
Enhancing Community Leadership Negotiation Skills to Build Civic Capacity

*Deborah Shmueli, Wallace Warfield, and
Sanda Kaufman*

Most intra- and interorganizational decision making entails negotiations, and even naturally talented negotiators can improve with training. Executive trainings for managers and leadership programs for publicly elected officials, public managers, and nongovernmental organizations frequently include negotiation modules. These efforts, however, have yet to reach community leaders who also need to develop their negotiation skills.

We propose that members of disadvantaged low-income communities who lack educational and economic opportunities, and are less able to advocate for their own interest, need to build and strengthen their civic capacity, including their negotiation skills, to become more effective parties to decisions affecting them. While many professionals and executives have access to training, such opportunities are less accessible to the leaders of these disadvantaged communities. Although such leaders draw from their own heuristic knowledge, skills, and abilities, they could also benefit from sharpening their negotiation skills.

Deborah Shmueli is head of the department of geography and environmental studies at the University of Haifa in Haifa, Israel. Her e-mail address is deborah@geo.haifa.ac.il.

Wallace Warfield is associate professor for conflict analysis at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia. His e-mail address is wwarfiel@gmu.edu.

Sanda Kaufman is professor of planning, public policy, and administration at the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio. Her e-mail address is s.kaufman@csuohio.edu.

We propose that the multidimensional understanding of their community that members accumulate through direct experience is indispensable, nontransferable to outsiders, and not teachable through in-class activities. Leaders with the ability to leverage knowledge and assets to connect effectively to community insiders as well as to outside people, institutions, and resources, however, possess some specific inherent personality traits as well as an understanding of social structures, strategies, and agency, which can be taught and learned. Such skills as how to conduct negotiations around the table and away from it and how to identify community members who can help and how to rally them are also teachable. The cases were chosen to illustrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that make these leaders effective in and beyond their communities. We highlight those KSAs that we think are teachable in the framework of a negotiation module in community leadership training to enhance civic capacity for community betterment.

Key words: negotiation executive training, civic capacity building, leadership in disadvantaged communities.

Introduction

Negotiation pedagogy has evolved rapidly in recent years. Organizational scholars now recognize that most intra- and interorganizational decision making entails negotiations and that even naturally talented negotiators can improve their performance with training. Students in business, planning, and law schools can expect to be exposed to a variety of negotiation materials including theoretical literature, case studies, and role plays. Executive trainings for managers that seek to help practicing professionals develop specific skills frequently include negotiation modules, as do leadership programs. Universities, organizations, and such public agencies as the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management offer training for publicly elected officials, public managers, and representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). A growing wealth of materials helps tailor the training to specific contexts. These efforts, however, have not reached many of those in community leadership capacities who also need to develop their negotiation skills.

We argue in this article that disadvantaged communities whose members face poverty and lack educational, economic, and political opportunities need to build and strengthen their civic capacity to become more effective parties to decisions affecting them. The acquisition of negotiation skills can be a critical contributor to this goal.¹ But while many

professionals and executives have easy access to negotiation training, the leaders of disadvantaged communities typically do not.

The men and women who function in community leadership roles draw from their own heuristic knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), but could benefit greatly from sharpening their skills.² We propose that the knowledge component, a multidimensional understanding of their community that members accumulate through direct experience is indispensable, nontransferable to outsiders, and not teachable through in-class activities. But to successfully develop the ability to leverage this kind of knowledge and the community's assets to connect effectively to others in the community as well as to outside people, institutions, and resources in order to devise and implement needed change requires, beyond some specific personality traits, a (teachable) understanding of social structures, strategies, and agency. Such skills as how to conduct negotiations around the table and away from it, how to identify community members who can help, and how to rally them are also teachable to some extent.

