current literature is suggesting, this seems to be a logical assumption. The overall efficacy of improvisational theatre elements in mending conflict in businesses and organizations gives an indication that the same might be possible on the international level. Further, the inherent similarities between track two diplomacy practice and improvisational theatre elements in business indicates a possible link in using improvisational theatre elements as a tool. The likelihood that a proven tool such as improvisational theatre will promote further success in track two diplomacy engagements is to be anticipated. Further, it is very likely that many elements of improvisational theatre have been utilized in track two diplomacy engagements without the facilitator's or participant's knowledge. These cases will help to provide the basis of testing the presented hypothesis.

### **Section 2.5: Process Tracing**

Track two diplomacy and the interactive problem solving techniques that are utilized within it require a method of examination that can illuminate causal effectiveness of improvisational theatre elements on track two diplomacy endeavors. Therefore, I have elected to utilize a case study analysis which will provide insight as to possible application of this tool. Further, the overall nature of the analysis is to examine the efficacy that improvisational theatre elements have on track two diplomacy, and because no international conflict resolution practitioner is known to have used improvisational theatre as a tool I will draw on examples that best match with the outlined elements of a successful improvisational approach to determine which, if any, cases used such elements and have been more successful because of that use.

In order to analyze the efficacy of improvisational theatre in track two diplomacy, I will utilize process tracing over time that will determine whether an improvisational theatre element

was the causal link in determining the success of a track two diplomacy engagement (George & Bennett, 2005). The four elements I will be specifically looking for are the four improvisational components:

1. The creation of a “yes” space (Halpen et al, pg. 5, 1994).
2. The ability to build off other participants (Hough, pg. 45, 2011).
3. The equity of all involved in the endeavor (Hough, pg. 81, 2011).
4. Finding success in failure (Halpen et al, pg. 53, 1994).

The translation of these components or elements within given cases may pose the largest threat to the research. As George and Bennett warn there are two limitations to using process tracing, and the ability to create or find an uninterrupted causal path, in examining track two diplomacy cases will require reliable historical data of the cases (2005). In determining if these elements are present, there are several factors that must be present in each.

For the creation of a “yes” space, each participant must willingly agree to participate in the endeavor. There must be a set of rules or guidelines present about what can be spoken about and what is not to be spoken about. However, the more freeing the guidelines, the easier it will be to determine the presence of a “yes” space. The second element of improvisational theatre is where the joint narrative starts to take shape, as it requires that participants build off of each other’s ideas and input. Therefore, to determine the presence of this element, the two sides will have had to agree on at least two parts of a narrative and at least one of each of those parts must come from each side. Determining the presence of the third element requires two important components. First, none of the participants are state or official actors or acting directing on behalf of an official. Second, the participants must agree that all the participants who are present may participate. This does not mean that the participation must be equal and each person speaks

for the same amount of time. Rather, it means that each participant has equal chance to speak and add to the dialogues. The final element is applicable if something were to go wrong. The easiest way to determine if something goes wrong is if the engagement ends because of something that is said. The success part of this failure would require that participants come together after this break in dialogue and talk about the why the talks ceased. Then, the participants move forward with the engagement.

While the improvisational theatre elements are the independent variables in my analysis, the success of a case is going to be key. The use of the three levels of success are going to be key to determining wherein certain cases fall.

1. The creation of a shared narrative between participants.
2. The acceptance of the narrative by the constituencies of both sides.
3. “Official” or track one progress towards a settlement that was a result of the narrative.

These levels of success are important in determining overall efficacy of the tool that is being used. Each level builds off the previous level to strengthen the overall resolution of a conflict. The first level requires that the participants of an endeavor write down what is discussed and agreed upon by both sides. Acceptance of this agreement by the constituencies of both sides will require a powerful narrative. However, a powerful joint narrative will be more effective in changing and shaping the constituencies. One of the most effective ways to tell if a narrative is applicable in penetrating through to the various constituency would be public polling, but this is highly unlikely to take place in many of these conflict regions. Therefore, if state news or international news sources share the new narrative from the talks, success at that level will be reached. The third and final level can be attained by going through the other two levels or it could be jumped to, which goes back to the “transferring” that track two diplomacy relies on. If

any official action towards a peaceful agreement is taken due to the joint narrative that was created, then the third level will have been reached.

Concurrently, it is highly likely that other possible variables might suggest conflicting results of my cases, and ultimately lead to skewed results of the true causal mechanism. Some of these possible outlier variables are:

1. Intervention by an “official” or state-sponsored actor
2. The death or killing of state actors
  - a. Change in leadership
3. Third party intervention
4. Existing solutions or resolutions are reformed
  - a. Pre-existing agreements are utilized

## **Section 2.6: Structure, Focused, Comparison**

In utilizing Alexander George and Andrew Bennett’s (2005) structured, focused, comparison approach to standardize and begin analyzing the three cases that were selected. The first section in Table 2.1 contains the background information of each of the cases. The years of engagement, question 1.1, begin with the year that the first track two engagement happened and end with the year that a formal agreement was reached. The length of the engagement is the range of years from beginning to end following the years of engagement scheme. The final question in the first section is the number of key actors involved in the engagement. The second section deals with the independent variable of inquiry. The four questions direct relate to the four key improvisational theatre elements.

The final question in the second section, question 2.4, requires that a track two engagement end abruptly without an immediate reconciliation. Question 2.4.a regarding the reconciliation of the breakdown is key to determining if that variable is present in each case. The final section of Table 2.1 provides the dependent variable of success with a framework to develop. The main question of a shared narrative is key to determining the efficacy of the track two engagement, but arguably what is more important is the overall resolution of the conflict and whether the shared narrative aided in the continued resolution of the conflict. Therefore, the final question, 3.2.b, of whether the conflict is still resolved is essential in determining whether the shared narrative created was effective.

<b>Table 2.1</b>	
1.1) Years of Engagement	
1.2) Length of Engagement	
1.3) Number of Actors	
2.1) Was a neutral, “yes,” space created?	
2.2) Did participants from all sides contribute?	
2.3) Were ground rules established for equity among the participants?	
2.4) Did any of the engagements breakdown?	
2.4.a) If so, was there a reconciliation?	
3.1) Was a shared narrative created?	
3.1.a) If so, was the shared narrative created by all sides?	
3.2) Did the narrative transfer to Track I?	
3.2.a) Was the conflict resolved?	
3.2.b) Is the conflict still resolved?	

### **Section 2.7: Scope Conditions and Case Outline**

Due to the overall necessity to narrow the scope of my inquiry, I have chosen to look at instances of ethnic, racial, or religious conflict within a sovereign state. These intrastate conflicts present richer cases of underlying psychological conflict than interstate conflicts which are often

based more on geographical power than the overall nature of the relationship of the actors involved. Further, the threshold that will determine if a case is plausible is if the conflict has been ongoing for more than a year. Conflict begins when the first casualty is reported. A casualty, in these instances, must not be combatants, rather they are citizens or persons affected by the conflict. The one-year mark will help to determine the sides of the conflict, as well as their overall strategies and desires from the conflict. A year of conflict will also create many conflicting narratives that will provide for substantive talks during the engagement. Moreover, the conflict must also meet the threshold of at least a hundred casualties within the first two years to be considered.

A total of three cases were selected for analysis. The first case is regarding the conflict in South Africa for the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This case provided the richest documented track two diplomatic engagements of any of the cases utilized. This allowed for further examination of additional elements in the case. However, it should be noted that each of the cases selected presented enough information to effectively trace the process and follow the structured model of analysis presented. The advantage of the South Africa case having richer detailed notes is simply that it allowed for further exploration into the reason South Africa found a resolution to its conflict.

The second case that is utilized is Northern Ireland and the conflict that waged for approximately thirty years in the late-1900s. This case provides an interesting perspective on the overall efficacy of track two engagements when only some improv theatre elements are present. Unlike in the first case of South Africa, Northern Ireland presents varying degrees by which improv theatre elements were present in the track two meetings.



The final case that is used is Israel-Palestine. The main concern with this case is that it can be argued that it is not an intrastate conflict, but rather an interstate conflict. However, the conflict is based on an ethnic divide between the Israeli and Palestinian people and presents rich documented case of track two engagements that have been attempted throughout the years. These cases range from no improv theatre elements being used to all four of the elements being present. Therefore, the dynamics of the final case present a good amount of detail and information by which to assess the efficacy of improv theatre elements in track two diplomatic engagements.

