

Consciousness and Conflict (Explained Better?)

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Integral Conflict presents a new map of conflict. Drawing on the work of James Mark Baldwin, William James, Ken Wilber, Leslie Combs, and others, we focus on the evolution of consciousness within the experience of conflict, refracting human experience into its four fundamental dimensions: individual and collective; internal and external. Using the River Conflict as a real-life case study, the authors illustrate how an integral approach to conflict analysis and action allows practitioners to choose among the most relevant and effective tools, techniques, and insights to more effectively support the constructive engagement of conflict.

Introduction

For many of us, the experience of conflict, even in retrospect, is likely to be deeply unpleasant, a painful sense of loss and betrayal. For others, conflict may be challenging, and yet the experience of it sometimes feels like a rich source of learning about oneself and others. And for a few people, conflict is creative, sometimes painful, yet always bringing a recognition of the internally constructed nature of both the problem and the response. With the many different experiences of conflict, even a simple conflict between two people has untold complexity and depth of meaning. Magnify all that complexity exponentially in the violent confrontations across the globe and who can argue against the observation that we need some very different ways of understanding our collective turmoil?

Fifteen years ago Butler (1996) wrote, "Much of the available conflict resolution theory focuses on the exchange between the parties. If conflict theory

is to advance, approaches need to be found that emphasize both inner processes and external exchange between the parties” (p. 3). Twenty years ago, Morton Deutsch (1991), an eminent conflict scholar, noted that the previous twenty-five years had been an especially intensive research period, characterized by a multitude of scholars from a vast array of disciplines, each focusing on their own particular disciplinary interest in conflict, mostly to the exclusion of others. As a result, a confusing and fragmented identity permeates the conflict field to this day. Jeong (1999) also spoke to the importance of developing more conceptual work to embrace the multidimensional aspects of conflict resolution. Dukes (1999) defined the need for a unified body of conflict theory that would link individual circumstance and social structure, and Rubenstein (1999) spoke of the need for a “revolutionary” brand of conflict resolution that would offer processes for altering basic socioeconomic structures without the mass violence that we have witnessed in places like Iraq. Despite those calls, there has been little progress made in the intervening years toward such an integrated approach. We believe that the integral approach we present in this article meets these criteria, finally providing a new vision of conflict—one that integrates all perspectives into a holistic,¹ evolutionary² understanding of conflict.

A pivotal point in the integral approach is that a person’s understanding of what is going on in a conflict is dependent on his or her *consciousness*—what shows up on the radar screen of his or her awareness—and what that radar is calibrated to identify from the vast expanse of phenomena we encounter. Getting a better handle on conflict, both in theory and in practice, requires a deeper understanding of the nature and quality of the experience itself. As Integral Theory³ (Wilber, 1995, 2006) recognizes the multiple dimensions inherent in all human experience, Integral Conflict focuses in on the multiple dimensions of the experience of conflict.

Integral Conflict offers a comprehensive understanding of the evolving terrain of conflict, bringing together all the significant contributions of the major disciplines of knowledge acquisition, the natural and social sciences as well as the arts and humanities. Because Integral Conflict organizes and honors all existing approaches to conflict analysis and action, it allows practitioners to choose among the most relevant and effective tools, techniques, and insights. But it doesn’t stop there. Integral Conflict also recognizes the *evolutionary nature* of knowledge construction and the importance of self-reflective practice, both as an individual and as a field of inquiry.

While an integral approach is new to the conflict field, it is widely used and recognized in other fields. Integral Theory is currently being applied in

over thirty-five academic and professional areas, including the arts, health care, organizational leadership and management, ecology, economics, law, and psychotherapy (Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman, 2009; Schwartz, 2010). Perloff (2010) used an integral approach as the orienting lens with which he outlined the theoretical assumptions of several different mediation approaches and highlighted the contribution to mediation that modern, postmodern, and integral stages of growth and development have made. His is an excellent illustration of how to use aspects of integral theory to think about and integrate seemingly disparate methods and philosophies into a holistic construct.

Although larger in scale, our task here is the same as Perloff's—to provide a holistic construct of conflict that, when utilized by the practitioner to analyze and intervene in a conflict, provides a context for a more strategic use of the always limited resources that are available. It helps us answer the question, "Where and in what ways can we be most effective?"

At first glance the integral approach may appear needlessly complicated; but consider the implications of failing to adopt a comprehensive strategy for modeling conflict. Conflict *is complicated*. And we need a comprehensive *meta-theory* that embraces a wide variety of interpretations and understandings so that no single-sided definition of conflict co-opts our ability to fully appreciate its myriad components. Theories are vital to our work because, in addition to mapping reality, they *shape* our reality, a discussion we fully engage later on. Integral Conflict offers a form of synergistic meta-theorizing that can be applied to all important dimensions of any particular conflict.

As a form of meta-theorizing (for more, please see p. 249), Integral Conflict, as noted above, takes an *evolutionary* perspective—on the experience and the choreography of conflict and on *itself* as a process of knowledge creation: it not only looks at the evolutionary processes within conflict and consciousness, it looks at the ongoing evolutionary process of our own understanding as we develop and apply it and observe what happens. Integral Conflict is a work in progress; these ideas are complex and challenging and require a willingness and capacity to invite in, entertain, and mingle with competing perspectives to see how we can learn from and with each other.

An integral perspective *means* and *requires* coordinating the knowledge and insights of *all* theoretical perspectives, as the formalization or reification of any particular content denies the evolutionary nature of human and social development. Integral Theory is itself a content-free structure within which we can organize, understand, apply, and continually create and

recreate knowledge from all the contexts and contents of our work in conflict. So this is what Integral Conflict looks like so far: an integral, meta-theoretical perspective on conflict. There is much work yet to be done, as we are still getting reports back from the field: testing assumptions and surfacing new ideas, observations, and hypotheses. We invite you to join us in our inquiry, and we look forward to the continuing journey.

We ground our discussion in a concrete situation: the River Conflict, a struggle taking place on the lower Fraser River in British Columbia, Canada, in which one of us spent twelve years working with the disputing parties as a mediator, facilitator, coach, and educator. The River Conflict is a cross-cultural resource-access conflict between the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO); the Stó:lō Nation (i.e., the “River People”); the commercial fishing industry; recreational fishermen; and the conservationists. All of the disputants in this conflict allege unfair treatment. They all feel they are victims of bias; they all want justice and view it as being unevenly applied, and they all want fish. At times the hostility escalates precariously close to deadly violence.

Practitioner Tip:

While an Integral approach to the River Conflict (or any conflict) provided for a thick and comprehensive analysis (presented in two reports written for the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans), it was not realistic, nor were there resources available, to act on all of the elements that were revealed by this analysis. Rather, the mediators chose to guide their intervention(s) by those elements that they hypothesized would provide the greatest leverage toward supporting the parties to constructively engage one another and their conflict. Over the twelve years that they stood as interveners they had the opportunity to develop many different intervention strategies, some of which were more effective than others but *all* of which were revealed and located with an integral analysis of the conflict.

Case Study: The River Conflict

The River Conflict is a longstanding battle fought over the rights to and allocation of salmon in the Fraser River. The Stó:lō Tribal Council and other independent indigenous communities have fished here for thousands of years and managed the lands and waters in sustainable ways. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the River People had culturally complex communities with well-functioning governance structures. European colonization

of the territory changed everything. Over the past 150 years, the River People's access to the river has been restricted and regulated by the newcomers, resulting in fractured communities, families, and individuals. Traditional relationships continue to suffer, and despair stalks the youth, with addiction problems and illnesses threatening every community.

Prior to the great smallpox epidemic of 1792, in which 65 percent of the River People died, their population had numbered in the tens of thousands; their multifaceted culture flourished and moved with a timeless rhythm that archaeologists have traced back over nine thousand years. After European settlement, other introduced diseases such as measles, influenza, and chicken pox would further ravage their communities, as would another smallpox outbreak in 1862. Some of the colonizers believed that the River People were destined for extinction and incapable of integrating into the imported agrarian and industrial-based communities.