Professionals participate in executive training to improve skills necessary to perform their work tasks; they benefit both personally and in their current organizational roles from knowledge and perspectives that are transferable to other situations and workplaces and from becoming reflective practitioners who can accumulate experience and apply it in novel ways to new work situations. Unlike such professionals, community members often become leaders in an *ad hoc* fashion in response to specific, sometimes unique, situations. Rather than a professional expectation, training of the kind we propose would be rather unusual for them. It would require participants to be willing to put themselves in the potentially uncomfortable situation of a student, to devote their scarce time to an activity mostly outside their experience, and to trust that the return on such an investment on their part is worth the time, effort, and inconvenience of going through it. Community leaders do not aim to become reflective practitioners and the skills they need seldom have to be transferable to other contexts. In fact, they mostly need tools tailored to their specific circumstances to enable them to make a difference quickly and respond to their communities' crises, as well as to their longer-term needs.

The difference in the needs of the typical executive enrolled in a training seminar and a community leader suggests that the many tools developed for the former will prove ineffective for the latter. Worse yet, training perceived as irrelevant may discredit any future attempts to assist community leaders in enhancing their effectiveness and their community's civic capacity.

Tailoring to specific needs is already a feature of executive training program design because even professionals relate more readily to role play situations that are similar to their own experiences. Those who teach negotiations as part of undergraduate curricula may also have noticed that students with no work experience find it more difficult to participate in role

plays simulating work situations than in games depicting situations they may have already encountered in their young lives (such as buying a used car).³

More generally, training materials used in contexts that are culturally different — whether national or professional — may need to be adapted to the specific cultures. For example, some American-designed role plays may seem less relevant to European students, and lawyers may need different materials than managers. To design an executive-type training program for community leaders, as we propose, it may help to recognize that marginalized communities such as the ones featured in our following two cases can be culturally very different from the ones within which we typically conduct executive training. These cases were chosen to identify effective KSAs and then identify those that can be bolstered through training. They can also help us to develop our thinking in terms of the pedagogical approach, content design, and kinds of materials needed to deliver this kind of training.

A set of questions guides this article:

- What characteristics/traits are associated with community leadership?
- How do these characteristics relate to the leaders' KSAs to negotiate community-based conflict?
- What KSAs do leaders bring to conflict situations, and what KSAs do they develop as a *result* of engagement in the conflicts?
- Which KSA components can be taught and how?

We begin by exploring through examples the KSAs of “natural” leaders, who have shown themselves able to rally their communities and act to benefit them in decisions involving public and private entities. We discuss which of these qualities might be related to negotiation effectiveness and might be enhanced through training. We conclude with some recommendations for curriculum components for the teachable negotiation skills that we think are instrumental for community leadership development.

The cases from which we derive the KSAs of effective community leaders — a poverty-ridden neighborhood in Washington, D.C., and Bedouin villages in Israel — are worlds apart, but their residents' problems are similar: inadequate security, limited social acceptance by the outside world, narrow economic opportunities, loss of self-esteem, and barriers to change. They lack access to resources and are often excluded from decision making in the larger systems to which they belong. Any reduction in their marginalization stems in large part from the quality of their leadership.

Far from offering conclusive evidence, these examples are nevertheless useful starting points for probing whether enhancing community leaders' negotiation skills can benefit their communities and whether successful leadership traits hinge solely upon specific personalities or share some

characteristics that could guide the design of training programs for capacity building in marginalized communities. The stark cultural differences between the two communities may also constitute a starting point for addressing one of the more enduring training quandaries: whether and how models developed in one culture can be helpful to trainees working in other contexts ranging from mildly to drastically different. (For more discussion of contextual and cultural aspects of training see articles by Avruch 2009 in this issue; Bernard Forthcoming, 2009 in this issue; Fox Forthcoming; Nolan-Haley and Gmurzynska Forthcoming; Volpe and Cambria Forthcoming.)

Case One: Benning Terrace, Washington, D.C.

Mediator-assisted negotiations that occur in communities affected by physical and psychological violence have not received the scholarly and policy attention paid to intervention in such other arenas as international or environmental conflicts for at least two reasons. The most obvious is that the immediate consequences of such conflicts mainly affect the community members on a local scale rather than the society at large, although long-term effects may be more broadly societal in scope. Second, in community-based conflict, intervention is shaped mainly by the objective of ending violence leading to the eventual reconciliation and transformation of the community (Bush and Folger 1994), rather than by the legal or precedent-setting procedural concerns typically present in other settings.