### **Chapter 3: South Africa**

In 1948, the all-white government of South Africa, led by the National Party, enacted legislation that promoted racial discrimination in public facilities and neighborhoods. Throughout the reign of apartheid, it became illegal for whites and people of other races to marry each other, as well as dictated the type of employment a person could get based on his or her race, and other forms of segregation and discrimination. Opposition to these laws quickly took root among the African National Congress (ANC), a South African political party that was founded in 1912 in response to the mistreatment of other races from the white political leaders of the time. Notably, in the late-1950s, the ANC worked to end apartheid with nonviolent measures of protest and civil unrest. However, on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1960, after police opened fire in the black township of Sharpeville, killing more than 60 blacks, militant wings of the ANC were formed. Nelson Mandela, a founder of Umkhonto we Sizwe (“Spear of the Nation”), was imprisoned in 1963 for promoting the group’s violent acts. Over the next two decades the conflict in South Africa became violent and separated the sides along racial and socio-economic lines. However, the political crisis and conflict in South Africa prompted many non-state actors within the country to try and resolve the conflict.

Due to the nature of the conflict in South Africa, a multi-lateral intrastate conflict, it is ripe for assessment of any track two diplomacy that occurred within the nation. The conflict in South Africa, like many others, was born from a series of state laws that caused divides in the nation’s population based on the differences of the citizenry. By enacting laws that forced segregation of the races the South African government was imposing a narrative upon its citizenry, rather than the citizens and communities driving the narrative in the nation. Throughout the conflict there were instances of citizens and groups attempting to shift the

narrative. The groups that attempted to shift the narrative were made up of business leaders, ANC leaders, journalists, and past government officials. Some of these attempts were through force, like the Umkhonto we Sizwe, and some of the attempts were through non-violent means. For the purposes of this analysis, the focus will be on the non-violent track two engagements that occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s. While the conflict started over two decades prior to any documented cases of track two diplomacy, there were instances of other non-violent acts of protests and dissent against the apartheid laws imposed by the government.

While this paper does not directly ask the question to whether other acts of non-violent protest can shift narratives within nations of conflict, there are many examples in South Africa of citizenry engaging in actions and movements that helped to shift support towards resolution of the conflict. These non-violent acts will be discussed at the end of this chapter, as their importance in the overall resolution to the conflict is justified when focusing on the narrative appropriation aspect of the question to the effectiveness of a shared narrative of conflicting sides. Further, the non-violent acts that will be discussed will focus on performing arts organizations that worked to shift the narrative in the nation. This focus on the collaborative arts will further enumerate the possible power and effectiveness of utilizing improv theatre techniques in track two diplomacy engagements. Nevertheless, the first sections of this chapter focus on the track two diplomacy engagements that, woven together, form a shared narrative between the conflicting sides to help bring about an overall resolution to the decades long conflict that caused a deep divide in South Africa.

### **Section 3.1: The Zambian Meeting**

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1985, a meeting between four business executives and three journalists from South Africa and the ANC President, Oliver Tambo, and five ANC officials took place in Zambia's capital of Lusaka. The engagement was facilitated by the Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda. President Kaunda and the editor of the business magazine *Leadership SA*, Hugh Murray, organized the meeting largely due to President Kaunda's support of the ANC's plight in South Africa. Further, due to the ANC's exile in 1960, ANC headquarters was based in the Zambia capital of Lusaka.

The meeting took place after months of civil unrest in South Africa, which culminated in an ANC led bombing at Anglo-American headquarters in April of 1985. The unrest caused Anglo executives to become fearful of their workers who supported the ANC to disrupt their mining operations with strikes. Anglo held "roughly 50% of the Johannesburg Stock exchange" (Lieberfeld, p. 360, 2002), causing further worry that a disrupted market would exacerbate and cause more divides in South Africa because of the growing economic divide.

For the Zambian meeting arranged by President Kaunda, the sides were made up of exiled ANC officials and business leaders from South Africa that had been divided by the conflict, due largely to the growing economic disenfranchisement. Gavin Relly, chairman of Anglo, led the South African delegation, which included South Africa Foundation (SAF) chief executive, Peter Sorour; former liberal member of the Progressive Federalist Party (PFP) and Parliament and current executive director of Anglo-America, Zac de Beer; and Anthony Bloom, an executive of Premier Milling. The ANC side was headed by ANC President Tambo. South African policy prevented the negotiation with terrorists, but because the engagement was in a different country, there was now law that prevented it from happening. Further, it was noted that

because the delegation from South Africa was led by business men, there would be little done by the government to prevent the talks (Lieberfeld, 2002). The disconnect between the business leaders in South Africa and the government of South Africa allowed for flexibility in what could be discussed and how the structure of the talks and engagement could take place between the two sides.

In accordance with the scheme set up in the previous chapter, the format of this engagement is key. President Kaunda “chaired” the session, and he presented the sides with ground rules regarding the nature of the talks. One of the key components to these ground rules was an intermixing of the participants around the room. The sides started on opposite ends of the conference room table, but through suggestion of Tambo, they mixed up, as to not “face each other like opponents” (Lieberfeld, p. 259, 2002). This initial interaction set an equity among the participants that prevailed for the entirety of the six-hour meeting, which included lunch. Further, equity was built in the relationship of the participants as they chose to use only first names to address each other and not focus on titles or entities that participants might represent.

True to form, the participants of this track two engagement were creating a space that was neutral and free of judgement. The overall shared expectation that there were no grand expectations or goals of the meeting provided a backdrop of ease and necessary collaboration for the engagement to create a shared narrative. Noting their common traits were important to the overall meeting, as all the participants found themselves bound together through their Christian backgrounds. This commonality acted as a bridge between the two groups. While President Kaunda brought the two groups together to discuss and engage in a freewheeling talk, the sides were that of two “opposing” sides. However, the opposition was not constructed by the participants, but rather by the system where they exist.

<b>Table 3.1: South Africa</b>			
	<b>Zambian Meeting</b>	<b>Dakar Conference</b>	<b>ANC-Afrikaner England Meeting Series</b>
1.1) Year of Engagement	1985	1987	1987
1.2) Length of Engagement	Six hours	Three days	Two days
1.3) Number of Actors	13 (7 from SA and 6 ANC members)	78 (61 Afrikaans and 17 ANC members)	7 (4 Afrikaans and 3 ANC)
<b>2.0) Was a neutral, “yes,” space created?</b>			
2.1) Was a neutral, “yes,” space created?	Yes	Yes – moving to a bar	Yes
2.2) Did participants from all sides contribute and build from each other?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.3) Were ground rules established for equity among the participants?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.4) Did any of the engagements breakdown?	No	Yes	Yes
2.4.a) If so, was there a reconciliation?	n/a	Yes	Yes
<b>3.0) Was a shared narrative created?</b>			
3.1) Was a shared narrative created?	Yes	Yes	Yes
3.1.a) If so, was the shared narrative created by all sides?	Yes	Yes	Yes
3.2) Did the narrative transfer to Track I?	No	No	Yes
3.2.a) Was the conflict resolved?	No	No	Yes
3.2.b) Is the conflict still resolved?	n/a	n/a	Yes

Along the scheme of the possible improv elements that were present in the six-hour engagement, there were three of the four elements. As noted in Table 3.1, there are elements of creating a neutral “yes” space for the participants to have a conversation and engagement free of judgment. This is evident by the location where the engagement took place, outside of South Africa, and by the manner in which the meeting was conducted. By mixing the participants around the table there is a recognition that everyone is there for some sort of common goal, even if that goal is not clearly stated or known in the beginning. Much like an improv show, the actors prepare and rehearse, but the performance begins when the shared narrative is created (Halpen et al., 1994). The Zambian meeting participants created an engagement free of judgement which allowed for them not only to connect with one another, but also create with one another.

Further, the second element of building off other participants is when the narrative begins to form. The first element is providing structure for the creation of a shared narrative, and the second element is when the participants begin to create and discover what is possible through collaboration and understanding. In the Zambian meeting, there are examples of these building blocks coming to fruition specifically when the discussion was focused on South Africa’s economic growth. The businessmen explained that they believed for economic growth in South Africa, the nation must adopt a more capitalistic view as opposed to nationalized business. In using the economic growth of South Africa, the groups could begin to speak about the other issues that were linked with the economy, namely laws and legislation around segregation that prevented individual rights to prevail over group rights (Bloom, 1985). By the suggestion of the business leaders to focus on the economic growth of South Africa, the participants could speak about other issues that may not have been as approachable if not rooted in the foundation of economic growth.

The third element present in the Zambian meeting is the equity of all participants. Like the first element is its efficacy of the participants, the third element provides a structure within a shared narrative can be created (Crossan, 1998). The participants in the Zambian meeting allowed for this to be present in a myriad of ways, specifically in having the participants inter-mixed and not having any one member of the engagement lead. Rather the engagement being chaired by delegates of both sides provide that the members could speak more freely and open, thus providing a more well-rounded perspective on the conflict in South Africa. A more informed perspective and a structure that provides freedom to posit claims allows for the engagement to create more from the reality of the conflict.

The final element, which was not present in the Zambian meeting was the success from failure element. This element would have required that the engagement have something go wrong or something cause a breakdown in the talks. However, whether due to the structure of the meeting or the six hour duration of the meeting, this element was not present in the Zambian meeting.

