

Program in Conflict
Management Alternatives

Program Staff

PCMA Working
Paper # 1

CRSO Working
Paper # 331



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

4501 LSA BUILDING
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN, U.S.A. 48109-1382

Revised Proposal to the Hewlett Foundation:
April, 1985 and July, 1985

Funded by the Foundation: December, 1985

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Mark Chesler, Professor of Sociology
Elizabeth Douvan, Professor of Psychology and Director,
Residential College

School of Social Work

Helen Weingarten, Assistant Professor of Social Work

School of Education

Charles Moody, Professor of Education

School of Natural Resources

James Crowfoot, Professor of Natural Resources and Dean,
The School of Natural Resources

School of Public Health

Barbara Israel, Assistant Professor of Public Health

The Interdisciplinary Program in Conflict Management Alternatives (PCMA) at The University of Michigan has two major objectives: 1) to enhance a distinctive agenda of research, theory, and practice in alternative mechanisms for resolving social conflict; and 2) to further develop the institution's capacity in this area by linking and stimulating existing scholarly applied efforts concerned with conflict and conflict resolution.

I. RESEARCH/THEORY DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The core faculty of this program is committed to exploring the link between social structure, social justice, and conflict resolution. The development of new institutional resources to respond to conflict in imaginative and effective ways requires a social research and development effort that retrieves the streetwise inventions of practitioners. Likewise, developments in theory and research must be tested in arenas of public controversy and more extensively disseminated and applied to help reduce threats of violence and protracted, escalated strife.

A research/theory agenda focusing on these concerns will emphasize: (1) the use of new settlement procedures and roles for disputants and third parties; (2) the institutionalization of innovative structures and procedures that permanently alter the way conflicts are managed and; (3) the fundamental differences and inequalities between disputing parties that threaten stable resolutions and the attainment of social justice. We will study these issues primarily in United States' settings, in conflicts arising between families, organizations and communities, and between different races and social constituencies. Three main activities will be undertaken: (1) seminars and colloquia on Social Justice and Conflict, (2) pilot research projects on New Roles and Settlement Procedures; and on Institutionalizing Conflict Resolution Mechanisms; and (3) a Working Paper series.

1. Seminars and Colloquia on Social Justice and Conflict. The core staff will meet in an ongoing seminar to examine systematically the relationship between social equity and the management of conflict. Our purpose is to advance theory and research across traditional academic boundaries, and compare practice across different social arenas. We will develop conceptions or models of the ways in which social justice enters into and influences dispute management processes.

The attractiveness of alternate forms of dispute management lies in the promise they offer for relieving underlying injustices and redressing unjust arrangements before they erupt in rancorous conflict. Moreover, they have the potential to go beyond the immediate settlement of disputes, to plan and implement a long-term perspective on organizational change. In undertaking such an emphasis, a number of important questions arise: How are different world views and assumptions legitimated and incorporated into problem solving and negotiations? How do parties differentiate the cohesiveness of face-to-face decision-making from their stratified relationships in ongoing institutional and community settings? How do final agreements compare with the initial interests and social justice concerns of various parties? What are the implications of an agreement for long-term institutional or community change? Are settlements implemented: and if so, with what modifications? Who uses alternative mechanisms of conflict management? What does access to alternative procedures depend on?

In addition to the ongoing seminar involving the core staff and visitors, a monthly colloquium (presentation and discussion) will involve a larger number of people interested in these issues. Program members, faculty and students across campus, and external visitors will be invited to present their research and practice work. Open and advertised to the university and public at large, these events will encourage exchange and collaboration across the university community.

2. Pilot Research Projects. Members of the core staff will conduct pilot research to advance theory and practice in two areas: (a) new roles and settlement procedures in dispute management, and (b) institutionalizing new mechanisms for organizational conflict .

A. New Roles and Procedures. Typical adversarial models of dispute resolution may settle immediate issues, but often fail to sustain cherished relationships, encourage collaborative problem-solving, and establish procedures for parties to enact proposed agreements. Practitioners guided by alternative values and theory are currently attempting to employ techniques designed to establish cooperative relationships that can continue to function in the midst of diversity and even in the face of future conflicts of values and interests.