The effects of violent community conflict can be devastating. Entire neighborhoods can be under practical “house arrest” as residents are unable to move about freely to attend to their basic human needs.⁴ Such sustained violence, much of which stems from other criminal activity, such as drug dealing, shrinks real estate values, weakens local businesses, and puts pressure on already overburdened public services. More broadly, violence disrupts the development of social capital, diverts public policy energies away from productive use, and deteriorates the quality of residents’ lives.

In economically devastated minority communities with low social capital, efforts to secure and sustain the peace needed to foster development have often emerged from attempts to deal with violent conflict. For example, in some cases in which violence escalated to critical levels, local leadership has sought to turn the community into a “violence-free zone,” mobilizing the residents to cooperate with local authorities to turn the situation around. The leaders’ goal has been (at best) to transform or (at minimum) to contain violent individuals and groups by surrounding them with a framework of norms that seek to corral the behavior of combatants and minimize their impact on the rest of the community. In the process, other projects have also emerged that benefit the community, and local businesses have begun to feel more secure making investments there.

Building a community’s capacity for sustainable peace and development requires that leaders be skilled in negotiation and able to transfer

these skills to groups engaged in conflict. In what follows, we describe the roles that current leaders play in the poor, mostly African-American, Benning Terrace neighborhood in Washington, DC. We identify the KSAs that contributed to their success in negotiations to achieve community peace.

In the mid-1990s, Benning Terrace was one of the most violent neighborhoods in the nation's capital, plagued by anarchy and lawlessness (Smith and Ariadne 1999). Between 1987 and 1997, sixty-five people in the community were murdered, including seven people who were killed between 1995 and 1997 as a result of ongoing turf wars between two rival gangs. District of Columbia policing proved ineffective. Residents feared venturing out even to the neighborhood store. The crisis peaked in 1997 when Daryl Hall, a twelve-year-old boy, became national news after being abducted and killed by gang members.

The story of community capacity building in Benning Terrace involves a small group of African-American men, former gang members themselves, who grew up in this neighborhood. Tyrone Parker, whose nineteen-year-old son was murdered in this neighborhood, took the leadership initiative (Parker 2001). Alarmed by the unchecked violence, he and his friends felt it imperative to intervene and in 1998 formed the Alliance of Concerned Men (ACM). According to conflict ripeness theory, parties may reach a point when they realize that they are unable to make any appreciable progress toward desired ends by continuing the conflict and that conflict costs and risks have reached an unacceptable level exceeding expected gains. (See Pruitt and Kim 2004 for a fuller discussion of ripeness theory.) In the conflict management literature as well as in specific situations, ripeness — the readiness to negotiate — means that *all* parties have reached this stage. The Benning Terrace gangs did get to this point, but as in other situations, more was needed to overcome barriers to negotiations.

The two crews (gangs) waging war on each other and on the Benning Terrace community were tiring of the ongoing conflict. But gang members' fears of being identified as traitors to their group and the "enemy other" image rooted in retaliatory shootings blocked their ability to act on their own to resolve the conflict. The vocal outrage of "the mothers, aunts, and loving grandmothers" of Benning Terrace (Woodson 2001) provided a needed impetus for the ACM platform, enabling the organization to play the role of brokers on behalf of the women. ACM began an assessment process by reaching out to this group of outspoken, active women to obtain the names of gang members who would be willing to participate in negotiations.

As former gang members in Benning Terrace, ACM interveners had credibility with the warring crews. Nonetheless, the latter were suspicious of the alliance's intent at the initial stage of persuading them to accept the idea of negotiations. The gang members believed that their best alternative

to a negotiated agreement (BATNA) was to continue to fight. If not compelling, this alternative was at least familiar in terms of rules, roles, and responsibilities that govern the paradigm of gang culture. ACM's persistence in stating its intent to assist the gangs in reaching a negotiated agreement to reduce the immediate violence was instrumental. The alliance nested this intention within a larger framework of transforming values and behavior, an approach reminiscent of John Paul Lederach's (1997) notion of sustainable reconciliation wherein guiding principles become the vehicle for a long-term intervention.