This engagement acted more of a primer for further engagements than a catalyst of change in South Africa. The narrative created was more general than specific in nature. However, the meeting in Zambia brought a furthering of the narrative that statutory racial discrimination in South Africa should end (Lieberfeld, 2002). This overall narrative is one that many citizens already held, but what was different was the way in which the parties engaged with one another. The business leaders adopted further understanding and appreciation for the plight of the ANC members. Conflict, specifically violence within conflict areas, can be very deliberate in nature. This was much of the case with the acts of violence that the ANC engaged in in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. However, an understanding of the perception of how the violence



looks from outside members and other citizens provided ANC exiles in the Zambian meeting to see the need for other solutions.

The existence of three of the four elements from improv theatre in the Zambian meeting and the creation of a shared narrative suggest that there is possibility that the elements of improv theatre made the engagement in track two diplomacy more effective. If, for example, President Tambo had not suggested that members inter-mix within groups around the table, would participants have been as enthusiastic to actively participate in the discussion? Further, if the talks were not grounded and built upon the economic growth needed in South Africa, would the narrative have even mentioned the woes of black workers? The building blocks, neutral space, and overall equity in the process of the Zambian meeting provided a more open and free dialogue that produced a clear shared narrative that the racial discrimination statutes in South Africa are harmful to South Africa.

### **Section 3.2: The Dakar Conference**

From July 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 1987, a conference was held between seventeen ANC officials and sixty-one Afrikaans-speaking intellectuals from the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA), in Dakar, Senegal. The key connection between the initial meeting in Zambia and this conference was a meeting in 1985 between Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, the South African parliamentary opposition leader, and Anthony Bloom and Zac de Beer. Bloom and de Beer expressed their eye-opening experience of conversation and talks with the ANC official in Zambia. As Slabbert (1998) put it in a later interview “I just became very impressed with...how we had been indoctrinated,” a turn of phrase to express the embargo on attempted diverse thinking in South Africa that was banned at the time, as the government tried to control the

narrative. A few months after his meeting with Bloom and de Beer, Slabbert resigned from Parliament, and along with Alex Boraine founded the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa. IDASA was the organizing organization of the Dakar conference, and sought to bring together a multi-racial group of intellectuals to discuss policy in South Africa (Lieberfeld, 2002).

The conference was different from the Zambian meeting by sheer size and number of participants. In having so many participants, there is difficulty in assess the overall ability of all participants to contribute on each side. However, there are notes that as the conference broke out into further sessions the participants became more comfortable and were more ready to speak about the issues plaguing South Africa. The conference itself was held in a hotel in Dakar, which provided a sense of “neutrality,” but what was more influential was the hotel bar. Due to the long nature of the conference, many participants found themselves resigning to the hotel bar. This is where the most substantive talks happened among the participants. As Peter Gastrow (1998) explained, “...you couldn’t put up a front all the time, and we were together for 18 hours a day, for several days.”

The participants also shared a “sense of danger,” as many IDASA participants were hearing that many of their families were being harassed by South African security forces back at home. There were reports being given to many of the IDASA participants that their families were being harassed back in South Africa because of their participation in the talks with the ANC officials (Lieberfeld, p. 262, 2002). There was a commonality in the danger that all participants felt, some for the first time, in engaging with the other side. Although an active track two engagement, the engagement was beginning to affect official channels, which was made clear by the harassment. Many of the IDASA members were not used to the type of bullying by the South

Africa government, and this provided a shared experience for the participants to engage in with the ANC members.

The Dakar conference's scale allowed for a rich sharing of experience between the participants. Further, it allowed for more time for the engagement to have some interplay with possible breaking down and reconciliation. This is partly the case with why both ANC officials and IDASA members reconvened at the hotel bar after long discussions. This moment provided a more open and neutral space and opportunity for the participants to speak about the conflict in a non-official and intellectual way. While not well documented, the conversations at the hotel bar were likely to provide a much different perspective on the public front that the conference provided through its own means. Also, the hotel bar provided an unofficial refuge for when participants were feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information and perspectives that were being provided by the conference.

The Dakar conference is a ripe with examples of improv elements and the structure of the conference allows for that structure to permeate into the narrative that the participants created. First, the aspect of the space that the conference was held is that of a neutral state outside of South Africa. Further, the conferences multiple venues within the hotel allowed for more open discussion of perspectives and narratives between the participants. Moreover, the willingness of the IDASA members to even attend the conference marked a shift from the central policy in South Africa. Their attendance at the conference encouraged the overall neutrality and non-state sanctioned nature of the conference. This element being present, just as in the *Zambian meeting*, provided a structure by which the participants could be open with one another about their perspective on the conflict in South Africa.

Second, as Table 3.1 suggests, the participants could build off one another to create a shared narrative. Perhaps most important was how the participants decided to build off the need for the support of whites in South Africa for change to occur at the state level. This change is only possible when each of the sides are willing to perceive it as such. The overall effectiveness of this element, in this case, is built around the premise that the participants all very acts against the South African government, by attending the conference, are in themselves acts to create a stronger shared narrative among the participants.

Third, the conference was set into a structure that required equity among the participants. The conference, while chaired, largely consisted of breakout sessions of the various participants. The sessions provided an intimate environment for the participants to share their narratives and perspectives. These sessions would then come together as a whole to create the group's overall narrative that posited the importance of the willingness of the South African government to negotiate. Further, the smaller sessions allowed for the participants to share their own stories and grievances with other members that may have found commonality in the story. The structural importance of the third element of improv, as well as the first, is that without that structure there is very little chance for the interactions that occur between participants to be real and based in truth. The truth of the participant's perspectives is key to creating the narrative that the participants share by the end of the engagement (Halpen et al., 1994).

The final element that is key to improv theatre is applicable in the Dakar conference case. While no talks or sessions ended in a breakdown of communication, there was an understanding that the long hours of the conference had worn out many of the participants. In effect, the participants were having their own breakdowns that provided for some reconciliation to take place. These reconciliations happened primarily at the hotel bar, where many of the ANC

officials pointedly addressed the IDASA participants in a less official manner than in the conference. Perhaps the most important place during the Dakar conference , the hotel bar was an unofficial meeting place for participants to air grievances that they may not have spoken about in any other location or fashion.

Perhaps it is the nature of the first and third structural elements that creates a sense of importance to the structure of the talks when employing theatre elements. However, the final element suggests that perhaps it is sometimes important for these structures to break down to create a better, more true narrative. This is the case with the Dakar conference; all the elements were present, and it is because of the structure of the talks that the narrative the participants created is so powerful and meaningful. There was not a structural breakdown; rather, a perspective breakdown occurred when the participants were engaging in unofficial talks at the hotel bar. These engagements provided the participants with more perspective to garner a larger amount of growth in their shared narrative.

However, it could be argued that the Dakar Conference was more of a media stunt than a substantive conversation of ideas. Nevertheless, the participants found a shared narrative in the restrictions and lack of willingness to negotiate coming from the South African government. After the conference the participants made a joint declaration that the government needs to open negotiations with ANC officials, and the government has been the primary obstacle to progress in South Africa (Lieberfeld, 2002). This joint declaration further exemplifies that possible effectiveness in employing improv theatre elements in track two diplomacy engagements can exist once done. The declaration was one made from a shared narrative that was created from by the participant's willingness to open their perspectives up to the other side and create with them something that could change South Africa for the better.

### **Section 3.3: The ANC-Afrikaner England Series**

From November 1987 to February 1990 a series of six meetings were held between elite Afrikaners with ties to the National Party South African government and senior ANC officials. Much like the Zambian meeting, the person responsible for the meetings taking place had important ties to coal mining in South Africa. Humphrey Woods, the Vice-Chairman of Consolidated Goldfields (Cosgold) had attempted since the early 1980s to set up a meeting with ANC officials and persons in South Africa that had close ties with the government. Consolidated Goldfields is a coal mining company based in Britain, with key holdings in South Africa.

A consultant of Consgold, Fleur de Villier, connected with Willie Esterhuyse, a political philosophy professor at Stellenbosch University, to begin setting up the meeting (Lieberfeld, pg. 264, 2002). The president of South Africa, P. W. Botha had Esterhuyse as a political advisor and Botha's daughter studied under Esterhuyse at university (Esterhuyse, 1998). Esterhuyse recruited two other professors, Sampie Terreblanche and Willie Breytenback, both of whom served in government for the talks.

The ANC side was led by ANC President Tambo's committee head, Thabo Mbeki. The ANC also include members that had attended the Dakar conference, Aziz Pahad, Tony Trew, and Harold Wolpe (Lieberfeld, p. 264, 2002). The initial meeting was held November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1987 in Henley, England. The initial meeting was chaired by Michael Young, the head of Consgold communications and corporate affairs. Much like the Zambian meeting the sides agreed that the talks were not about negotiating, but about finding out information and the perspectives of both sides.