Although the smallpox epidemics and other diseases had decimated the River People, their pain and loss was not over; another chapter was beginning. Their future was eclipsed by the Europeans' relentless pressure to tame and industrialize their ancestral lands. This led to the reserve allocation process, which saw the River People's children taken away and sent to residential schools where they would be Christianized by the missionary teachers of all denominations. Considered heathens by the emerging mainstream society, the River People would be brutalized by these "saviors" who saw them only as a problem to be solved. Consequently, the Europeans waged a deliberate campaign to eradicate the River People's language and, with it, their culture. The River People's sense of identity and very existence was under siege and in danger of disappearing altogether.

We introduce you to some of the disputants who, while drawn from the River Conflict parties, are fictitious characters: the *River People* as represented by Elder Eli Jackson and Craig Jackson, Tribal councilor and fisheries portfolio holder; the *Eagle River Rod & Gun Club* as represented by local chapter president Ted Cowen; and *the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans* as represented by Jeremy Smith, local river manager, and Bobbi Rogers, conservation officer.

While the River Conflict might generally be described as a confrontation over access to the fish, the actual meaning of the conflict, for every disputant on every side, orients to a very different experience and a very different perspective. As a multi-perspective model, Integral Conflict organizes the systems, structures, and perspectives within the conflict itself, and therefore opens up possibilities for meaningful intervention strategies,

keeping all sides of the story on the table, and surfacing the assumptions, biases, judgments, and beliefs that color and shape what we look for and what we look at in a conflict. Within an integral model, we have a meta-perspective that gives us the largest view possible to understand and intervene in conflicts of any scale.

Consciousness and Conflict

The multiple dimensions that characterize the experience of any conflict constitute a complex journey into the most basic elements of our sense of *being* and *presence*—of consciousness itself. In a deep-rooted identity-based conflict like the River Conflict, those same ingredients can also contribute to a crushing sense of loss. To fully understand that experience, we must more fully understand *consciousness*. Combs (2002) defines the phenomenon:

Consciousness is the essence of experience. Its touch is the bearer of meaning. It is pointed neither inward nor outward . . . it is neither introverted nor extroverted. It is not simple nor is it complex. It has no structure of its own but only essence. It is not static nor is it in motion. Consciousness is the perfect transparent *subjectivity* through which the phenomenal world shines. Without it, knowledge is only information. Without it the cosmos is dead. [p. 7]

Consciousness is a process, a moment-to-moment awareness of *being*. Wade (1996) also notes the multidimensionality of consciousness—the experience of being alive and having a personal history and a future; the experience of an intersection between our private, subjective experience and the external, objective world; and the binding together through memory of moment-to-moment awareness. All of this is made coherent in our processes of meaning-making (Kegan, 1982; McGuigan and Popp, 2007).

The study of consciousness is a recent project in the history of humankind. The American psychologist James Mark Baldwin articulated a detailed and sophisticated evolutionary developmental model of the human psyche and its construction of reality (Broughton and Freeman-Moir, 1982). Other psychologists, such as Brentano, James, and Myers, shared the view that consciousness is a “dynamic stream of experience made up of both conscious and unconscious aspects” (Wade, 1996, p. xv). Freud, Jung, and Piaget then took up the task and each mapped new and different territories in the human psyche, looking through different lenses at the ways in which

it changed over time in relation to its social and natural environments. Around the end of World War I, a rising tide of *logical positivism*⁴ sent the study of consciousness underground. Logical positivism, a worldview that recognized only what could be publicly observed and verified, rejected the notion of consciousness, both as a subject of study and as a viable human experience. Even the emerging field of psychology got drawn into this worldview and embraced behaviorism, which saw no place for internal experience and instead focused exclusively on operational manifestations of conditioning and reinforcement on behavior.

The turbulence of the 1960s re-birthed the study of consciousness, launching it into the 1980s and 1990s as a legitimate area once again of academic investigation (Combs, 2009), even amid the lingering chorus of critics rooted in a more “objective” view of the world. Despite its renewed legitimacy, the study of *consciousness* still suffers from a persistent use of the term as if it referred to a static entity. A. N. Whitehead (1979) suggests that to treat an abstraction or concept, such as consciousness, as a physical or concrete reality is to commit “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness” and that such *concretism* may be a convenient way of speaking, “but it is merely the accidental error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete” (p. 51). William James substituted the word *experience* for *consciousness* and described it as continuous, as a flowing stream or the flights and perchings of a bird, always in motion. Combs (2009) further clarifies our tendency toward misplaced concreteness as he notes how the wild activity of wind and rain has become a noun: *a* storm; and water cascading over a cliff has become *a* waterfall. It is human nature to want to classify and concretize experience so that we feel we understand it better. And yet, there can be danger in attaching our understanding of a process, especially conflict, to only one moment or event in its evolution. The evolution itself of a conflict, the way it plays out over time, gives us critical information that cannot be seen when it is viewed as a noun.

This distinction is crucial to an Integral approach to conflict because the constructive, *evolutionary* nature of the experience of conflict is a process—in the continual activity of making meaning from our experience (Kegan, 1982). To view this vital activity as a static thing labeled *consciousness* reduces the transforming power of the meaning of conflict to a mere series of oppositional events. To suggest, for example, that the River People have “a primitive consciousness” that explains their “maladaptation” to the “civilization” introduced by Europeans is to disregard the evolution and complexity of the experience and meaning of the River Conflict for *everyone* involved.

In the River Conflict, the lives of the River People today reflect their dislocation from a many-thousand-year history of life on the river, now reconfigured and subject to the colonizing forces of imposed social structures. The non-indigenous groups also continue to reflect their own history of exploring and immigrating to new territories, and introducing their own economic and cultural value systems. The dynamic continues, perpetuating itself in the battle over the competing and contradictory meanings of ownership of the land, the river, and the fish. To fully address these contradictions, Integral Conflict offers a way to refract the experience and dynamics of conflict into more easily understandable and interconnected parts, and to see how the interconnected parts impact and transform each other over time.

Integral Conflict

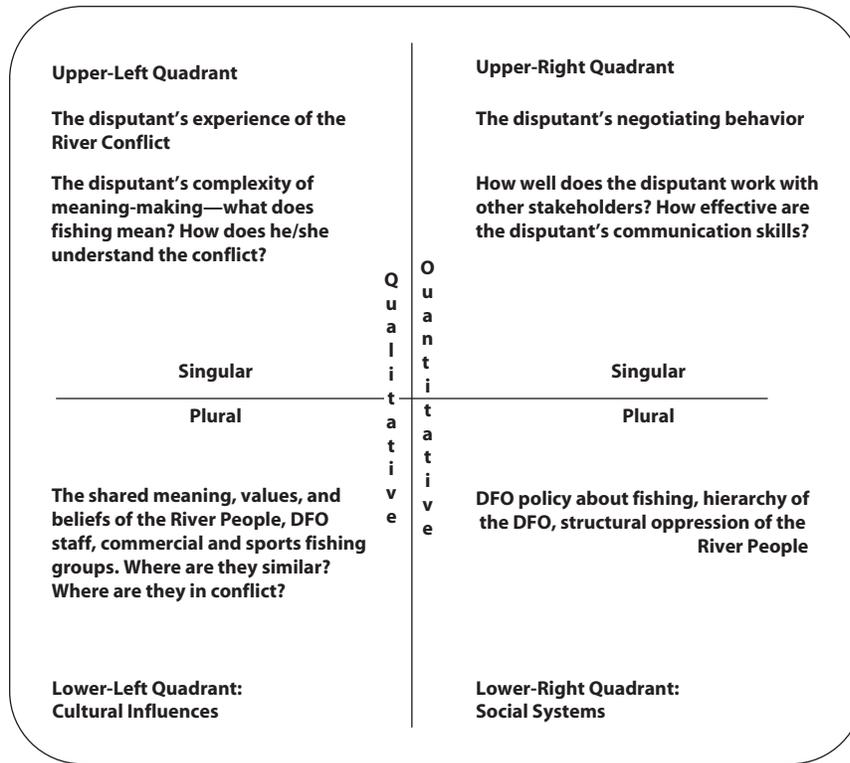
Integral theory originated from Wilber's (2006) cross-cultural comparison of most of the known forms of human inquiry. That process led to his comprehensive map of human experience, referred to as the *All Quadrant, All Level* (AQAL) model, shorthand for the multiple aspects of reality that are recognized in the integral approach (see Figure 1).

