WHY IT WORKED

Moving from Success to Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution and Peace Negotiations[1]
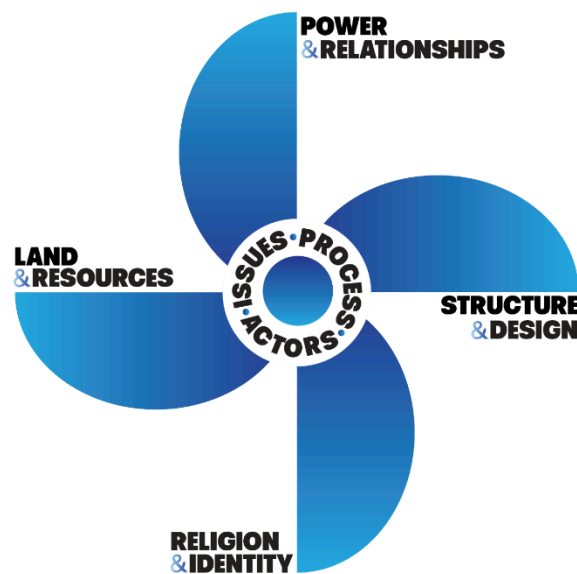### 3–Page Abbreviated Article

Overview: This paper surveys the literature on success in conflict resolution to understand the gaps and biases around what constitutes "success" in protracted, asymmetrical and ethnonational (PAE) conflicts. It makes the case for moving from *outcome-based* approaches of success toward *effectiveness*. It suggests four integrated factors to understand the nature of effectiveness in peace negotiations: (1) structural factors and process design; (2) power and relations; (3) religion and identity; and (4) land and resources. It contributes a novel way to analyze effectiveness in PAE conflicts through a conceptual visualization that illustrates key elements in peace negotiations aimed at resolving PAE conflicts: the Propeller.

Model: The Propeller concept is built upon the empirical research conducted in the BI studies, which offer new ways of understanding "why it worked," shifting away from outcome-based success toward a benchmarked understanding of effectiveness. Each BI paper focuses on different factors that contribute to "why" PAE conflicts were "resolved" through an agreement. These include actors, process, and issues and form the basis of "the Propeller"– a way of looking at "why it worked" as effectiveness – as ways to propel a process forward in a (1) integrated and systemic; and (2) incremental and bi-directional fashion. It builds on the literature that processes are relative and honors and accounts for the complexity inherit in PAE conflicts.

This visualization invokes the aesthetic and logic of a propeller, that three core elements of PAE conflicts—**actors** involved, **issues** at stake, and the **process** aimed at resolving the conflict—make up the "core" of the propeller. The "wings" of the propeller – power and relationships, religion and identity, land and resources, and power and relationships – generate motion on the core, either encouraging forward progress or discouraging and thwarting it. All of these elements must be considered in connection and understood as systematically interconnected.

The Propeller showcases how a conflict resolution process is systemic and integrated. Each element of the conflict core and the wings is an integrated part of a larger system; a propeller does not operate correctly without the harmonization of all parts. The propeller also demonstrates how a conflict resolution process is incremental and bi-directional. Forward motion generated by

a propeller—or by the elements in a conflict resolution process—occurs through continuous motion, and not instantaneously. A propeller can move both forward and backward, incrementally forward, in a circular fashion, repeating previous actions, slowing, or stopping.

In the visualization, the wings (power and relationships, religion and identity, land and resources, and power and relationships) generate motion on the core elements of a conflict (issues, process, actors). Each wing can contribute to thrusting a conflict resolution process forward, backward, stop, or stall it. However, because they are integrated and systemic, they do not operate in isolation. Further, shifting from a focus on success to effectiveness suggests we depart from asking if the boat moved (success) and instead ask what factors propelled the boat or held it back (effectiveness). This frame opens up new ways of analyzing the individual yet interconnected movements and actions that may, collectively, propel a peace process forward.

Key Insights: Analyzing the BI project papers through the Propeller reveals Key Insights:

Power and Relationships. Intractable conflicts are often embedded in a web of regional and other rivalries which make them even more difficult to solve. Along with internal leadership changes, new regional relationships are often key to progress. The presence of a trusted third party is often necessary to help realize opportunities for change. Often, before there is the possibility of change at the official level, unofficial dialogues can help to open up space for progress. Successful peace processes incorporate technocratic solutions within a framework that fosters genuine emotional relationship change.

Structure and Design. The dimension of *time* is important as a process needs sufficient time to allow for relationships to develop between the parties, while also requiring, at some stage, some degree of pressure not to allow the process to drag on forever. Recognizing the need for a process to move through phases (Track Two, Track 1.5, Track 1) allows for different time scales to be applied as appropriate. It also allows for a multiplicity of actors to take part in the process, each at different levels in different phases. The presence of a third parties, each appropriate to the phase that the process is in, is often crucial in allowing the parties the time, confidentiality and space to come to terms with the idea of new relationships in the Track Two phase, while bringing some degree of pressure to bear for decisions in the official phase. Third parties must not be unbiased but must uphold process integrity.

Religion and Identity. While agreements to end fighting can be achieved without taking religious and identity issues into account, they are more likely to be "truces" that eventually break down and lead to a resumption of fighting. Agreements which acknowledge and confront religious and identity issue are more difficult to achieve, but more likely to be durable. The creation of shared, or at least complementary, notions of identity can be structured around general commitments to shared religious and other values, but are often expressed in agreements as shared commitments to civic, rather than necessarily religious or ethnic identities. Finally, some level of systemic engagement with the past, in the form of such things as Truth and Reconciliation processes, strengthens the implementation and durability of a peace agreement.

Land and Resources. Land and natural resources represent central issues addressed in peace accords, whether as matters of distributive justice, to achieve self-governance for an ethnic

group, or based on ethnic and religious identity. They can be significant impediments to peace, but also can stimulate new ways to approach solutions as creative arrangements to share these things can be keys to success. Outside actors, including private companies who wish to promote peace in order to access resources, can powerfully influence a peace process. For instance, the need for personal security for civilians, businesses, international trading partners, and mining enterprises is often a major reason to make peace. Select case studies reveal that opportunities to use water resources frequently lead otherwise hostile parties to develop water-sharing treaties. Women and other marginalized groups often have a special relationship with the land, and their inclusion at high levels in certain peace processes reflects this importance.

Conclusions: The field can shift from binary understandings of outcome-based success versus failure and towards effectiveness in peace negotiations, incorporating complexity, nuance, and theoretical eclecticism. By integrating the theoretical models and empirical insights from the BI papers, we present a conceptual tool called The Propeller. The Propeller illustrates how effective peace negotiations aimed at resolving PAE conflicts are integrated, incremental, systemic, mutually reinforcing, context-dependent, relative, and adaptive.

Reflection on conflict resolution and peace extends beyond signing of a peace agreement. Some peace agreements are not implemented as planned, which may not necessarily be a problem if the parties remain committed to the overall peace deal, however, implemented agreements are more likely to lead to *sustained* peace.

The BI papers highlight key considerations for sustained peace: (1) Transforming armed groups into political parties; (2) Creating cross-cutting based on religious beliefs, faith-based principles, regional community initiatives, and intergroup dialogue; (3) Guaranteeing minority rights, including cultural protection, freedom of religion and political influence; and (4) Redefining intergroup divisions by challenging and acknowledging their effects.

BI case studies and research underscore the importance of moving from views of success in conflict resolution towards effectiveness. Measurable key considerations aid practitioners in propelling conflict resolution forward.