The talks encouraged the members to think critically about what possible interests they had and concessions they would make for a reconciliation of the South African government to take place. The Afrikaners emphasize the importance that timing played in their meeting; because of the violence that ANC engaged in the South Africa government was unlikely to act before 1987 from fear that it would come across as “violence paying off” (ANC, p. 7, 1987). The groups engaged in intellectual conversations about what was possible through their communications. Esterhuyse enumerated that he would be able to communicate their discussion to top security officials in the South African government. This allowed an openness to what the ANC officials were willing to speak about and how they expressed their views on the current policies of the government.

Through the engagement there was an understanding and willingness by the ANC officials that an armed conflict was far from what was desired. This allowed an openness in how the Afrikaners could proceed in disseminating the information to the government officials, as it promoted the idea of negotiations between sides rather than hinder the possibility of negotiations. After the initial meeting, Esterhuyse led five more Afrikaner groups to England for meetings through the next three years, each time with a desire to promote that narrative created in the first of opening negotiations through official’s channels in hopes of preventing armed conflict in South Africa.

The series of meetings in England provided a final tipping point in the overall resolution of conflict in South Africa. The elements of improv theatre are found throughout the meetings. Initially the understanding of the space as a place for perspectives and views to be expressed, but no formal negotiations were happening showed both sides that there was a sense of neutrality around the meeting. There were few expectations for each side to point to throughout the

meeting so when the engagement was happening there was an open flow of communication from side to side. The space itself was neutral, being in England and not South Africa. This allowed the ANC officials that were present at the Dakar conference to further the narrative created to this engagement.

Moreover, the ability of the participants to build off each other was central to the success of the engagement. The ANC members that were present at the Dakar conference brought a narrative that was created by other intellectual Afrikaners, which could further build up the narrative created by the meetings in England. This improvement is further demonstrated through the growing narrative of wanting negotiations and a move away from violent demonstrations by the participants. There is a wholeness in the willingness of the participants to accept and disseminate this information to the South African government officials that is key to the overall success of the shared narrative.

By nature of the engagement, there is equity built within the status on the individuals that are engaging in the conflict. Even though the Afrikaners hold a more direct line to the official channels of negotiation, the engagement itself in England is based on equity of the participants' perspectives and own narratives. The narrative that is created by the participants is one that provided a more diverse and unique perspective on how the conflict in South Africa had and will play out in the future. Further, the structural nature of the third element requires that the question of equity be directed to the participants of that engagement, to which the engagement follows. There may be questions as to whether the influence of a participant in the official channels (i.e. Esterhuysen) affects the overall equity of the participants. The engagement as moment in time is the focus of these questions, and during the meeting all the participants were engaged in an



equitable sharing of perspectives and views that provided a space for the creation of a shared narrative among all the participants (Halpen et al., 1994).

By the nature of the series of meetings there is a breakdown in the engagements. Due to the span of the meetings over two and a half years, each time a meeting ended there was a breakdown, as time was allotted to create a shift in the narrative that was created. However, because the meetings continued to happen with key players that were the same, the narrative could grow and become more relatable and sharable as more participants engaged in the meetings. The series of meetings provided a unique opportunity to include more people in a narrative with shifting events over a period of time.

Similar to the Dakar conference, by possessing all four elements of improv theatre the engagements created a more concrete shared narrative. In the case of the England meetings, the conflict was resolved during the series of meetings. This furthers the notion that improv theatre elements can promote successful track two diplomacy engagements. Specifically, when there is a tie in between the various track two engagements, such is the case with the Dakar attendees who participated in the England meeting, then the narrative that is created can further the purpose of resolving the conflict in the country. The structural nature of the first and third elements provides a throughout base to determine possible effectiveness of track two engagements. The second and fourth elements are more reactionary in nature and allow for the spontaneity and openness that improv theatre can provide to track two diplomacy engagements.

### **Section 3.4: Help in creating a narrative**

Track two diplomacy, whether utilizing improv theatre elements or not, is based in conflict resolution and the attempt to create a narrative of change within a conflict. Throughout South African apartheid there are instances of acts of art shifting public opinion and creating a concurrent narrative with those created by the track two diplomacy engagements. One of the best examples of this is the Market Theatre of Johannesburg. On Jun 21<sup>st</sup>, 1976, the theatre opened as a “non-racial” theatre (Graver & Kruger, 1989). The premise of the theatre was simple: everyone, regardless of race, deserves to experience theatre. The audiences that came to see shows at the Market Theatre were not segregated as the law mandated, and therefore were breaking the law. Further, the cast and company producing shows at the Market Theatre was integrated and produced plays written by people of every race.

The rationale by the South African government to not shut down the Market Theatre was that they were a “legitimate” form of entertainment for white citizens (Opperman, 1993). Although the Market Theatre produced plays by blacks, because much of the audience was white there was an air of legitimacy around them. The plays that were produced by the Market Theatre, for example *Black Dog* and *Born in the RSA*, garnered international attention, but also provided a safe environment for protest in South Africa. The narrative that was created through the Market Theatre was that segregation prevents the furthering of art and life.

Art acted as a catalyst for action in South Africa. The shift in the narrative from violence to peaceful reconciliation was prompted by many different individuals coming together to provide a rational examination of the conflict in South Africa. In terms of the structural nature of the talks, the engagements followed closely with the elements of improv theatre. All the track two engagements in the South Africa conflict possessed the first three of the elements, which

points to the importance of structure within the engagements. Two of the three engagements possessed the final element, which provided a furthering of the shared narrative that was created through the second element of building blocks. The overall effectiveness of the cases relies on the power of the shared narrative created and the narrative created throughout the engagements drove the conflict to a resolution. While the official track was not examined here, the clear importance of track two on the shifting narrative of the conflict is important to note.

Conflict in South Africa was predicated on legislation and laws that caused narratives of each side to lose trust in the other sides. To resolve the conflict the sides needed to create a shared narrative based on their own perspectives and views. Track two diplomacy allowed this interplay and collaboration to take place between the sides, and the overall advantage was a shared narrative by both sides that drove an end to the conflict. The importance in terms of effective track two diplomacy is how the improv theatre elements affected that success.

## Chapter 4: Northern Ireland

For thirty years in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century violent conflict roamed the streets of Northern Ireland. From October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1968 to April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998, the period known as “The Troubles,” a conflict over Northern Ireland’s status as part of the United Kingdom brewed along religious and political ideological lines. Unionists, who were chiefly Protestant, favored staying part of the United Kingdom, whereas nationalists or republicans, who were chiefly Catholic and were in the minority, favored becoming a part of the Republic of Ireland. Preceding The Troubles, the parliament of Northern Ireland was made up almost entirely of unionist Protestants, who attempted to ease tension with Catholics by ending forms of institutional discrimination that were faced by Catholics. However, moves towards ending institutional practices angered the broader Protestants who made up a majority.

Approximately forty years before the start of The Troubles in Northern Ireland, the Irish War of Independence took place. The result of this conflict left Northern Ireland in a state of tension, existing as geographically attached to Ireland, but politically linked with Great Britain. The Anglo-Irish Treaty, which prompted the cease-fire between British and Irish military forces, freed twenty-six counties and left six counties under British rule. The division fell very similarly to the dividing lines of the violence experienced in the north-eastern part of Ireland, as opposed to the south and west portions. The violence in the northeast was between Catholics and Protestants, while in the south and west the conflict was largely between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and British forces. Following the Anglo-Irish Treaty on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1921, Northern Ireland plunged deeper into civil war for eleven more months, which included Catholics, Protestants, IRA forces, and British Forces engaging in violence, and ended in late-

1922 with the death of Michael Collins, who was the leading strategist of the IRA attacks in Northern Ireland.

The 1960s saw civil rights movements all over the world, and Northern Ireland was no different in the beginning. The civil rights movement in Northern Ireland had many goals which ranged from voting rights for all citizens to ending housing discrimination based on religion. During the beginning of the movement, in 1965, the government of Northern Ireland allowed protests and marches. However, on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1968 the government banned a civil rights march in Derry. Catholic protesters defied the ban and marched on the streets. The government responded by sending in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police force. The RUC forces surrounded and beat the protesters, injuring over one hundred of them. This incident is largely believed to be the start of The Troubles as it was broadcast on television and shown around the world as the first major violent act between the sides in Northern Ireland.

The conflict in Northern Ireland lasted for nearly three decades, and some have argued the reason was due to the nature of the conflict. As Neil Jarmen explains, “there was no broadly accepted understanding of the nature, cause, or outcomes of the Troubles” (pg., 2009). This assertion suggests that the conflict in Northern Ireland lasted so long because there was a lack of understanding among the sides as to what exactly the conflict was about. This lack of understanding provided the people of Northern Ireland a ripe opportunity to engage in track two diplomacy with each other to see if a joint narrative could be created. The possibility of creating a joint narrative is perhaps amplified by the lack of a prevailing narrative on either of the sides in the conflict.