Although Wilber has considerably advanced integral thought, he is only one thinker among many who has used the term *integral* to describe big-picture conceptualizations, such as we are doing here. Other integral approaches have been developed by Aurobindo (2001), Gebser (1986), Laszlo (2003), Sorokin (1959), and Edwards (2009).

Wilber (2003) defined the term *integral* to mean inclusive, balanced, or comprehensive, and his AQAL model is just that, a model, or map, whereby we can more clearly appreciate the complexity and interconnectedness of every aspect of our experience in general, and of conflict in particular. Combs (2009) relates this type of mapping to Isaac Newton's discovery of the spectrum. In a darkened room with only a single shaft of sunlight,

Newton passed the shaft of light through a glass prism from which it emerged as a complete spectrum of colors. These could be projected onto a white screen for ease of viewing. Placing an opaque lattice such as a comb across the emerging stream of colored light broke it into smaller beams which, if the size of the lattice was properly adjusted, could be recognized as discrete colors such as red, orange, yellow, green, and blue.

Figure 1. The Four Quadrants of the River Conflict



Now, it turns out that when conscious experience is passed through the appropriate prism, it too can be seen in multiple colors or, speaking literally, in multiple *perspectives*. This is the prism of reflective awareness by which we each can examine the facets of our own experience. [p. 13]

Similarly, using the AQAL map, we can *artificially* separate our experience of the River Conflict into four facets or dimensions, as shown in Figure 1. *None of these dimensions exists without the others*, but when we conceptually separate them, we see more clearly the dynamic interplay among them.

The two right-hand quadrants represent those aspects of experience that relate to the *exterior, objective* processes of conflict, studied quantitatively. Some exterior aspects of the River Conflict include the negotiating rules and behaviors of the disputants, concrete rules about which people,

what fishing equipment, and which boats are allowed on the river at what times and for how long.

The two left-hand quadrants represent the *interior, subjective*, qualitative dimensions of the experience of conflict, those features understood only through introspection. *Interior* aspects of this conflict include cultural values, myths, and beliefs of the River People, the members of the fishing industry and governmental agencies, as well as each individual's sense of identity and what it means to fish: their emotions, beliefs, and attitudes about their rights and the rights of others to fish; and their individual intentions in and understanding of the conflict. From the Integral perspective, *every* conflict, and every *experience* of conflict, has both exterior surfaces that can be directly observed and interior depths that must be grasped introspectively (Wilber, 1995).

The AQAL model functions as an integrating map that organizes and describes the refractions of the evolution of conflict in both its analysis and engagement. Wilber's (2003) definition of *integral* illustrates the model's comprehensive grasp:

Integral: the means to integrate, to bring together, to join, to link, to embrace. Not in the sense of uniformity, and not in the sense of ironing out all of the wonderful differences, colors, zigs and zags of rainbow-hued humanity, but in the sense of unity-in-diversity, shared commonalities along with all the wonderful differences. And not just in humanity, but in the Kosmos at large: finding a more comprehensive view—A Theory of Everything—that makes legitimate room for art, morals, science and religion, and doesn't merely attempt to reduce them all to one's favorite slice of the cosmic pie. [p. 2]

The Integral approach is distinguished from other approaches in that Integralism does not focus exclusively on any one perspective. Any individual perspective generates important, but partial and incomplete, analyses because it attends to only a fraction of the conflict. A rational-scientific understanding of the River Conflict, for example, gives insight into the ecosystem of the river, pollution levels, and numbers of fish available, but it tells us nothing about the *meaning* of fishing and *why* people are fighting over it. The integration of the important contributions of each knowledge domain provides a new framework through which we can examine the tacit assumptions, theories, and hypotheses that guide the practitioner as well as the disputants.

The Five Elements of Integral Conflict

To facilitate a deeper understanding of both internal and external aspects, we can further refract the experience of a conflict into the following five elements, each of which we will briefly discuss:

1. *Quadrants*: the four dimensions-perspectives of experience: individual, cultural, behavioral, and systems domains (see Figure 1)
2. *Levels and Stages* of psychological development (i.e., pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional)
3. *Lines* of psychological development (i.e., cognitive, emotional, moral, and kinesthetic)
4. *States* of conflict (i.e., waking, dreaming, deep sleep, altered, meditative)
5. *Types* of personality (i.e., masculine and feminine or the Myers-Briggs types)

Element 1: The Four Quadrants

When we refract an experience of conflict, we begin to see how it manifests equally in all aspects of all the quadrants. The quadrants are the central meta-theoretical framework of AQAL. Not only do the quadrants map out the different domains in which all individuals change and develop, they also provide the context(s) for understanding the process of evolution itself: how a change in one necessarily brings about a change in all the others.

Practitioner Tip:

For example, in the River Conflict, the ways in which Bobbi Rogers, a fisheries officer, *understands and relates to* her mandate in patrolling the river (UL in Figure 1) and her corresponding *actions and behaviors* (UR) is set within the *shared value system or culture* of the Fisheries Department (LL) and the *structure of its hierarchies and regulations* (LR) (Wilber, 2005; Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman, 2009), some of which also reflect the structural oppression (LR) of the River People. Having a better understanding of each quadrant and the mutual influences among them gave the mediators a better understanding of Bobbi's operative viewpoint and her part in the conflict. That in turn allowed the mediators to work more effectively with the officer toward a more complex and more inclusive perspective on the River Conflict. Using the Integral Conflict model allowed the mediators to *organize* their attention to these four distinct dimensions of every disputant's individual and collective experience of the conflict.

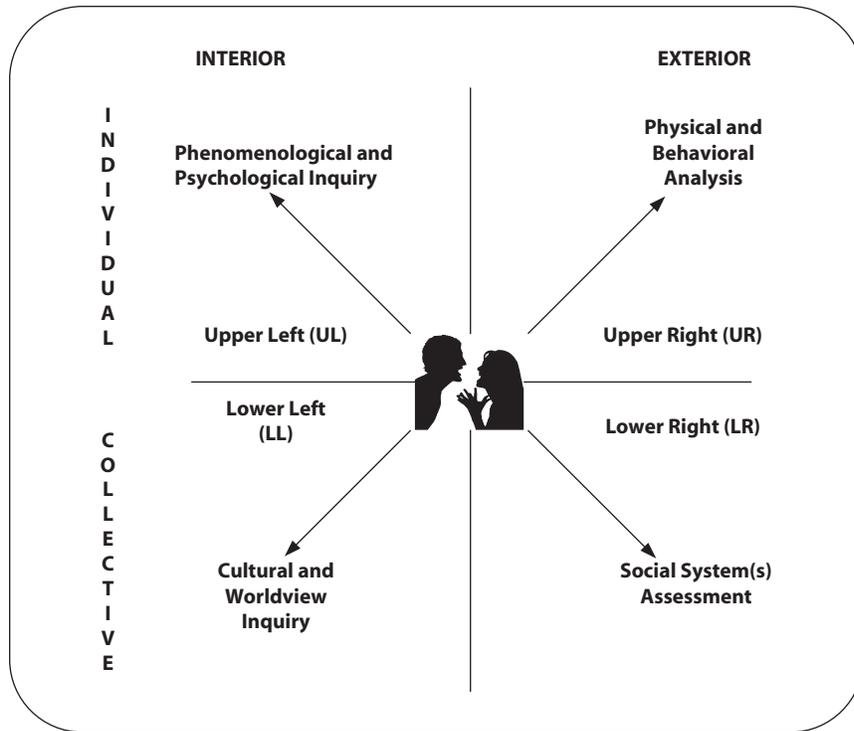
In this way, the four quadrants provide a minimum set of categories for an integral explanation of psychosocial development—if Bobbi, through the interventions of the mediators, begins to differently understand herself and her role in the conflict, it sets off a kind of chain reaction. In changing the way she thinks (UL), she changes her behavior (UR), which changes both the internal dynamics (LL) and the physical interactions (LR) of her relationship toward the conflict and with the River People, which can lead to more changes in understanding and behavior, and so forth. This is clearly only a tiny slice of the complexity of even Bobbi's part in the conflict, but it serves to illustrate the ongoing, evolutionary, and dialectical nature of the development of an individual's understanding, the development of the interactions within the conflict, and the development of the conflict as a whole.