ACM based its intervention on a set of core ideas: *beliefs*, *values*, *images*, and *fears*. They used *beliefs* to refer to the socialization process that minority youth undergo in communities suffused with physical violence (Parker 2001), whereby violence becomes an acceptable group norm. *Values* related to the need to transform antisocial values and behavior into accepted social norms. *Images* referred to assisting gang members in developing positive perceptions of themselves, leading to the construction of new identities supported by reshaped beliefs and values. Combating gang members' *fear* of change follows from the other core ideas. In the opening mediation session, ACM members acted as advocates for the values underlying these core ideas, as well as for the conflict management process itself.⁵

Opposing gang members agreed to meet at a neutral community location, but at the outset of the negotiations they confronted the ACM interveners with positional gang rhetoric. Frozen into rival identities, gang members had different perspectives on the origins of the conflict, each accusing the other of provocations. In the back-and-forth of negotiations, gang members' separate and conflicting identities began to weaken when the death of Daryl Hall was raised as an issue. The ACM interveners used reflection to skillfully bring about this change, evoking the memory of Daryl Hall, and asking "What would he say if he were in this room?" "Put down your guns . . ." was a typical answer (Smith and Ariadne 1999).

ACM might well have failed to create mutuality between gang members absent a tangible sign of change that supported their behavioral shift. Fortunately, having read about the work of ACM, the chairman of the D.C. Housing Authority attended subsequent meetings and offered gang members such short-term job assignments as removing graffiti (a graphic record of youths who had been killed) and other tasks that made Benning Terrace a more attractive and secure environment for residents. A few gang members eventually received full-time employment with the housing authority.

Reflecting the idea that "the intervention process starts from where the parties are, not [from] where the intervener would like them to be" (Warfield 1993), intervention began using the gangs' cultural frame and guided them toward broader community norms by encouraging gang members to reflect on the destructiveness of their behavior. ACM helped participants

reconsider their BATNA and no longer see continued warfare as a viable alternative to a negotiated agreement.

Although the outcomes of the negotiation have not been formally evaluated, a few anecdotal examples suggest that epistemic or conflict-learning awareness has contributed to change in gang members' behavior and has perhaps extended to the broader community. Following the negotiations, there were no gang-related killings and the truce held even after a shooting incident.⁶ Residents began to move more freely around the community. As fighting decreased, so did the deterioration of the public housing stock. People stopped abandoning their residences and began taking care of their property. This saved the city considerable rehabilitation costs.

The ACM team displayed several leadership characteristics that seem to have been key in their successful intervention: *authenticity* rooted in knowledge of the community, *insight* into specific situations based on knowledge and skills, and *agency* to be a broker between the community and structures external to it.

Authenticity entailed conveying that the interveners had "stood in the shoes" of those whose behavior they seek to change. The alliance members' instrumental skill was in telling stories about time spent in similar circumstances, while exemplifying that alternative roles are possible. They did that at the beginning stage of negotiations, building third-party credibility to encourage a willingness to negotiate specific issues.

Insight refers to the ACM members' understanding of the circumstances that contributed to the conflict. They combined this understanding with their reframing skills to alter the parties' perspectives so that they could see a particular issue in a different light and broaden their BATNA calculus.

Agency entailed linking the community to external resources that could sustain agreement (e.g., the D.C. Housing Authority). The ACM team members successfully articulated a sense of interdependence that enabled them to bring into play the external resources necessary for closure and sustainability.

While authenticity is inherent in the leaders' position in the community, insight and agency are likely to pertain to teachable skills.

Case Two: Negev Bedouins

Israel comprises a land area of 20,330 square kilometers (less than eight thousand square miles), with a population of approximately seven million that is 80 percent Jewish and 20 percent Arab. In general, land disputes there feature intense competition for the very limited amount of land and water, the diversity of uses to which various contenders wish to apply them, and severe imbalances in their respective power positions. Contests between Israeli Arabs and Jews add complexity to already protracted disputes. The current discourses over allocation and use of land and water are

further complicated by the fact that the two groups frame equity issues differently with narratives rooted in their respective identity frames (Shmueli 2008).