There were many negotiated treaties attempted. One of them, the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, will be discussed during one of the track two diplomacy engagements. The agreement

was made between the United Kingdom and Ireland to give the Irish government an advisory role in the Northern Ireland government. The agreement also made it clear that any agreement to join the republic of Ireland must be agreed upon by a majority of Northern Ireland citizenry.

Over the course of the Troubles more than 3,600 people were killed and many more were injured (Jarmen, 2009). The conflict in Northern Ireland, not dissimilar to the South Africa case, was largely caused by a majority party government that held power for decades preceding the conflict. This dimension adds an interesting insight into the overall efficacy of track two diplomacy to shift the narrative in the nation to align with the citizenry, rather than the government creating the narrative. Within this chapter there are two track two engagements that are discussed. The first took place in 1988 and was facilitated by a Lutheran pastor. The second track two engagement that will be discussed is possibly the most intriguing as it took place with a trip to South Africa in 1994. The presence of organizations that promote open dialogue between groups in Northern Ireland is also discussed.

#### **Section 4.1: The Duisburg Meeting**

October 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 1988 brought together members of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and Alliance Party in Duisburg, West Germany. The parties fell along the following lines in the conflict: unionist side included the DUP, UUP, and the Alliance Party.; and the republican side included Sinn Fein and SDLP. The engagement was organized and facilitated by Dr. Eberhard Speicher, a German Lutheran clergyman who sought to help bridge the conflict in Northern Ireland. The meeting participants, while not all disclosed, are reported to have included churchmen, politicians, and paramilitaries. The overall meeting in Duisburg was dubbed a failure, largely due the leaks of the politicians that were present (Arthur, 1990). The politicians included Peter Robinson (DUP), Austin Currie (SLDP), Jack Allen (UUP), and Gordon Mawhinney (Alliance Party). The diversity of participants should have allowed for more ripe discussion over the issues. However, the Duisburg Meeting did not set up the overall scheme of the meeting with the notions of open communication.

The overall facilitation of the meeting in Duisburg was done by Dr. Speicher, who proposed a four-point agenda to the participants. The agenda proposed was created by Speicher, which would seem to promote a sense of neutrality in the engagement. Nevertheless, even though Speicher was not from Northern Ireland and directly involved in the conflict, his being a Lutheran clergyman provided enough reason for some of the participants to see him as biased and pulling his leverage on one side of the conflict, the Protestant side (Arthur, 1990). This was not necessarily the case for Speicher, who believed he proposed a fair and neutral agenda for the talks. The agenda attempted to punt the implementation date of the intergovernmental conference created by the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 to a later date, and in the meantime the parties

would hold discussions. Not only was the agenda seen as non-neutral, but also the overall secrecy of the meeting was nullified by leaks regarding of the participant's names. The names of the politicians from their respective parties led to questions of the decision-making authority given by party officials to these politicians (Arthur, 1990).

Key to this engagement is its classification as a track two diplomatic engagement rather than an official track negotiation. The politicians that agreed to participate in this engagement did so under the pretense that it was merely an exercise in relationship-building and not a negotiation of terms (Arthur, 1990). This ability of the participants to actively participate as equals was predicated around the notion that each member could trust that the engagement would remain a secret. However, when the names of the participants were released any trust that might had been built up throughout the meeting was lost immediately. The politicians were forced to distance themselves from the engagement, because the engagement was not a negotiation. Track two diplomacy relies on the ability of the participants to trust that the engagement will not necessarily lead to an outcome, rather it may simply lead to trust.



<b>Table 4.1: Northern Ireland</b>		
	<b>The Duisburg Meeting</b>	<b>South Africa Trip</b>
1.1) Year of Engagement	1988	1994
1.2) Length of Engagement	Two days	Seven days
1.3) Number of Actors	Five to Eight	Seven (Northern Ireland)
<b>2.0) Engagement Process</b>		
2.1) Was a neutral, “yes,” space created?	Partial	Yes
2.2) Did participants from all sides contribute and build from each other?	No	Yes
2.3) Were ground rules established for equity among the participants?	Partial	Yes
2.4) Did any of the engagements breakdown?	Yes	No
2.4.a) If so, was there a reconciliation?	No	n/a
<b>3.0) Narrative</b>		
3.1) Was a shared narrative created?	No	Yes
3.1.a) If so, was the shared narrative created by all sides?	n/a	Yes
3.2) Did the narrative transfer to Track I?	No	Yes
3.2.a) Was the conflict resolved?	n/a	No
3.2.b) Is the conflict still resolved?	n/a	n/a

The Duisburg meeting had interesting possibility of its overall applicability to improv theatre elements. Nonetheless, at each step of the engagement the elements of improv were not fully included. In terms of the first element, which is the creation of a “yes” space, there was a partial neutral space created (see Table 4.1). The overall location was neutral in the sense that the city of Duisburg was out of the conflict zone of Northern Ireland, and the usage of a Lutheran church as a meeting place provided a possible bridge between the Protestant and Catholic divide. By Dr. Speicher coming to the meeting with an agenda, as the facilitator, the overall neutrality for a created joint narrative was not possible. For purposes of assessing the effectiveness of track two diplomacy facilitation, Speicher’s actions could be assessed, but for purposes of evaluation in terms of improv theatre elements in relation to track two diplomacy his facilitation did not provide a full neutral space for which the participants felt they can participate freely without judgement.

Further, due to the leak and release of the meeting to media sources the participants were not able to actively engage equally with all sides in the conflict. The secrecy of the meeting was key to participant’s willingness to freely engage in meaningful conversations that would have allowed them to build off each other in hopes of creating a joint narrative. This, of course, was lost with the secrecy of the meeting. Compounding with the lost secrecy was the agenda set forth by Speicher which prevented open and meaningful discussion in terms of participants’ narratives coming forward to complement each other. The need for participants to build off each other is key to a successful improv theatre venture, this is also what would have allowed those who engaged in the Duisburg meeting to have created a shared narrative.

In terms of overall rules being established to promote equity among the participants, they were partially created. Like the creation of the neutral space in which the participants engaged in

their dialogue, the rules that were set up were not rigid but were malleable to the shift of the meeting from secret to public. Thus, the overall structure of the engagement was shifted away from the agenda, which acted as a set of rules, when the meeting became public and prevented any real equity among the participants. This was further exemplified by the assessment of the participants present by outside influencers in terms of what each participant brought to the negotiating table regarding the “imprimaturs of their leaders” (Arthur, p. 417, 1990). Track two diplomacy, not being about formal negotiations, does not follow the premise of the narrative that the outside influencers were pushing. Therefore, the overall equity within the Duisburg meeting was misaligned and did not provide the participants with a guarantee of equity in each of their respective narratives.

The final element of improv, which requires a breakdown then reconciliation of the engagement, was involved in the Duisburg meeting, but not with the outcome that promoted a resolution or a joint narrative. The overarching theme of the Duisburg meeting was the fact that it was a secret engagement that became public because of a lack of trust between participants, and this led to the engagement breaking down. Following the tenants of improv theatre this would have been acceptable if the engagement was then rectified by the participants. Due to a lack of trust, equity, and overall neutrality in the Duisburg participants the lack of a reconciliation was not surprising.

The Duisburg meeting provided an interesting look into a track two engagement that possessed parts of improv theatre elements, but lacked overall capacity of the structure within the four improv elements. Further, the overall narrative of distrust that came out of the Duisburg meeting runs counter to the key that makes the elements of improv theatre so effective. Trust requires that the participants see each other as having an equal say in the narrative being created.

This is the power of utilizing improv theatre elements, as each element helps to build the level of trust each participant has with the others. The building blocks allow each participant to feel more connected and ready to share a piece of their respective narratives with other participants.

#### **Section 4.2: South Africa Trip**

In 1994, the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) invited political leaders from Northern Ireland to South Africa to learn from the South African peace process. The delegation from Northern Ireland included: Peter Robinson (DUP Deputy Leader), Ian Paisley (DUP Member), Jim Wilson (UUP General Secretary), Jeffery Donaldson (UUP Honorary Secretary), Mark Durkan (SDLP Chairman), Johnathan Stevenson (SDLP Member), and Dr. John Alderdice (Alliance Party Leader). The DUP, UUP, and Alliance party were all on the unionist side and the SDLP was on the republican side. The trip was set to be a week from November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1994 to December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1994 and was an attempt by IDASA to “provide them with the opportunity to study the South African experience and negotiation process since the 1980s” (Grogan, p. 5, 1994).

The visit to South Africa was rich with meetings with members of the South African media, academia, NGOs, with individuals who contributed to the South African political transition, and most importantly with members of the other Northern Ireland parties. The aim of IDASA’s involvement with the Northern Ireland delegation was not to prescribe solutions, but to show a structure that worked in South Africa in hopes that members of the four parties from Northern Ireland would find parallel with their conflict. Further, the meetings included interactions with: Minister for Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, Roelf Meyer (National Party), ANC deputy Valli Moosa, the Minister for Water Affairs and Forestry, Kader

Asmal, Colin Eglin (Democratic Party), Suzanne Vos (Inkatha Freedom Party) and Ferdi Hartzenburg (Conservative Party). These meetings show a diversity of ideas and narratives from South Africa, which provided the delegation from Northern Ireland a ripe experience from which to learn.