In addition to these basic categories of development, the quadrants are also used as a foundation for applying the other elements of the AQAL (Edwards, 2009). We introduce those later in this article.

Integral Conflict: The Four Perspectives⁵

Applied to conflict, the four quadrants are not simply four different kinds of conflict, but refer to *four different dimensions of, and perspectives on, every conflict*. The whole point of a quadratic approach is to illustrate the ways in which *all four dimensions of any conflict arise simultaneously*: they tetra-enact⁶ and tetra-evolve (Wilber, 2006). Seeing this, it becomes clear how important each one is in contributing to and shaping all the others. The important distinction between perspectives on and dimensions of experience refers to the directionality of our gaze. When we talk about *dimensions* of experience, we describe the individual's experience from within his or her own frame of reference. Perspectives on experience are the theoretical and empirical lenses through which we look to understand the particular aspects of each quadrant. For example, when Ted Cowen, president of the Rod & Gun Club in the River Conflict, gets angry when his club members can't fish when they want to, one dimension of his experience that we are interested in is the Individual Interior (UL) to hear from him what makes him angry; what he sees as the injustice; what values he holds that he feels are violated. We use the quadrants to organize all the various perspectives on experience and, as shown in Figure 2, each of the four quadrants represents distinct perspectives on the individuals' experience of a conflict.

Figure 2. The Four Perspectives of the River Conflict



The perspectives we call upon to deepen our understanding of any conflict are as follows: for the Individual Interior (UL) we use constructive-developmental theory and phenomenology to guide us in understanding the individuals' internal experience and meaning-construction (i.e., what the fishing restrictions mean to Ted Cowen); for the Individual Exterior (UR), we look to neurology, behaviorism, and game theory to shed light on individual behaviors (i.e., what Ted's physiological response is and what he does in response to the fishing restrictions); for the Collective Interior (LL), we employ cultural worldview inquiry to help us understand the cultural and shared meanings, values, beliefs, and group identities that hold and shape the individual's sense of identity and belonging and meaning (i.e., what the Rod & Gun Club's values and worldview is); and for the Collective Exterior (LR) we use social systems analyses to illuminate the social structures within which the cultural and individual meanings and behaviors are held, regulated, and organized (i.e., how the members of the Rod & Gun Club collectively

respond and behave in this conflict). In the next sections, we further explain and illustrate the four quadrants.

The Right-Hand Dimension of Integral Conflict: External Observable Perspectives. The right-hand dimension of the Integral Conflict model attends to the external, observable behaviors and systems of the individual and the group—the observable ways in which individuals interact with each other in the *River Conflict*, the language they use, their tone of voice, their body language, and their level of participation in negotiation sessions. The lower-right quadrant shows the systems within which individuals act: the structure of their government; the laws of their society, and the rules of negotiation and engagement; their traditional social and family structures, the roles designated for men, women, and children in the social order; and the physical location of the banks, the schools, and the religious or spiritual ceremonial space(s) in the community. All of these observable structures of social life regulate the negotiating behaviors of individuals and groups involved in the River Conflict. We gain essential information when we use the right-hand perspectives to examine the actual location of the disputants, their degree of isolation from or integration into other sectors of society, their access to information, and the opportunity to express their views, as well as the effects of ongoing economic and social marginalization on many of the River People's communities.

Galtung's (1964) theory of structural conflict or structural violence⁷ is helpful here in understanding the perspective of the lower right. Early work by Emery (1981), Trist and Murray (1993), and others led to the view that organizations are systems and all their components dynamically interrelated. In their model, conflict appears as a subsystem within the organization, one of the last structures to develop and be recognized (Constantino and Merchant, 1996). Conflict within organizations appears to emerge and resolve itself in systemic patterns.

Simmel's (1955) functional conflict theory describes conflict as “a way of achieving some sort of unity, even if it be through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties” (p. 13); scapegoating⁸ is a common way of doing that. Marx's (1974) concept and Rummel's (1976) research of class warfare both emphasize the functionality of conflict. Theories about the role of economic and social organizations and their impact on human behavior belong in the lower-right quadrant.

The upper-right perspective is illustrated by Hobbes's (Tidwell, 1998) observation that all humans possess an inherent drive toward aggressive

competition. In line with Hobbes's view, Burke (Cobban, 1929) argued that the only way to prevent humans from acting on their aggressive urges was to develop laws and customs (LR) that would reflect principles of "enlightened self-interest."

Empiricism and the system sciences (UR and LR) have been the traditional sources of knowledge in Western cultures. These approaches are essential for the ways they describe the *physical, quantifiable phenomena* of the River Conflict—the diminishing fish stocks and the increasing numbers of people who want them—and allow us to analyze the observable setting, the stage upon which conflict is enacted—the river, the fishing equipment allowed and disallowed, the agreements hammered out and broken, and so on. So, again, the two *right-hand* quadrants attend to the *exterior observable* events of the River Conflict and its processes, and the quantitative theories related to them.

While systems theory provides an important research instrument for defining the *patterns* of relationships within and among disputants in the River Conflict, it cannot help us understand the *intentionality or meaning-making* of Bobbi Rogers's or Elder Eli's interior, or the phenomenological dimensions of the River Conflict. They can explain the rhythm and choreography of the River People's 9,000-year history on the banks of the river, but they cannot help us understand the depths to which Elder Eli's sense of identity is linked to that land and water and his feelings of despair at the destruction of his culture. Because systems theories focus on the "outside," they cannot explain the "inside" of the conflict experience. As such, each of these theories remains only one perspective on conflict, albeit a useful and far-reaching one.

At the same time, we need the interpretive, qualitative understanding indicated in the left-hand quadrants to make sense of the levels of *meaning* that find expression in the concrete events of conflict. In the River Conflict, we need an additional array of conceptual tools to help us understand its intransigence and intensity—*how and why people care so much* about fishing for salmon, and *why* they fight so vehemently over it.



The Left-Hand Dimension of Integral Conflict: Interior Perspectives of the Experience of Conflict. The left-hand quadrants attend to the qualitative, invisible aspects of the River Conflict (and every conflict), and are concerned with *interpretation*—the meaning-making process itself, and how cultural contexts shape the possibilities for constructing meaning. The contents of this quadrant help us understand the nuances of Elder Eli's sense of

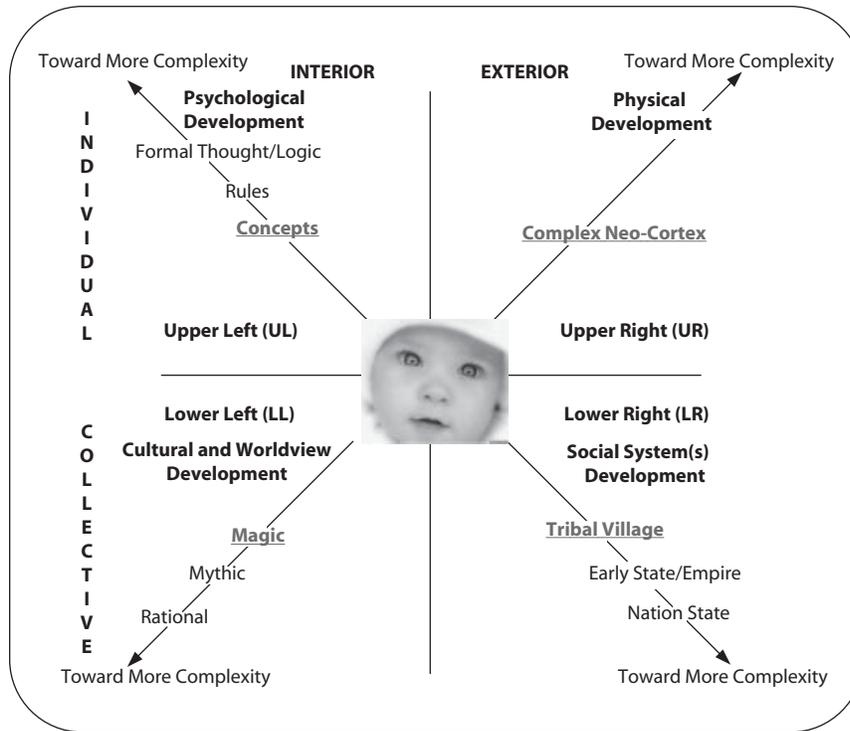
identity and Ted Cowen's anger. The meaning-making process reflects the evolution of consciousness, as individuals make increasingly complex sense of an increasingly complex world (McGuigan and Popp, 2007).