Israeli Jews view Arab communities' petitions for land expansion mostly within the context of national and local security needs, fearing a demographic threat and the potential for a "fifth column" within Israel. The need of Israeli Arabs for additional land, driven by demographic and socio-economic pressures, is made more acute by feelings of injustice owing to their belief in their historic claims to lands that they once owned or used. They feel under siege, lacking the land they need for the kind of development that they see taking place in neighboring Jewish communities. The Israeli Arab narrative calls for separate but equal status within Israeli society. Policy makers, government officials, and Jewish stakeholders alike are reluctant to address the widespread land disputes for fear of spurring more intractable societal conflicts. For all these reasons, the stakeholders need conflict management skills to tackle land disputes.

The land issues faced by the two hundred thousand Negev Bedouins, for example, have become pressing and are now high on the national agenda. This population is, by all measures, on the lowest rung of Israel's socioeconomic ladder: they have an unemployment rate of more than 50 percent (compared to 8 percent nationally), a per capita income that is 20 percent of the country's average, and an infant mortality rate of fourteen per one thousand, which far exceeds the national level (four per one thousand). With an annual growth of 5.6 percent, their population doubles every thirteen years and two-thirds are under the age of eighteen.

In 1948, the state relocated Bedouin nomadic tribes into a zone (the "seig"), which was administered militarily until 1966. In the 1950s, many Bedouin territories were declared state land according to government-adopted early versions of the Ottoman Land Law. The Bedouin had to abandon their traditional livestock and dry farming and settled in small *ad hoc* hamlets within the seig (Ben-David 1982; Meir 1999). In the early 1960s, the government attempted to relocate the Bedouin into seven semi-urban towns, but only about 60 percent moved there. The towns, planned with little attention to Bedouin needs, lack cultural relevance (Meir 1990) and receive few public resources.

The remaining 40 percent of the Bedouin live in about forty-five townships of six hundred to six thousand inhabitants that are unrecognized by the government. Most townships consist of tents and cinder-block shacks accessible via dirt tracks, often with no municipal water, sewage, or electricity. The Bedouin are demanding recognition for their settlements. Since 2003, the government has recognized eleven of the forty-five townships housing about 15 percent of the population, leaving a quarter of the total population in unrecognized settlements. The recognized townships organized administratively into the new Abu Basma Regional Council

(ABRC), whose first steps were to develop and facilitate implementation of plans for services and infrastructure. Since then, schools and health facilities have been built in some communities. Very little progress has been made, however, in terms of infrastructure, permanent residences, employment opportunities, and reduction in crime.

One of the authors (Deborah Shmueli) is part of a team working with leaders and residents of the newly recognized Bedouin villages to develop consensus-based plans acceptable to the villages, the ABRC, the Israeli Land Authority, and the district planning commissions. Contentious issues include land claims, boundary lines, internal land rights and access to water, splintered leadership and public infrastructure, inclusion of recently recognized villages, and exclusion of still unrecognized villages. Progress has been uneven at best. An analysis of the factors that account for the variability of results revealed that the quality of leadership in each village has played a key role.

The Bedouin villages have qualities of a natural experiment in that their leaders differed in their characteristics and so have the outcomes to date (with all else rather similar). It is thus possible to relate outcome to leadership characteristics and to argue that, at least in these cases, civic capacity did make a difference in the degree to which marginalized communities managed to engage with external structures to reach their goals. The cases also suggest that leadership qualities are not sufficient in themselves; rather, their effectiveness hinges on opportunities and external catalysts for change. It seems, however, that given similar opportunities and catalysts, the difference between success and failure in pursuit of community goals depends largely on the quality of leadership.

We describe below the leaders of four communities: one of the seven townships and three (out of eleven) of the Abu Basma villages. Two of these villages have been successful in achieving gains; the third, a “static” (less successful) Bedouin village is included for comparison purposes. “Gains” or “success” is construed here as engaging with the external administrative structures to bring about desired changes that benefit village residents.