The experience that the seven Northern Ireland political leaders had in South Africa provides an important look at the applicability of improv theatre elements in track two diplomacy. The week-long visit was not set as a negotiation, and as such it did not produce an agreement. Rather, it produced trust among the participants to move forward in the formal negotiations. Alderdice wrote following the trip that his party, the Alliance Party, would publish policy changes on police accountability in Northern Ireland (Brocklehurst, Scott, Hamber, & Robinson, 2000). The trip to South Africa would not seem to be a track two engagement from the outside perspective, but it is because the engagement possessed the first and third elements of improv theatre. The space where the engagement happened was a neutral space that did not provide a biased view of the conflict in an attempt to sway the narrative towards one party's desires. Further, the facilitation by IDASA was done in a way that provided the members with neutral standing with members of opposing parties. In having members of the opposing parties in South Africa speak with the Northern Ireland delegation a diversity of views was given to provide a rich full narrative of the process.

Regarding the participants contributing and building from one another, the reports after the trip show that members of the four parties were engaging in meaningful conversation that was not prompted by an agenda, but rather by each other. IDASA spokesman, Ivor Jenkins explains that it was the hope that the trip "would assist them in their thinking" (O'Loughlin, p. 5, 1994). This mindset from the facilitating organization helped to structure the visit in such a way

that members could build from one another and could promote different ideas to solving the conflict. IDASA as the facilitating organization also set a structure in place that promoted equity among the members involved. This equity was not just shared by the members of the Northern Ireland delegation but also by the various party members of South Africa, who all had their chance to provide context and information. The ability of the IDASA members to provide a space that was neutral and free of egos afforded that the members of the delegation could provide their honest and true ideas to the group. Further, the trip never saw a breakdown in the talks and there was no reconciliation as such, so the final element of improv theatre was not present. However, due to the strong structural nature of the trip presented by IDASA there was little chance of this element being present.

The overall complexity of the Northern Ireland conflict greatly parallels that of the South African conflict, which provides a striking premise for why bringing members of the conflicting sides of Northern Ireland to South Africa provided Northern Ireland with a boost towards a resolution. There is an overall message created by the seven Northern Ireland participants proposed that if the sides could come together in South Africa to meet and discuss than they should be able to do the same in Northern Ireland. They did not create a narrative, but they actively agreed to future engagements with one another. The question as to whether this engagement is truly a track two engagement due to the high influence or power of the participants is null in terms of structure of the trip. In terms of the rationale and overall desired outcomes of the trip, it follows the scheme of a track two engagement. Having no clear outcome in mind makes the creation of the shared narrative between the participants more meaningful concerning the introduction of improv theatre elements, as it provides further fodder to the premise that utilizing these elements will increase the success rate of these engagements.

Another facet to this engagement, which was absent from the Duisburg meeting, was the acceptance of outside influencers and actors. Rather than attempt a secret trip with the seven participants, the trip was announced in the media, along with the participants. To that end, however, throughout the trip there was little to no coverage, which allowed the participants to act within the neutral space that was provided in South Africa by IDASA. In creating a space that was both neutral, but surrounded by the cloud of outside observers, the engagement was able to better disseminate any narrative that was created throughout, which it did in the days following the engagement.

The trip to South Africa came during a crucial time in the official negotiation that was taking place in Northern Ireland. The trip itself promoted a renewed sense of importance for peace in Northern Ireland, and it prompted consequent meetings and negotiations that followed the scheme of official diplomacy more in line with that of furthering the dialogue with the decision makers in the political parties.

### **Section 4.3: Bridging the Divide with Information**

Northern Ireland was ripe with organization and outlets with people attempting to express their opinions to others. One outlet was opened by a reporter, Frank Millar, of *The Irish Times*. Millar was not simply a reporter, he was a former UUP executive. He was attempting to find a breakthrough in the conflict that raged in Northern Ireland, and he did this by conducting a series of in-depth interviews with various party leaders which included: Jim Molyneaux (UUP Leader), Peter Robinson (DUP deputy leader), Dr. Robin Eames (Church of Ireland Primate), and Dr. Cahal Daly (Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor) (Arthur, p. 416, 1990). These in-depth

interviews helped to clear up the conflict and defined the “parameters of the problem” (Arthur, p. 416, 1990).

Millar’s interviews with these party leaders helped to provide much needed information to other leaders and party officials in analyzing possible resolutions to the conflict. However, it should be noted that these interviews directly oppose tenants of improv theatre elements. The issue becomes an assumption of participants to presuming an understanding of the other side through other channels rather than by the source of the conflict. The information is useful in terms of attempting to reporting on the overall efficacy of the peace process, but the information does create conflict in determining the efficacy of improv theatre elements in the resolution of the conflict.

Nevertheless, Northern Ireland presented a richer understanding of possible actions in track two diplomatic engagements where not all four improv theatre elements are present. The Duisburg meeting did not have all four elements present, and it did not resolve the conflict. The overall expectations of the Duisburg meeting also presented an issue in the possible solutions that could be presented because there was an agenda set forth rather than a structure to follow. The trip to South Africa presented an interesting overlap of cases, as it provided a space by which the participants could opening express their feelings and sides in the presence of company that had done the same just a few years earlier. The overall rules of the trip also presented a forum by which the participants could freely express themselves and interact with each other in a meaningful manner.



## Chapter 5: Israel-Palestine

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is perhaps the most well-known ongoing conflict from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The conflict is also one that has a well-documented case of the various conflict resolution attempts made by numerous different individuals, organizations, and countries. During World War II the Nazi Holocaust prompted a heavy migration of Jewish people from Europe to Palestine. This migration was after Britain seized control of Palestine in 1917 from the Ottomans, and produced the Balfour Declaration that launched a clear muddling of the understanding of what the intention and purpose behind Jewish migration to Palestine (PBS - Promises, 2001). A reoccurring issue with the attempted resolutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the attempted brush over the history of the two sides. Much of the literature begins after the war of 1948 and does not properly align with the focus of the sides narratives in terms of what has been passed from previous generations. There is a ripeness in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that produces an ability for each side to actively create their own narrative within their own spheres, but the narrative does not often reach the other side because there as so many intermediaries in the conflict focus is hard to obtain.

In 1947, the United Nations (UN) recommended the parting of Palestine into two separate states, one for Arabs and one for Jews. This recommendation was rejected by every neighboring Arab state in the region, as the narrative coming out of the United Nations was not clear in terms of the relocation of Jews and Arabs. In other words, there were no simply divisible lines because Jews and Arabs were living interchangeably in the nation. Following the UN's recommendation, in 1948, Zionist leaders declared a state of Israel causing fights and conflict to break out (PBS - Promises, 2001). This declaration was also made as British forces began leaving the country. For the next two decades, mini-skirmishes were fought between Israel and many of its Arab

neighbors, including Egypt and Jordan. In May of 1964 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed. The following five decades to present time was filled with recurring conflict and attempted peace talks, including the well-known Oslo Accords in the 1990s (PBS - Promises, 2001). Nevertheless, with all the third-party intervention there has still been no concrete resolution made in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Throughout the conflict and attempted peace process there have been many diverse channels and modes of negotiation that were used. Some of these engagements fall into the definition of track two engagements, while others are more similar to official diplomacy attempts. A recurring theme throughout the process was regarding the overall usage of third parties. The third parties often were not there to facilitate an open dialogue, as much as they seemed to be present to further their own narrative. The most well-known peace agreement, the Oslo Accords, from the conflict are an example of the United States swooping in at the end of peaceful negotiations to further their own narrative as the peacekeepers of the world. There are examples of this taking place with the Arab nations around Israel and Palestine, but also regarding the United Nations actions.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides a unique perspective on the creation of narratives by both sides and the possible effect that improv theatre elements can have on the creation of these narrative because the conflict contains so many facets. Further, the conflict provides an overall consider creation of the interplay between track two diplomacy and official diplomacy. There are many instances wherein multitrack diplomacy has taken place in attempt to resolve the conflict. However, the conflict is still not resolved. There are many possible explanations for this, but what is clear is that without an understanding of the other side's narrative in possible

connection with their own, each side is shutting down any possible resolution before it can begin to work in the confines of the narrative.

Two specific engagements are going to be used to analyze the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first is perhaps the first ever documented case of track two diplomacy in modern history and it was done by Herbert Kelman and Stephen Cohen in 1971. This engagement is a workshop that was meant truly to bring people from the both sides together for the simple purpose of gathering each side own perspective and narrative of the conflict, and perhaps in the discussion there was some interplay at possible solutions. The second engagement that is discussed was part of a multi-track approach to solving the conflict, which took place in December of 1988 and January of 1989. This engagement helped to form the basis of possible track jumping and transfer of the narrative to an official track.