The two left-hand quadrants represent qualitative theories that focus on the data uncovered through introspection and the apprehension of *I* (*We*) as described in phenomenology and introspection theory, hermeneutics, and collaborative inquiry. The *upper-left quadrant* represents the phenomenological perspectives that guide our investigation of the direct first-person accounts of conflict. This perspective illuminates the immediate, lived experience of a conflict. Structuralism or structural theories are also located in this quadrant; we draw on the work of Piaget (1932), Kegan (1982, 1994), and others who employ this perspective to explore the deep-rooted patterns of consciousness that underlie conflict. The field of constructive-developmental psychology takes the structure, or complexity, of the individual's evolving meaning-making activity (UL) as its focus.

The *lower-left quadrant* is the intersubjective space uniting two or more people who share information about their interior perspectives⁹ in order to more adequately understand one another's inner experience (Wilber, 2003). The works of Heidegger (1968) and Gadamer (1976) offer significant contributions to understanding this field of inquiry. As developed by Heidegger, *phenomenology* is a science of interpretation; we apply it to the consensual understandings of conflict located in the *inside* of collective interiors. In *Conflict and Culture: A Literature Review and Bibliography*, Le Baron Duryea (1992) demonstrates the usefulness of this method for investigating the patterns of mutual understanding within groups. The values and mission of the DFO are top priority for River Manager Jeremy Smith as he tries to manage the tensions between his officers and the people fishing on the river. Working within this shared mission, his identity as the River Manager is defined by these values, and he feels the obligation to uphold them at the risk of letting down his fellow officers and their entire department.

The phenomenon of *mimesis* (Girard, 2000; Redekop, 2002) is another important element within the experience of conflict. It is the phenomenon of imitating the perceived desires and interiority of another in order to possess what that person has.¹⁰ Mimesis has profound implications, not only in the development of our sense of identity and belonging, but in the ways in which we engage in rivalry, conflict, and violence over competition for the desired objects—status, power, dominance, access to fish.

Figure 3. The Four Quadrants—Stages of Development



Element 2: Levels and Stages of Development

The Integral Conflict approach relies on another vital component to help us understand conflict: within each quadrant there are levels of development that correspond to the levels of development in all other quadrants (see Figure 3). This means *the same evolutionary patterns and capacities exist in each aspect of each quadrant*. Levels of development are important because they describe and allow us to recognize the different degrees of complexity associated with each quadrant and to see how development in one quadrant relates to development in another.

Wilber (2006) makes the distinction between *enduring stages* of development and *transitional lines* (described in the next section). Enduring stages of development, as their name implies, endure once they have emerged. Like building blocks, they also lay the foundation for the next

stage. In this way, they endure over time, yet are transformed by the emergence of the increasingly complex subsequent stages. In Kegan's (1982) constructive-developmental model, each level of meaning-making complexity is *transcended by* and *included in* the next. For a more detailed look at the evolutionary process of meaning-making, please see Kegan (1982) and McGuigan and Popp (2007).

Abilities such as linguistic competence and spatial coordination also tend to incorporate and build on previous stages in increasingly larger and more complex patterns. This process of transformation and inclusion happens in the interaction between the individual and his or her environment—as the environment becomes more complex, the person must develop, in every aspect of experience, more complex ways of responding.

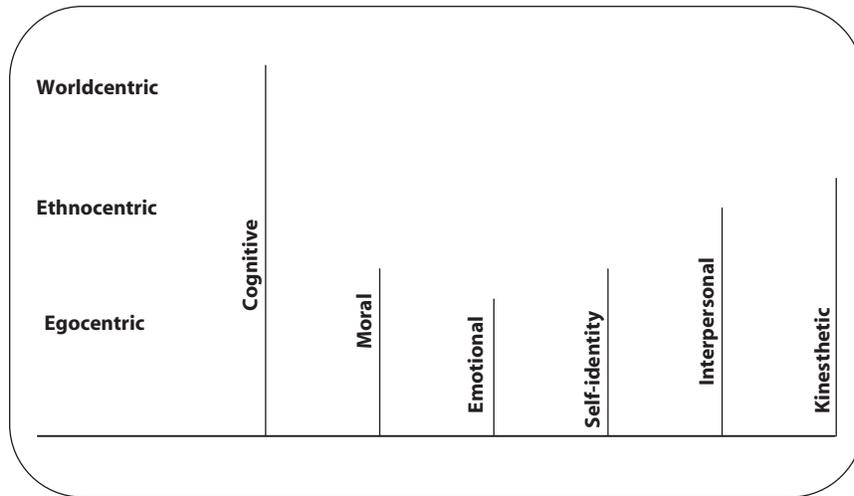
Development in one quadrant corresponds to development in each of the other quadrants—development in one quadrant always impacts the development in other quadrants. For instance if we look at the levels of development in the upper left (UL) we can see that the development of our ability to hold *concepts* corresponds with the development of a *complex neo-cortex* (UR) in our brain, which corresponds to the development of early *tribal villages* in the lower right (LR), informed by a *magical culture* in the lower left (LL). In each of the quadrants there is a developmental journey that can be represented in many different ways.

Element 3: Lines of Development

The *transitional lines* of development contribute to an individual's ability to engage successfully in the multiple contexts of a conflict. The development of these lines throughout our lives both originates in and indicates our increasing maturity, higher levels of education, and feedback from others in our professional and personal lives. You are probably already familiar with many lines of development, as they have been discussed for years by such researchers as Howard Gardner (1983) in his work around multiple intelligences.

Transitional developmental lines are phased out once they have been superseded. Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development is a transitional line as each stage of moral development is *replaced* by the next. When moral stage two, for example, emerges in an individual's development, it does not incorporate the qualities of moral stage one; rather, moral stage two replaces the earlier stage (there is no transcendence and inclusion here). The major developmental lines (mapped out in Figure 4) are:

Figure 4. Integral Psychograph



Source: Wilber, 2005.

- Cognitive
- Moral
- Emotional or affective
- Self-identity
- Interpersonal
- Kinesthetic

Each of these lines tells us something unique about a person's experience. Wilber's (1995) integral psychograph is useful in distinguishing which lines of development might be most salient for assessing and engaging in conflict. In the River Conflict, for example, the Fisheries officer Bobbi Rogers's emotional intelligence line, as Goleman's (1995) research described, lagged behind her cognitive development. Her lack of emotional awareness, appearing as insensitivity to other perspectives, caused considerable conflict with her fellow officers and frequently disrupted sensitive negotiations with Elder Eli and Craig.

In the integral psychograph (see Figure 4) the cognitive line of development plays a pivotal role in relation to the growth of the other lines. The cognitive line, the only line operative in *enduring stages*, is commonly used as a yardstick for development. While each line of development is distinct and follows its own trajectory of growth, there exists a unique relationship between the cognitive line and other lines: although the other lines are not *contained within* the cognitive line, they are *dependent on* it (Wilber, 2005).