The emerging field of family and interpersonal conflict mediation is one useful arena for studying the role third parties play in alternative dispute management. When the restoration or improvement of relationships between parties is of concern, the role that third parties play in helping to settle disputes is quite unclear. Indeed, considerable controversy has emerged recently about the requirements for professional training of mediators, how far third parties should go in shaping settlements, whether clients' proposed agreements should be allowed to challenge established legal precedents, when and for what kinds of conflicts mediation is appropriate and effective, and what role client empowerment should play in mediation. We will conduct research and gather case studies of interpersonal conflict mediation (e.g. divorce, rental disputes) that indicate (1) the obstacles mediators and clients encounter in attempting to reach and implement settlements; and (2) the formal and informal methods employed to overcome these obstacles.

B. Institutionalizing Organizational Change. The process by which organizations integrate new conflict management procedures into normal operations is quite complex. Such innovation may require clarification of the organization's mission and significantly altered structures and norms relating the organization to its members, clients/consumers, or surrounding social environment. We will investigate cross-party coalitions as a mechanism by which conflicting parties identify common interests that enable them to work together for specified goals. Then we will examine the ways in which such coalitions can be institutionalized as (semi-) permanent organizational innovations. The pilot research effort will gather data from a variety of active efforts to create such coalitions, and will synthesize and expand our understanding of institutionalized coalitions in racial conflict in education, professional-client conflicts in health care, worker-manager conflict in industry and citizen-government-corporate conflicts in the environment.

3. Working Paper Series. Preparation for the seminars and colloquia will involve the retrieval of published and non-published work relevant to conflict management alternatives. As we contact scholars and practitioners conducting frontier work in these areas, and as we or our colleagues develop new research and theory, we will prepare them for informal publication and dissemination in a working paper series.

Integrating theoretical work via pilot research projects, seminars and colloquia are essential to our second agenda of institutional development. An effective linkage system will succeed as a catalyst only insofar as it has an intellectual vitality of its own (e.g. derived from but not limited to the interests of the core group). Pilot projects will help establish connections with conflict resolution practitioners outside the university, thus promoting mutual exchange and application. The core group will initiate a conceptual frame, build

effective outreach and dialogue with other scholars and practitioners, assist others in the development of their own work, and generate theory and provide integration of findings from various projects on and off campus.

II. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The program will develop a communication network linking University of Michigan faculty who are investigating conflict and its resolution, and will encourage dialogue and collaborative projects. Interdisciplinary collaboration is essential to the development and test of more general theory via cross-fertilization from diverse scholarly traditions and from different national and international arenas of conflict. By stimulating and encouraging the exchange of ideas, and promoting new collaborative ventures in research and curriculum development, practitioner/scholar exchange, and dissemination, this program can foster a climate whereby creative and nonviolent means of resolving disputes can gain a more prominent place in the academic agenda.

The University of Michigan has a strong tradition of intellectual decentralization, and existing departments and programs are protective of their autonomy and time/energy. It is, therefore, neither advisable nor conceivable for all campus research and teaching activities related to conflict and conflict resolution to be centralized in a single new program or structure. Our model of institutional development concentrates on establishing and maintaining linkages among various programs involved in conflict-related research and theory development. It permits individuals and groups to test, over time, their mutual interests and potential for joint work. According to current organizational theorists (e.g. R. Kanter), a decentralized system is most likely to generate creativity and innovation. It does so by having "a large number of integrative mechanisms encouraging fluidity of boundaries, the free flow ideas, and the empowerment of people to act on new information."

We will offer various scholars and scholarly groups on campus and in the geographic area a place for dialogue and sharing information about each others' activities and findings, structured events which encourage intellectual exchange and action, opportunities to publish 'work in progress,' support for travel to conferences, funds to bring to campus relevant speakers, collegueship in proposal development, contact with practitioners in the community and opportunities for applied work, and the coordination or joint conduct of projects when and if that seems appropriate. We also will link community practitioners to these scholars and their work.

Off campus activity that is central to the overall linkage effort involves effective connection and collaboration with other centers across the nation involved in research and action in conflict resolution. The NIDR-Hewlett Consortia Conference in Cambridge was a good opportunity to develop such contacts, and they can be advanced via other conferences, mutual visit and joint projects.

1. Advisory Board. We will establish an Advisory Board composed of distinguished individuals inside and outside the university who will review and advise the program on its policies and activities.

2. Interdisciplinary Conflict Committee. We will establish an on-going campus committee to provide a means for sharing information on conflict and conflict resolution work at The University of Michigan, and for planning ways to take mutual advantage of relevant teaching and research efforts.

3. Departmental Liaisons. Core staff members will link with their respective departments and colleges and involve other interested faculty and students in PCMA activities.