For example, the leader of a cohesive village with a population of three thousand was a fifty-five-year-old son of a sheik who became the first head of the unrecognized Bedouin villages’ council. He displayed ability to organize and to be organized, to facilitate civil discourse that recognized differences, and to collaborate without losing uniqueness. He took advantage of opportunities to build coalitions with change agents, to network, and to cooperate with the new ABRC based on a good understanding of others and use of “shadow” leaders. In this case, the external catalysts for change included civil rights groups, the ABRC, and consultants in various professional areas.

A second successful leader was similar to the first in age and position and led a cohesive village of 850 inhabitants. An educated school

principal who had been exposed to innovation, he was open to changes including the use of new technologies such as solar power. His strength seems to have derived in part from his communication strategy: he engaged in nonthreatening civil discourse with the government and outside nongovernmental groups concerned with civic capacity, presenting his strengths rather than projecting an underdog image. Before requesting government aid, he began by showing an ability to achieve goals independently. He skillfully recognized the power of the media, formed coalitions with civil NGOs, and used advisers. He took advantage of opportunities to gain entrance such as the inclusion of Marit, a conglomeration of originally three (now two) encampments in the same general geographic area that were recognized together as one administrative entity, in the new ABRC, then separated and obtained recognition for his settlement as an independent village. As in the previous case, the external catalysts for change included civil rights groups, the ABRC, and consultants in various professional areas in addition to politicians and government ministry representatives.

The third success story is that of a fifty-year-old member of a large tribe, with a Ph.D. in chemistry, who was a former candidate of the Islamic Movement⁷ in local elections. His was a structurally diverse, recognized township of eleven thousand residents. Using his understanding of local tribal leaders and an ability to prevent internal conflicts, he brought together the various subtribes and communicated their needs in the language of the ruling administration. Acting autonomously, he had legitimacy in the eyes of all. He was able to offer creative suggestions for conflict management between the local community, the government's administrative offices, and the police.

For example, the township built a beautiful new school facility that, because it was in public space (not associated with any particular tribe), was continuously vandalized by youth. The township leader called a number of meetings with the youths as well as with the police. He reached an agreement with police that they arrest any young people caught vandalizing but that they be punished with community service rather than with imprisonment and that their arrests be expunged from their records. Within a year, the school had become a "vandal-free" zone. His track record of meeting commitments made to the government enabled him in turn to make demands of the government. In his quest, he took advantage of the positive governmental attitude toward the township, of regional development plans, and of the willingness of the young leaders, representing the different subtribes, to cooperate. The catalysts here were the Islamic Movement, support, and intratribal steering committees.

In the fourth case, the fifty-year old leader of a recognized but not very cohesive village of 3,500 residents, son of a "second-order" sheik, has been less successful in securing gains for his constituents. His failure is as

instructive as the others' successes. Although a council member, he did not actively participate in the ABRC. His communication skills are modest and, acting in part out of fear of collaboration, he behaved more as a bureaucrat than as a leader, remaining locked into positions he thought acceptable to the majority of his constituents. He did not take advantage of opportunities such as the ABRC, or the possibility of learning from other ABRC member villages, or of catalysts for change such as the Council of Unrecognized Villages and outside decision makers and administrators.

As in the Benning Terrace case, the Bedouin leaders had the *authenticity* inherent in their tribal positions, *insight* into their communities' circumstances, and — for the successful ones — *agency*, defined here as the ability to act as brokers working with entities external to their communities to secure resources and agreements. Taken together, the efforts of these four leaders suggest that leadership success depends on helpful personal and positional characteristics (such as tribal position), as well as civic capacity and negotiation-related skills, which can be developed. In the next section of the article, we focus on the latter and begin to link them to training elements.

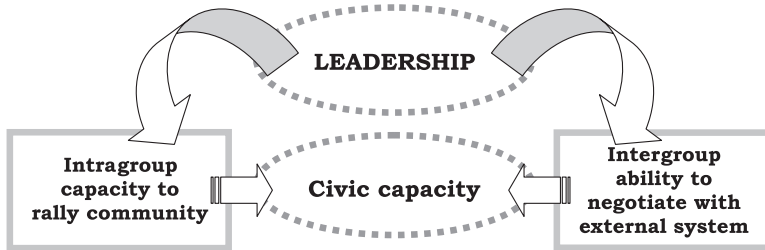
Community Leadership: What Can Be Taught?