Practitioner Tip:

In the River Conflict intervention, the mediators knew that those DFO staff and River Community members who were more likely to negotiate productively with one another were those who had attained a basic level of interpersonal engagement skills. These skills were based on well-developed cognitive capabilities such as critical thinking, the ability to recognize others' perspectives, and the ability to consider two competing perspectives at the same time. These capacities are fundamental to the functioning of the other lines of development such as emotional intelligence, self-awareness and the ability to monitor one's own responses, social awareness, and interpersonal skills such as the ability to engage with others in respectful and appropriate ways. In early stages of the River Conflict intervention, the mediators observed how the underdeveloped lines in some DFO staff had a remarkably inhibiting effect on the negotiations.

Lines of development are not restricted to the upper-left quadrant. Some social developmental lines occur within a family, group, culture, or society (see Figure 5). This does not imply that *everyone* in a group is at the same level of development, rather they indicate an overall social average. For example, not everyone in a First Nation community involved in the River Conflict will have the same physical longevity, but we do know that, on average, First Nation community members have a shorter lifespan than those of other social groups in Canada. The specific dynamics of growth in these developmental lines can impact the escalation or de-escalation of conflict.

Element 4: States of Conflict

In addition to enduring stages and transitional lines of development, there are also various kinds of states associated with the four quadrants (see Figure 6). We are all familiar with states because we experience them every day: waking, sleeping, and dreaming. States associated with the upper-left

Figure 5. Integral Sociograph

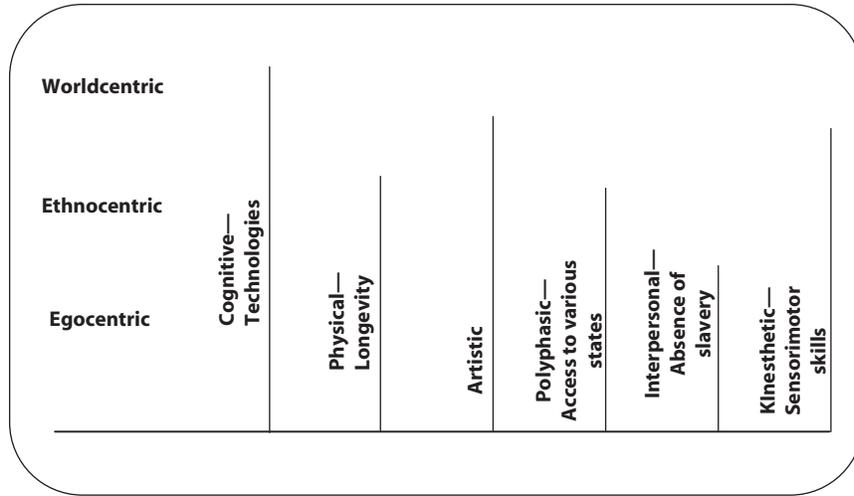
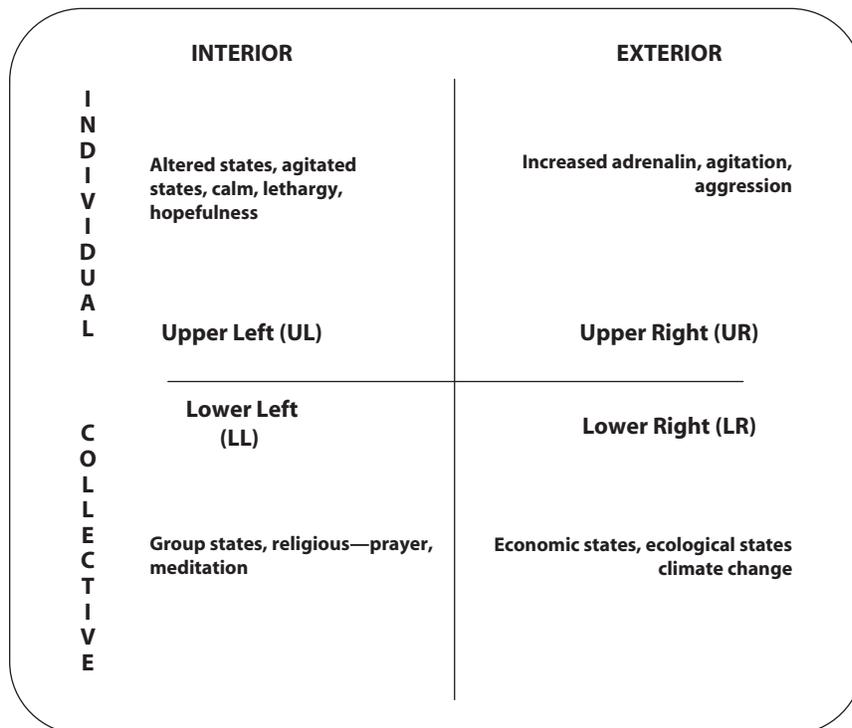


Figure 6. Selected States and the River Conflict



quadrant tend to be transitory, lasting from a few seconds to much longer periods of time; for the most part they are incompatible with each other (i.e., you cannot be both asleep and awake at the same time). Although they are transitory, and although you might not immediately think so, states do have an impact on our experience of conflict. For instance, an amphetamine-like plant, called *khat*, commonly used in East African societies for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, is stoking the flames of Somalia's civil conflict, draining that nation's economy and, until recently, thwarting international relief efforts in the region.

In this sense, the impact (on the aspects of the *upper-left* and *-right* quadrants) of this state-of-consciousness-changing drug should be seen not only as contributing to violence and state failure and inadequate development, but also as undermining economic processes, political identities, and societal structures that have been crucial to the formation and political success of Somaliland. In a much different arena, family mediators will be familiar with the various feeling states, insights, and intuitions that impact disputants in a family mediation, not only over time but within a single mediation session.

Many shared cultural experiences (lower-left quadrant) are also states that manifest as transitory moods spreading through groups of people. Experienced group facilitators recognize the different states that a group moves through during a day of problem solving: energy and hopefulness, agitation and frustration, lethargy and despair. In their recent book, Redekop and Pare (2010) discuss how enforcement agencies could work more effectively with protest crowds by working with these kinds of transitory states.

With respect to the River Conflict, many of the River People, both their youth and some adults, have drug and/or alcohol addictions, and are affected by altered states of consciousness—as well as physical states of agitation or sedation—from the highs and lows of these substances. These higher-than-average drug and alcohol addiction rates in River People's communities, as well as their deeply rooted multigenerational trauma, contributed to volatile states of consciousness that were powerful undercurrents in the River Conflict.

When tensions rose in the River Conflict—in response to a low return of spawning early sockeye salmon, for example—the different stakeholder groups (i.e., the River People, DFO staff, or recreational fishers) displayed their respective states of agitation or arousal (usually anger and frustration) in hostile overidentification with and protection of their own members and defensive underassessments of their perceived catch size.

The lower-right quadrant points to various environmental and ecological states that have a direct impact on the River Conflict—changing weather conditions have increased the intensity of the spring melt, and rising water levels have in turn decreased salmon spawning. Not surprisingly, these changing environmental states observably increased conflict among the various stakeholder groups who want, expect, and demand access to diminishing stocks.

Element 5: Typologies

Psychologists often use typologies to describe individual and group styles of behavior and information processing that arise in various contexts. Types show up independently of developmental levels and can furnish a different kind of insight into disputants' psychological tendencies and behavioral patterns (see Figure 7). Examples include popular typological maps such as the Meyers-Briggs, the DISC four-quadrant behavioral model based on the work of Marston (1987), the Enneagram, and the popular Thomas-Kilman conflict-mode instrument. We also have gender types theory based on Jung's (1971) work. In the lower left there are different types of religious systems (a common source of deadly conflict) and different types of kinship systems among indigenous peoples.