4. Interdisciplinary Curricula. An undergraduate curriculum in Peace Studies is under development at Michigan and a number of graduate programs include courses in negotiation and conflict management. We will support these

developments by fostering exchange of course materials and faculty. In addition, each year two core staff members will teach courses in their home units focusing on alternative dispute settlement theories and procedures. Selected undergraduate and graduate students in these courses will also participate in pilot projects and seminars.

5. Extra-university Exchange. Core staff members and program associates will travel to other centers and conferences to share their research and practice efforts. In addition, a series of guests from other universities, agencies or practice settings will be invited to campus to share their own work. In order to generate settings for the application of the research and theory development agenda, and to stimulate this agenda with input from concrete conflicts and conflict resolution efforts, we will expand and regularize relationships with practitioners in the private and public sectors.

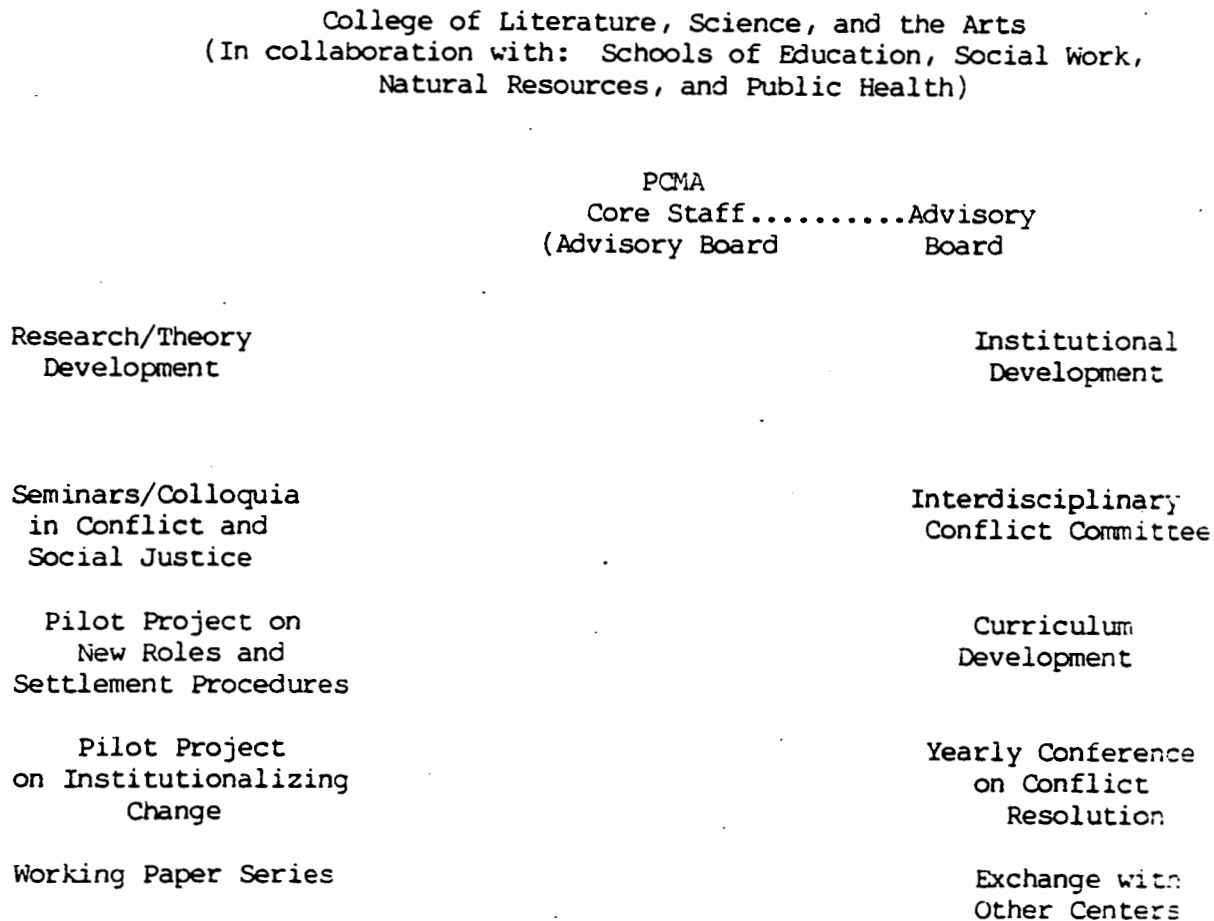
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The core group, through the pilot projects and the seminars/colloquia, as well through linkages to others, will have the opportunity to draw connections among various activities and develop theoretical formulations for discussion and elaboration. This model constitutes double 'value-added' for foundation funds:

(1) the use of programmatic resources to support and promote activities across campus and in the community; and (2) their furtherance of others' work by the core group's integrative research and theory agenda.

III. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The chart below diagrams how various program components discussed heretofore relate to one another.



The program will be operated by the 6 core faculty members, although executive leadership will be located in two staff members. This is consistent with our preferences regarding the role of collective management. The core faculty leadership group will be assisted and advised in its work by three groups: an Advisory Board; the Deans of the various Colleges participating in the program; and an Interdisciplinary Conflict Committee composed of representatives of campus research and teaching efforts on conflict management and resolution.

As this program becomes established and generates additional externally funded projects, some of these funds will help support core activities, reducing the level of core funding required from the Hewlett Foundation and/or the university. At this stage of our development, it is hard to estimate now and when these financial changes will occur in ensuing years; however, we are confident of our ability to generate external funds for theoretical and applied projects in alternative conflict management. The pilot projects and conferences, especially, should lead to newly funded ventures.

Experience and Interests of the Core Faculty

The six core staff members of this proposed program are located in different units of the university, and have broad connections throughout the university and surrounding communities as well as with colleagues in other universities and agencies throughout the country. The combination of junior and senior faculty members will ensure both innovation and stability within the core staff.

The members of this interdisciplinary group share a commitment to joining theory and practice. They have a history of conducting research on conflict management processes and disseminating research findings to policy makers, professional practitioners and citizens. Such research and intervention projects a transfer of skills and problem solving processes, while at the same time permitting the faculty to learn more about the ways conflicts and dispute

settlements are experienced by individuals, organizations, and communities. Some members of the group focus heavily on individual variables, others are concerned primarily with interpersonal and family relations, while still others emphasize social structures ranging from formal organizations and communities to societal institutions. Group members' experiences with different levels of analysis provide the capability for more varied comprehensive research than any one member could do alone. Experience with different disciplines and levels of analysis fosters theory development that draws on and synthesizes previously disconnected work on conflict and conflict resolution.

Members of the core faculty have conducted research and interventions in different types of social conflicts, including: school desegregation; health care disputes; processes of community conflict and change; higher education disputes between students and faculty or administration; workplace conflicts between managers and employees; affirmative action conflicts in the public and private sectors; life transition conflicts involved in illness, divorce and remarriage; and environmental and natural resource conflicts involving multiple organizations and institutions. As faculty members have conducted research and intervention with these different types of conflict, they have focused on various resolution processes including: negotiation, mediation, litigation, advocacy, coalition formation, cooperative organizational ownership, collective or participatory governance, individual therapy, skill and attitude training for groups and individuals, organizational development, value transformation, community assessment and problem-solving, empowerment in the context of social movements and consensus formation in relation to legislative and administrative processes.

Chesler's work has centered on the multiple parties (parents, student groups, teachers, administrators, school boards) engaged in racial conflict and desegregation in schools. In these settings, he has conducted research and/or used intervention procedures such as staff retraining, community organizing, organizational development, multi-party negotiations, joint problem-solving, formal litigation, and out-of-court settlements. He is currently completing a

study of the use of social scientific expertise and experts in school desegregation court cases, especially scientists', judges', and lawyers' views of alternatives to formal and adversarial litigation. Chesler is particularly interested in the various forms of coalition development in educational and health care arenas, and has been developing and assessing more adequate theory about the terms and conditions under which coalitions endure. He is currently directing a study of self-help groups of families of children with cancer; these groups have organized to support parents and to adopt more assertive stances toward resolving conflicts and forming coalitions with medical care systems.

Crowfoot's work on conflict and dispute management focuses on two areas: natural resource environments and work organizations. With other faculty and students, he has completed a project evaluating consensus building processes in relation to environmental policies, and the applicability of this approach to Michigan's environmental policies and dispute management processes. Currently, he is collaborating on a project to develop information and training to help citizen organizations utilize alternative conflict management processes. Crowfoot's research and training efforts on conflict in work organizations has focused on democratic management, where multiple means of participation and alternative governance processes are used to surface and resolve conflicts. He is part of an interdisciplinary team that has completed a study that compares employee participation practices applied to energy and natural resource conservation in U.S. and Japanese work organizations.

Douvan's research and theoretical interest have focused on processes of integration: how adolescents (or others who are marginal in one sense) are integrated into the social system, how individuals who hold multiple roles integrate their role performances into a coherent self, how two individuals forming a close interpersonal relationship create a new unit while maintaining their individual identities. She is currently studying the role of third party mediation and the ways in which gender affects the tolerance of difference, construction of conflict, and styles and strategies in mediation. She is also studying early marriage and the processes by which young couples negotiate differences and manage conflict.