## Section 5.1: Pilot Workshop

Stephen P. Cohen and Herbert C. Kelman taught a seminar in 1971 on “social-psychological approaches to international relations” (Cohen et al., p. 166, 1977). Both Cohen and Kelman were Jewish, and they noted this before proceeding with the workshop. Further, the workshop that was took was more for intellectual and scholarly assessment than practical application. Due to the workshop being used for scholarly application many of the participants are not named, and rather they were given distinctions within the parties they fell into. The initial plan was to have four Israelis, four Palestinians, and four Egyptians. However, they were unsuccessful in recruiting Egyptians for the workshop. There were also no women involved in the workshop either. Cohen and Kelman fell into the “third party” (p. 168, 1977) of the workshop and therefore they brought in an Arab scholar who was well versed in Arab affairs and conflict to even out the facilitators.

The structure of the workshop functioned to attempt as open an interactive dialogue on the issues between both sides. Before the workshop began each of the participants participated in pre-workshop session. The pre-workshop session was presented as a type of vetting for the participants. Cohen and Kelman admitted that they believed “...each party should be given an opportunity to present its position fully...in the absence of the other parties” (p. 173, 1977). The pre-workshop session afforded that each side had an equal opportunity to speak about their own narrative and be sure that it was clear among that side before speaking. In theory, this would have presented a nice forum for the participants to vent their frustrations or other issues. However, in terms of applicability with the tenant of improv theatre there is some dissonance. In presenting the participants with their own side to confirm the sides narrative there is a furthering of the narrative of each side own narrative rather than creating a joint narrative. Each side now

went into the workshop knowing the narrative that each on their sides believes in because they agreed to it. While, using improv theatre, would have all the participants jointly creating a narrative based on everyone's narrative rather than their sides narrative.

After the pre-workshop session, each side was given the ground rules for the workshop. Some of the ground rules included that each participant take "an analytic stance" rather than one that was grounded in advocating (Cohen et al., p. 176, 1977). Another important rule created was that no participant was bound by the official position of their side, and they could subscribe to new ideas. They also agreed that the purpose of the workshop was meant to facilitate effective communication between the sides and a clearer understanding of each side. The third-party facilitators also agreed to remain as neutral as possible and not say if one side was right or wrong.

As the session was opened one of the Palestinian participants noted that he had concerns over the confidentiality of the participants. Where the facilitators believed, confidentiality was key to having a freeing and opening dialogue this participant saw it as the opposite and feared that a closed meeting would indicate that he "was engaged in secret dealing with the enemy" (p. 177, 1997). The question of confidentiality loomed over the entire engagements, but ultimately the engagement's participants remained confidential.

The workshop's overall theme centered around nationalism and each side claim to the legitimacy of the other's sides nationalism. Each side laid claim to it, and each side accepted, after prolonged discussion, the other sides claim to nationalism. The workshop culminated on day two to a breakdown of discussion. On day one there was an understanding made about Palestinian rights, and how each side took what the other said to mean something different from what was meant. Thus, on day two when one of the Palestinian participants requested the Israeli

participants to sign a document affirming what the Palestinian participant believed to be true a disagreement began. The overall workshop ended abruptly with a break for each side to caucus with one another. These caucuses allowed for each side to clear what was meant by what had been said a day prior. The participants ended up coming back together and talking through the disagreement. There was no solution to the existing problem, but the overall dispute was managed. The next day the participants formalized what was discussed in a document that they all signed. This document helped to form a cohesive joint narrative that was created by the participants.

In terms of what elements of improv theatre were present in Cohen and Kelman's workshop there were at least two and a partial third element present (see Table 5.1). The existence and the effort put into the ground rules really did provide a space for all the participants to feel comfortable in participating. However, due to the nature of the facilitators, which Cohen and Kelman note, there was attempted neutrality and unbiased nature in the space that the workshop took place. Overall it was clear by the unwillingness of some of the participation that an overall "yes" space was not created. This was compounded by the fact that there was a pre-workshop session. There was a "yes" space created in this session, but the workshop session did not provide that space. Further, in terms of all the participants building off each other, because the workshop followed the pre-workshop, there was less likelihood that the participants in the session could effectively and openly build off the other participants. Finally, the element of breaking down was present and there was a reconciliation which proved to yield a positive outcome in terms of a joint narrative being created by the engagement.

<b>Table 5.1: Israel-Palestine</b>		
	<b>Pilot Workshop</b>	<b>Jerusalem, Hebron, and Ramallah Talks</b>
1.1) Year of Engagement	1971	1988-1989
1.2) Length of Engagement	Three days	Continuous
1.3) Number of Actors	8 (with 3 facilitators)	3 to 5
<b>2.0) Engagement Process</b>		
2.1) Was a neutral, “yes,” space created?	No	Yes
2.2) Did participants from all sides contribute and build from each other?	Partial	Yes
2.3) Were ground rules established for equity among the participants?	Yes	No
2.4) Did any of the engagements breakdown?	Yes	No
2.4.a) If so, was there a reconciliation?	Yes	n/a
<b>3.0) Narrative</b>		
3.1) Was a shared narrative created?	Yes	Partial
3.1.a) If so, was the shared narrative created by all sides?	Yes	Yes
3.2) Did the narrative transfer to Track I?	No	Yes
3.2.a) Was the conflict resolved?	n/a	No
3.2.b) Is the conflict still resolved?	n/a	n/a

Cohen and Kelman's workshop was the first one that they conducted. Kelman went on to do many more similar workshops throughout the subsequent four decades. This pilot workshop provided a good basis of a track two engagement in terms of true track two diplomacy. Cohen and Kelman state the lack of outcomes from this workshop because the participants were not close with any powerful or influence people. Therefore, while a joint narrative was created by the workshop, it could not transfer to track one.

### **Section 5.2: Jerusalem, Hebron, and Ramallah Talks**

The talks that took place from December of 1988 to January of 1989 were a testament to the flexibility of track two diplomacy in its overall ability to manage talks during multi track negotiations. Similar to many other track two engagements the meetings that took place were facilitated by an academic, Dr. Yair Hirschfeld. The talks that he engaged in from for the two-month period ranged in their overall purpose and goal, but what was clear was that each meeting did have a goal for him to achieve. One of the first talks that happened in this series was with Immanuel Halperin who was a television journalist and nephew of Menachem Begin, the founder of Israel's liberal Likud political party. This meeting also included Hana Siniora, a Palestinian journalist, and Mustafa Abdel Nabi Natche, the mayor of Hebron. The initial meeting between those four individuals led to a follow-up meeting with Hirschfeld and Faisal Husseini, the son of Abd el-Qada el-Husseini (Hirschfeld, pp. 64-65, 2014).

Key to these talks is that they were just that, talks. The engagement had no set agenda but rather were simple meet-ups between the participants. This flexibility allowed for a more freewheeling discussion, but also led to some instances where the talks lost course and direction for the overall narrative that was being created. The parts of the talks that were successful were



when the participants shared pieces of their own story that led Hirschfeld to a new piece of the narrative puzzle. At one point during the initial talks Halperin offered a very “soft tactical position,” (Hirschfeld, p. 64, 2014) which presented the Palestinian side to also over a similar soft position. What was different about the position in this context than in official and track one negotiations was the ability of the sides to accept that that other side could only go so far in their understanding of the conflict and possible solutions. There seemed to be an agreement on the overall context by which they were discussing the conflict, which led to a “very narrow” (Hirschfeld, p. 65, 2014) zone for an agreement, but there was a possibility.

The talks happened over a two-month span and consisted of only a couple meetings, but each time the purpose of the meetings was expressed through the facilitator, which was Hirschfeld. The overarching purpose of the meetings was for a resolution of the conflict, but the goal of these talks was to simply provide a channel by which certain negotiations could take place. Hirschfeld laid the groundwork for a larger mobilization of official negotiation to take place. This type of track two diplomacy does not lend itself to the use of improv theatre because improv is hard to produce focused purpose. In improv theatre, you can have the structure and outline, but you cannot start with the narrative, because it is created throughout. Thus, by pulling all of Hirschfeld’s talks together into a cohesive engagement of track two it is clearer to see the possible improv theatre elements that are present.

The first element of creating a “yes” space was apparent by the willingness of participants to give their opinions and stories to the group they were meeting with. Further, the neutrality would have been a question if the location of the meeting was constant, but because it moved from Jerusalem, Hebron, and Ramallah the overall possible bias was diminished by the comfortability of each participant in the different locations. The second element of participation

by all the participants was present in this case as everyone provided substantial building blocks for other participants to create. An example of this building off one another was when Siniora and Natche provided the name of another possible contact for Hirschfeld to contact. This willingness to provide a name, while not a narrative, was a crucial step to take that helped to further the dialogue that was being created. While the first two improv theatre elements were present in these meetings, the final two were not. Perhaps this lends to the nature of how the talks were more meetings than event, but the lack of any sort of ground rules could have hindered participants from feeling truly open and free to speak to the other participants. Overall this engagement offers an interesting look into the possible implications of having multi track negotiations that contain improv theatre elements.