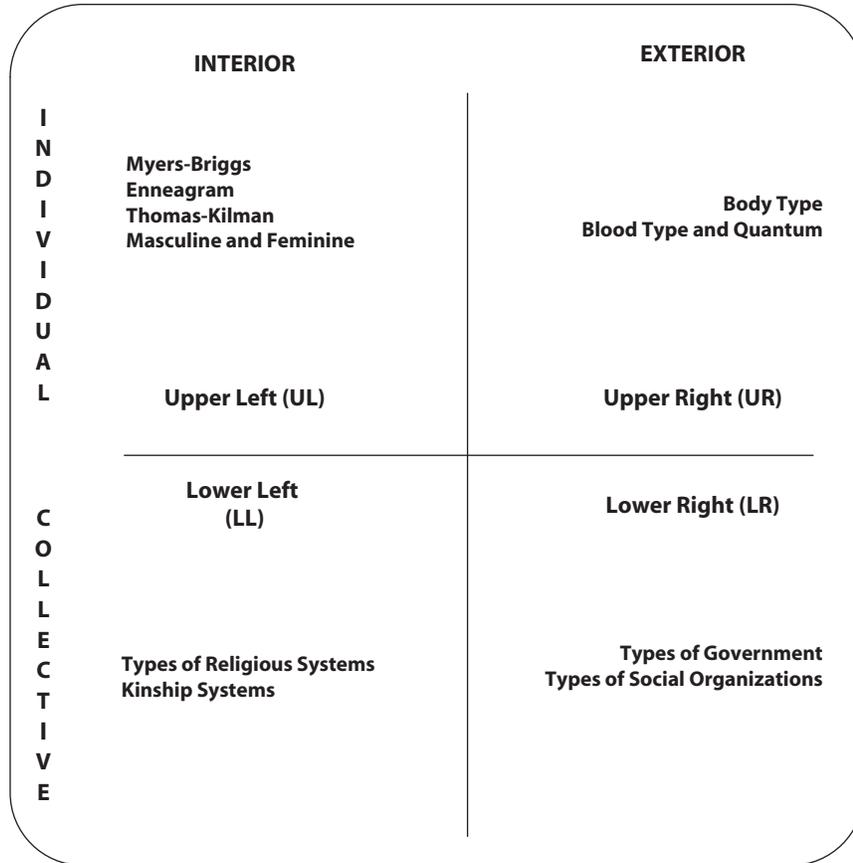
The upper-right quadrant refers to theories of body type and also to different blood types. In the lower right we have different types of political systems: communism, democracy, monarchy, and various degrees of dictatorship. We recognize all too well the social conflict and chaos that can arise when a group of community members tries to challenge and alter their type of government, as has happened in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.

As we conclude this section about the quadrants, you may well be asking yourself why you need to know all this. And why do we have to make it so complicated? Because, as we noted earlier, conflict *is* complicated, and a comprehensive meta-theory can help us better understand and engage the complexity of conflict. The next section discusses how.

Integralism as a Form of Meta-Theorizing

As we introduced earlier, a *meta-theory* is a big-picture approach to analyzing the meta-processes that guide us in making sense of our daily experiences. While theories refer directly to the empirical world, meta-theories refer to, and take as their subject matter, the theories and methods themselves

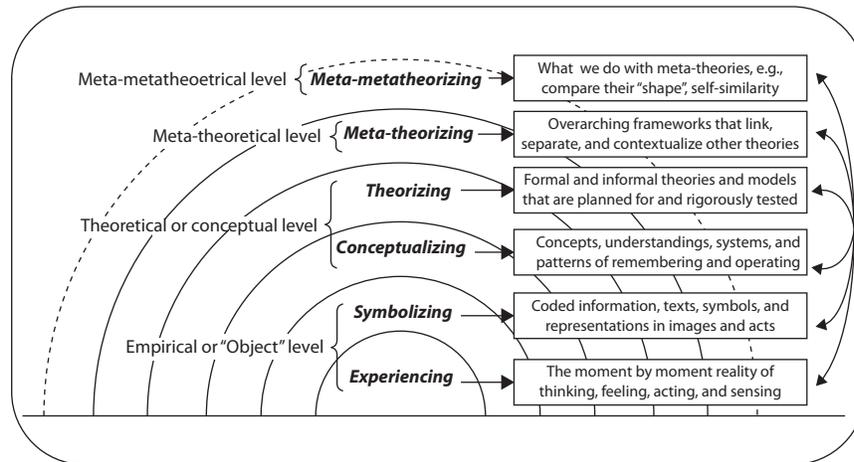
Figure 7. Selected Typologies



(Edwards, 2009). It is our theories about human behavior and conflict that guide and shape how we create governments and create and enact laws, how we structure our communities and schools, how we interact with the natural world—and crucial to our discussion here—how we understand what conflict is and how to constructively engage it.

There is a cycle of mutual co-creation here between theory and practice, between the idea and the action. So, it cannot be said that (meta) theories are simply interpretive of what is real, for they have a powerful hand in shaping reality as well as being shaped by that reality. [Edwards, 2009, p. 63]

Figure 8. Sense-Making and Theory Development



Source: Edwards, 2008.

When we begin to formalize any method of inquiry, however, our investigation risks becoming unbalanced if any particular perspective or practice becomes dominant or politically entrenched. A privileged perspective "becomes an unseen lens which both frees us to create what we know and constrains us from exploring what we don't know" (Edwards 2009, p. 11).

Unique to Integral Conflict is the *trans-disciplinary* framework that *integrates* multiple theoretical perspectives and research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, into one coherent whole. This framework acknowledges and honors the distinct contributions of each discipline within the conflict field and locates each in relation to the others (Black, 2008), allowing a new, integrated level of discourse and applied knowledge development to emerge around conflict engagement and analysis.

In a conflict, we experience and observe events, and we make sense of them through symbols (e.g., language, rituals) that generate systems of concepts, which then further inform our response to the events (see Figure 8). These conceptual domains develop into models and theories. Researchers analyze such theories in order to construct *meta-theories* (Tsoukas and Knudsen, 2003).

Part of the process of developing a meta-theoretical model, as Murray (2010) and Stein (2010) caution, is recognizing that it can become diluted and distorted as it spreads into more common use. The integral model of

conflict that we present here is itself in development, and we are aware that as “complex philosophical approaches reach beyond the boundaries of the academy and into the lifeworld” (Stein, 2010, p. 177) they often get muddied, watered down, misinterpreted, and misused. Acknowledging that “cultural knowledge reproduction is a messy process, with root ideas morphing and branching as they spread, even while speakers believe they are talking about the same thing” (Murray, 2010 p. 1), we make every attempt to be clear and precise in our discussion. And yet, as this is a work in progress and, even as we write, our own understanding continues to evolve.

Different Ways of Knowing the River Conflict: Research Methods

The phenomena represented by each of the quadrants of the River Conflict are accessible only through a particular method of inquiry or methodological family. What any one of the research methods reveals cannot be assessed in terms of the criteria or operational definitions of any of the other methodological practices. For example, phenomenology and structuralism are the methods that attend to individual interior experience (UL), so the findings of a phenomenological investigation of conflict are outside the purview of a social systems (LR) inquiry methodology: their methodological “radar screens” are designed to pick up very different kinds of data. Consequently, neither methodology can claim exclusive ownership of “the truth.”

An integral approach is based on one basic idea: no human mind can be 100% wrong. Or, we might say, nobody is smart enough to be wrong all the time. And that means, when it comes to deciding which approaches, methodologies, epistemologies, or ways of knowing are “correct,” the answer can only be, “All of them.” That is, all of the numerous practices or paradigms of human inquiry . . . have an important piece of the overall puzzle of a total existence. [Wilber, 2004, p. 3]

In our study of the River Conflict our choice of method is always set within a specific paradigm, or social practice, that is connected to a particular worldview. Paradigms are important to conflict practitioners because they make conflicts researchable. Kuhn (1962) made the concept of *paradigm* popular, and Morgan’s (1980) definition focuses on its use as a meta-theoretical tool:

Any adequate analysis of the role of paradigms in social theory must uncover the core assumptions that characterize and define any given

world view, to make it possible to grasp what is common to the perspectives of theorists whose work may otherwise, at a more superficial level, appear diverse and wide ranging. [p. 607]

Eight particular paradigms compose the *zones* of inquiry (Wilber, 2003) (see Figure 9). Each zone exhibits unique characteristics and relies on specific research methods to generate its own distinctive perspectives on a conflict.