Israel's work focuses on collaborative problem-solving approaches to dispute resolution in organizational and community systems. Her past work centered on social and psychological processes within communities which influenced impoverished citizens' abilities to effectively raise their concerns and resolve conflict. She is currently studying the relationship between occupational stress and quality of life in automobile manufacturing plants, and planning organizational changes relevant to these issues. This effort includes an examination of interpersonal conflict between supervisors and front line workers and the impact of policy inequities on salaried and hourly employee relations.

Moody's primary interests center on apparent conflicts between goals of equity and excellence in education. As the director of a federally funded race and sex equity center, Moody's work includes administrator retraining, needs assessment, policy review and formulation, and the study of organizational change in educational settings. His current research focuses on how structural conflicts arising in school desegregation programs are either resolved or reduced to intra-personal conflicts imposed on lower-power parties. In addition, he is studying the proactive use of alternative conflict management to break the cycle of intergenerational inequity in educational opportunities and outcomes.

Weingarten has a long standing interest in the relationship between conflict and growth. She has studied the impact of crisis and transition points such as terminal illness, divorce and remarriage on the course of adult development. Her research, teaching, and practice focus on family coping and adaptation to conflict, and the study of conflict processes and their management in families facing late life divorce. She is currently studying the relationship of gender to conflict management roles. Weingarten also is a practicing psychotherapist and divorce mediator.



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(In collaboration with: Schools of Education, Social Work,
Natural Resources, and Public Health)

PCMA
Core Staff.....Advisory
(Advisory Board Board)

Research/Theory
Development

Institutional
Development

Seminars/Colloquia
in Conflict and
Social Justice

Interdisciplinary
Conflict Committee

Pilot Project on
New Roles and
Settlement Procedures

Curriculum
Development

Pilot Project
on Institutionalizing
Change

Yearly Conference
on Conflict
Resolution

Working Paper Series

Exchange with
Other Centers

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Crowfoot's work on conflict and dispute management focuses on two areas: natural resource environments and work organizations. With other faculty and students, he has completed a project evaluating consensus building processes in relation to environmental policies, and the applicability of this approach to Michigan's environmental policies and dispute management processes. Currently, he is collaborating on a project to develop information and training to help citizen organizations utilize alternative conflict management processes. Crowfoot's research and training efforts on conflict in work organizations has focused on democratic management, where multiple means of participation and alternative governance processes are used to surface and resolve conflicts. He is part of an interdisciplinary team that has completed a study that compares employee participation practices applied to energy and natural resource conservation in U.S. and Japanese work organizations.

Douvan's research and theoretical interest have focused on processes of integration: how adolescents (or others who are marginal in one sense) are integrated into the social system, how individuals who hold multiple roles integrate their role performances into a coherent self, how two individuals forming a close interpersonal relationship create a new unit while maintaining their individual identities. She is currently studying the role of third party mediation and the ways in which gender affects the tolerance of difference, construction of conflict, and styles and strategies in mediation. She is also studying early marriage and the processes by which young couples negotiate differences and manage conflict.

Israel's work focuses on collaborative problem-solving approaches to dispute resolution in organizational and community systems. Her past work centered on social and psychological processes within communities which influenced impoverished citizens' abilities to effectively raise their concerns and resolve conflict. She is currently studying the relationship between occupational stress and quality of life in automobile manufacturing plants, and planning organizational changes relevant to these issues. This effort includes an examination of interpersonal conflict between supervisors and front line workers and the impact of policy inequities on salaried and hourly employee relations.

Moody's primary interests center on apparent conflicts between goals of equity and excellence in education. As the director of a federally funded race and sex equity center, Moody's work includes administrator retraining, needs assessment, policy review and formulation, and the study of organizational change in educational settings. His current research focuses on how structural conflicts arising in school desegregation programs are either resolved or reduced to intra-personal conflicts imposed on lower-power parties. In addition, he is studying the proactive use of alternative conflict management to break the cycle of intergenerational inequity in educational opportunities and outcomes.

Weingarten has a long standing interest in the relationship between conflict and growth. She has studied the impact of crisis and transition points such as terminal illness, divorce and remarriage on the course of adult development. Her research, teaching, and practice focus on family coping and adaptation to conflict, and the study of conflict processes and their management in families facing late life divorce. She is currently studying the relationship of gender to conflict management roles. Weingarten also is a practicing psychotherapist and divorce mediator.