### **Section 5.3: Is the Divide Too Big?**

Being one of the most well-known international conflicts does not provide much cover for track two dialogues to take place. Further, the conflict has reached a peak in the overall complexity of the narratives that have been created. Unfortunately, because of the complexity of the conflict, it is possible that the conflict is beyond what improv theatre elements can assist with in terms of track two endeavors. The sides that are involved are also very involved with other partners that possess certain ties to needed wants in the region which provided another challenge to the overall power structure in the region. Unlike the other two cases the overall length of the engagement proposed another barrier to the efficacy of the improv theatre elements to break down a decade's years long conflict.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict also possess another layer of third party involvement that the other cases did not possess. Due to the overwhelmingly high amount of involvement by other

actors such as the United States, the United Nations, Egypt, Jordan, Iran, etc., the ability to create a clear and consistent narrative become more difficult. For the two sides that are involved there are not just their own interests and narrative, but narrative and interests that are being pushed by the other actors involved. This involvement leads to blurring of lines in terms of the true narrative that each side in the conflict sees as their own.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The use of improv theatre elements in international diplomacy seems too strange to be effective in creating a resolution to conflict. Nevertheless, the elements of improv theatre have shown to be effective means of conflict resolution in businesses and organizations in contemporary business practices. The transfer to the international realm was likely to see similar success to the success that the companies and organizations have seen. In focusing on the four key elements of improv and specifically analyzing track two diplomatic ventures, a more effective means of analysis was created. By utilizing the structured, focused, comparison (see Table 6.1) along with process tracing, the effectiveness of improv theatre on track two engagements was thoroughly measured. The three cases that were selected were broad in scope in terms of the years that the conflict spanned, yet each had the necessary elements present to fit in the analysis that was being done.

The utilization of improv theatre elements on track two diplomacy engagements was presented throughout these three cases, each of which provided accounts of track two engagements in the respective conflict, and the cases ranged from a successful resolution to a still very present conflict. Each of the conflicts spanned some similar years, including most of the later-1980s and early-1990s. While the length of the conflict was different from case to case, each case was predicated by a law or statute that was put into place by the ruling government, or in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict's case by the United Nations. Perhaps most important, each case provided enough detail and substance per track two engagement account to provide a detailed account of the engagement.

By focusing heavily on the most successful case, in terms of the timeline of the conflict to a resolution, the South African case was easily traced from beginning to end from one track

two engagement to another. As seen in Table 6.1, the overall presence of improv theatre elements in the South African case also presents an important component in the success of resolving the conflict. In analyzing a somewhat successful case such as the Northern Ireland case the track two engagement that had more improv theatre elements, the South African Trip, came closer to helping resolve the conflict than the engagement where only partial improv theatre elements were present. The Northern Ireland case also presented an interesting perspective on how having outside perspectives, in this case the South Africans, to facilitate talks might be more effective than a group closer to the conflict. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict presents its own set of circumstances for the overall longevity of a conflict and how it might affect the possibility of a resolution. However, in looking at the improv theatre elements that were present, there is a clear lack of presence that led to very little successful transfer to official diplomacy and aid in resolving the conflict.

Each case provided something that the others did not. In terms of the South African case, the sheer size of Dakar Conference provided a rich account of facilitating a large-scale track two diplomatic mission. Further, the Dakar conference offered an interesting proposal in the terms of the location of the meeting, with some of the participants moving to the hotel bar to continue their conversation. The Northern Ireland case's South African trip provided a richer understanding of what might happen when nations that have successfully resolved their conflict may be able to help other nations in conflict. In the Israeli-Palestinian case's Jerusalem, Hebron, and Ramallah meetings an understanding of possibly how too much official involvement might sway a track two engagement off its intended effect. Each of the three cases provided a perspective that the other did not. Further, each case did have some improv theatre

elements involved in their track two engagements, yet the number of elements that were present varied greatly.

The cases examined here each presented their own type of conflict. South Africa focused heavily on the economic impact of the conflict from both sides. Northern Ireland was more of a religious conflict and harder to manage from a conflict resolution perspective. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been plagued by an official narrative that drove any attempt at resolution to little success. The analysis done on these three cases could suggest, what many have already concluded, that there are differences within certain conflicts that are unresolvable. The Israeli-Palestinian case points to this, as the case presents itself beyond the scope of creating a shared narrative between the sides. However, it could also be argued that these conflicts are all theoretically resolvable, while being different in nature. For example, the lack of improv theatre elements in the Israeli-Palestinian case is not the sole reason it remains unresolved, but given the experience of the other two cases it could be that successful application of improv theatre insights through the creation of a shared narrative could move even this conflict towards a resolution.

## **Section 6.1: The Key is Trust**

When conflicting sides resolve to end a conflict the key to a successful resolution is trust. What is shown throughout the three cases that were analyzed was that the more improv theatre elements that were present in the track two engagement, the more trust was built among the participants. Due to the growing amount of trust in the participants of the South African case, in each of the three analyzed engagements, the overall success transfer to official diplomacy was effective. In looking at Table 6.1, the four improv theatre elements that were present in all the engagements produced an effective means of resolving the conflict. Conversely, in the Israel-Palestine case and the Northern Ireland case, there was a lack of consistency between the usage of improv theatre elements in the engagements. This lack of improv theatre elements and lack of transfer to meaningful official diplomacy seems to be connected. The Northern Ireland Case's Duisburg meeting perhaps exemplifies this best because of the inherent lack of trust due to the conflict of the facilitator as a partial participant in the engagement. This permeates strongly in the engagement, which does not allow for the trust to be built and grow into a meaningful outcome for the participants.

<b>Table 6.1</b>			
	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Israel-Palestine</b>
1.1) Years of Engagement	1985 -1994	1968-1998	1964-Present
1.2) Length of Engagement	9 years	30 years	53+ years
1.3) Number of Actors	Seven to Seventy-eight	Five to Eight	Three to Eight
2.1) Was a neutral, “yes,” space created?	All	Partial	Partial
2.2) Did participants from all sides contribute?	All	Partial	Partial
2.3) Were ground rules established for equity among the participants?	All	Partial	Partial
2.4) Did any of the engagements breakdown?	Partial	Partial	Partial
2.4.a) If so, was there a reconciliation?	All applicable	None	All applicable
3.1) Was a shared narrative created?	All	Partial	Partial
3.1.a) If so, was the shared narrative created by all sides?	All	All	All
3.2) Did the narrative transfer to Track I?	Partial	Partial	Partial
3.2.a) Was the conflict resolved?	All applicable	Partial	No
3.2.b) Is the conflict still resolved?	All applicable	n/a	n/a

There are instances in each of the engagements when trust was built, and in every instance, it was brought on due to the existence of one of the improv theatre elements. The



Northern Ireland case's South African trip produced trust because of its ability to present a neutral space for participants from all sides to contribute, and the participants were all given ground rules by which they needed to follow. In the Israel-Palestinian case's pilot workshop, a focus was put on trying to get the participants to trust each other. The pilot workshop did have many of the improv theatre elements present, each of which allowed the participants to begin to trust each other. This pilot workshop even ended with an agreement being written up and signed by the participants, which signified an important joint narrative that was created because of the trust that was facilitated through the workshop. The South African Case was rich with examples of trust building, but the most impressive was during the Dakar Conference when participants, free of the facilitator, decided on their own will to move their previous discussions to the hotel bar, where more trust was built. This instance is possibly one of the most important parts of the analysis because it was created due to the way that the conference was conducted. The Dakar conference, which had dozens of participants, still utilized all four elements of improv theatre. The commitment of the facilitators to present the conference in this way allowed for the track two diplomacy to flourish into a cornucopia of trust and joint narrative creation by the various participants.

The trust that needs to be built for a narrative to be created by both sides requires a tool to be used. By utilizing improv theatre elements there is a higher likelihood of success in the creation of a joint narrative that is shared by both sides. The improv theatre elements that are presented throughout provide a structure and guide in the successful creation of a joint narrative. However, the transfer of that narrative to official diplomacy is harder to analyze in terms of the overall resolution of the conflicts. In the cases that were used, the joint narrative that did transfer, for example in the South African case, did aid in the resolution of the conflict. This does suggest

that there is a possibility for a transference from track two to track one, in terms of the joint narrative created, but what is more important is that a narrative be created by both sides of the conflict. Thus, by utilizing improv theatre elements as a guide track two engagements are bound to be more successful in creating a joint narrative by the participants that was facilitated due to the trust of the participants.

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