Inner and Outer Views of a Conflict: Eight Zones of Inquiry

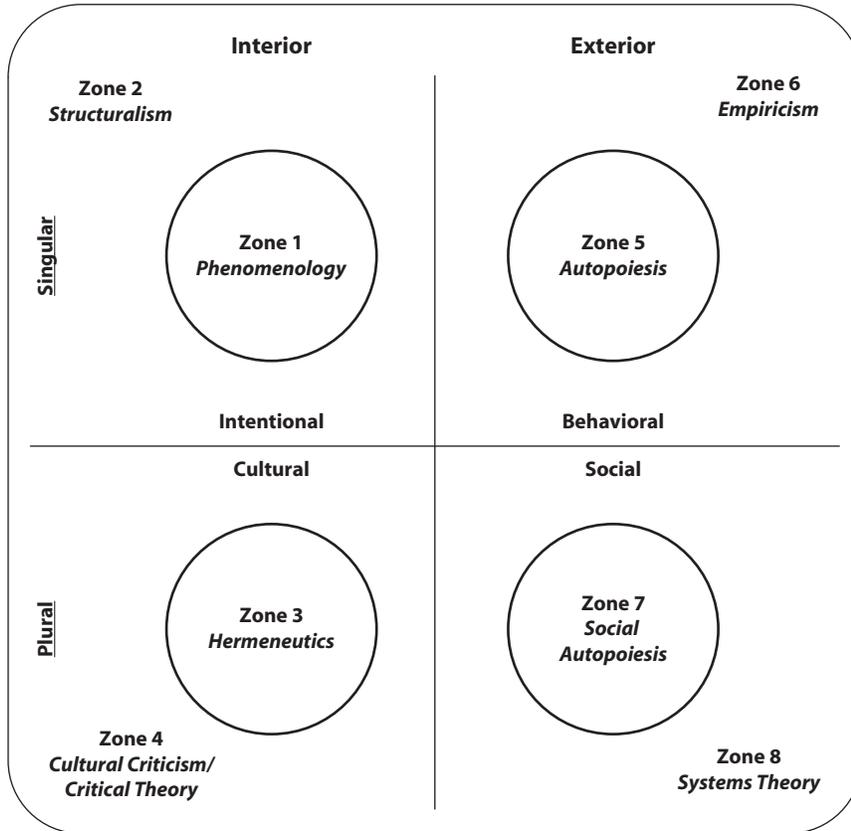
The eight zones constitute most of the forms of inquiry that are available to us as we chart the terrain of a conflict. Within each of the quadrants, we have an inside and an outside domain, constituting eight possible investigative routes, each of which discloses a different perspective of the reality within the conflict. Each of these outlooks is linked to a respective focus of observation and analysis: we cannot interpret the structures of the DFO's hierarchy, for example, through the lens of constructive-developmental theory. At the same time, if we neglect any of the eight zones of inquiry, we will miss important aspects of the conflict and fail to achieve a truly Integral perspective.

As Figure 9 indicates, the zones take into account the points of view of the person speaking: the I (singular), and the person spoken to, the thou, along with the we viewpoint. In the same way, we can relate particular zones (perspectives) to the third-person domains mapped in the right-hand quadrants, the person(s) or thing(s) (its) being spoken about. These perspectives—I, we or you, it, and its—compose the inside and outside dimensions of the four quadrants (Wilber, 2003), which in turn generate the different modes of inquiry that disclose, organize, and interpret the different phenomena that arise within the River Conflict.

The eight zones form the most historically significant approaches to the River Conflict. They are:

1. *Phenomenology*: the individual's direct lived experience of a conflict.
2. *Structuralism or structural theories*: the deep patterns or structures that underlie direct experience of a conflict—the outside of individual interior.

Figure 9. Eight Major Zones of Inquiry



3. *Hermeneutics theory*: the science of interpretation; it reveals the mutual, consensual understandings of conflict located in the inside of collective interiors.
4. *Cultural criticism (anthropological analysis)*: the investigation of the patterns of mutual understanding within groups—the outside of collective interiors.
5. *Autopoiesis theory*: the self-regulating behaviors in conflict—the *inside* of *individual exteriors*.
6. *Empiricism*: the measurable behaviors of the outside of individual exteriors.

7. *Social autopoiesis theory*: the self-regulating dynamics in systems—the inside of collective exteriors.
8. *Systems theories*: the functional interrelationships of the outside of the collective exteriors.

An integral analysis of the River Conflict will contain all of the mentioned zones, relying on each outlook to reveal and inform its corresponding slice of the conflict.

Implications and Conclusions

When we are in conflict, our consciousness is as William James's bird, flitting and fretting from one uneasy thought to another in our past and present recollections, sensations, and emotions. Guided by our awareness, we stop and perch tentatively on resting places in the presence of these thoughts, recollections, and feelings, looking for ways to make sense of the uneasiness.

In this essay we have introduced a new, evolutionary, and holistic vision of conflict—Integral Conflict. As an evolutionary approach to conflict analysis and action, Integral Conflict brings together all the significant contributions of the major disciplines of knowledge acquisition, the natural and social sciences, as well as the arts and humanities.

As we have discussed, throughout the River Conflict intervention, the mediators' practice was guided by integral analysis and engagement. In the actual engagement of the River Conflict, the mediators paid careful attention to all of the dimensions, perspectives, layers of meaning, and individual experiences that an integral analysis reveals. That analysis guided their twelve-year-long process in forging a new, inclusive foundation for an ongoing successful engagement among the disputing parties. During these years, many strategies were introduced, the most successful of which was the creation of the *Salmon Table*, an ongoing process where the four major disputants could regularly meet to collaboratively solve their problems. Although the DFO indirectly influenced the *Salmon Table*, it operates outside of DFO jurisdiction and is led by the parties themselves. The disagreements in the *River Conflict* have not gone away, but because all these aspects of the conflict were engaged, most of the disputing parties felt that some of their key concerns were heard and attended to. Many came away with a different understanding of themselves and each other, and of the

complexity of the issues, and, most importantly, they experienced a different and more effective way to engage each other around their still-significant differences.

Conflict is inevitable and in fact necessary. It is fundamental to the evolution of consciousness on every level. Without it we do not grow; we become stagnant. Too much of it leads to devastation and destruction. Coming to a broader, more inclusive understanding not only of the measurable dimensions of conflict but of the experience and *meaning* it holds for the people involved can open up untold possibilities for constructive and even transformative ways to engage it.

Integral Conflict is about the evolutionary dialectical cycle between how our identities, thoughts, and experiences shape conflict and how conflict shapes our identities, thoughts, and experiences. We believe that the contribution Integral Conflict can make to the conflict field is significant, and can lead to a new integration of the multilayer process of evolution and the development of consciousness, culture, and conflict.

Notes

1. A Greek word meaning *all, whole, entire, total* is the idea that all the properties of a given system, like conflict, cannot be determined or explained by its component parts alone. Instead, the system as a whole determines in an important way how the parts behave.
2. *Evolutionary* refers to the ongoing developmental change that results from the interaction between an individual and the environment. As the environment becomes more complex, the individual must respond in increasingly complex ways in order to keep pace.
3. We distinguish Wilber's work from the overarching field of integral studies by capitalizing *Integral Theory*. The distinguishing feature of Wilber's work is his AQAL model.
4. Or logical empiricism, sometimes referred to as *scientism*.
5. Wilber uses the term *quadrvia*.
6. *Tetra-enact* means to act simultaneously as a group of four discrete aspects.
7. *Structural* violence is the "violence built into the very social, political, and economic systems that govern societies, states and the world. It is the different (and obviously violating) allocation of goods, resources, opportunities, between different groups, classes, genders, nationalities, etc., because of the structure governing their relationship. It is the difference between the possible/optimum and what is. Its relationship to *direct violence* is similar to that of the bottom nine-tenths of an iceberg, hidden from view, while only the tip juts out above the waterline" (Galtung, Jacobsen, and Brand-Jacobsen, 2002, p. 17).

8. *Scapegoating*: Redekop (2002) defines it as the process whereby two parties are reconciled at the expense of a third party who is held responsible for all that the scapegoaters fear or are disturbed by, and who is ostracized, humiliated or killed.
9. Language is not the only form of information exchange; it is used here for illustrative purposes.
10. For a fuller account of mimesis, see Redekop (2002) and Girard (2000).

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