Despite their very different contexts, the two venues, Benning Terrace and Negev Bedouin villages have leaders who have played pivotal roles with more or less success in turning around or at the very least improving the dire situations of their marginalized communities. They illustrate the centrality of civic capacity and of negotiation skills in effecting positive change, as well as the consequences of not having them.

John Gardner (1990: 1) proposed that “leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.” In this sense, leadership is *situational*, in terms of specific dynamics from which leaders emerge and create an impetus for change. The definition also suggests, however, that leadership is *transactional*. From a negotiation perspective, community leaders and followers⁸ have similar needs for security, identity, recognition, development, and self-actualization that shape the contours of negotiation for change.⁹ In the community context, leadership is also arguably *transformational*. James Burns (1978: 20) notes that transformational leadership occurs “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and reality.”

The Benning Terrace case offered us the opportunity to identify the ACM members' skills in bringing the community together to curb the gang violence and create space for the community to function. In the Bedouin examples, the different township dynamics and leaders, some of whom have managed to reassure their constituents that they will succeed in

Figure One
Relationship between Leadership and Civic Capacity



pursuing development while preserving their land claims, afforded the opportunity to compare among them to tease out what has made their leaders more or less able to push these marginal communities forward.

What attributes of transformational leaders enable them to engage their communities in productive negotiation? Our case analyses sought to identify community leadership qualities that enable community members to collaborate to influence decisions that affect them. We explore which of these qualities are related to negotiation skills and are transferable (rather than situational or innate individual characteristics), and we suggest how they might be taught in training workshops accessible to communities in order to enhance leadership skills and build community capacity.

Michael Elliott and Sanda Kaufman (2003) have argued that civic capacity, which can be enhanced, arises from a community's individuals, organizations, and institutions, the knowledge and skills they can contribute, and their ability to collectively resolve problems affecting shared space or resources. To act effectively on their own behalf in transactions with the systems in which they are embedded and on which they often depend for resources, communities need both the ability to coalesce around issues of shared interest and the knowledge necessary to negotiate even with systems from which they may be excluded (see Figure One).

Both intracommunity cohesion and interaction with external organizations are difficult for the members of marginalized communities such as those described in our examples. Internally, members often lack the skills, time, and attention to devote to issues not immediately related to day-to-day survival. With respect to external structures, such communities often lack the understanding of how the system works and where there might be openings for them to claim their due share of resources or get redress for grievances.

From this perspective, those who become community leaders are in effect builders and enablers of their community's civic capacity. While they

have knowledge of their communities and often some ability to rally their peers around shared causes, they also need the skills necessary to put their constituents' claims before outsiders who should or would help.

For example, in both the Benning Terrace and the Bedouin cases, the leaders had a deep understanding of the history, norms, aspirations, interests, and relational needs of their communities. They were insiders who could get their peers to trust them, but they also understood what it takes to engage with the appropriate private organizations or public agencies outside the community and were able to play agent roles between their communities and the outside. In turn, agencies and organizations can become comfortable in dealing with these leaders in order to address community-related problems and they value the leaders' role. We believe this agent-like duality, when translated into specific skills, is amenable to training.

Consistent with the model proposed in Figure One, on the intra-community side, personal strength, charisma, and capacity to become an agent for change translated into the leaders' ability to lead, gain or retain legitimacy, and to form and support coalitions that promote change and the attainment of mutual gains in specific projects. The leaders' skills in articulating goals, defining operational steps (often incremental) for achieving those goals, and negotiating with their own constituencies were pivotal in their ability to move their communities forward in the directions they set. On the extracommunity side, the skills to negotiate with external stakeholders and decision-making bodies and to express their vision were key to the leaders' ability to network with the world outside their communities to facilitate planning and implementation of projects and identification of resources.

Table One summarizes desirable leadership qualities that we identified based on these cases and some of the corresponding teachable negotiation skills. It helps to illustrate the notion that while some community members are intuitive leaders, in many cases such personalities are absent. The remedy might then include identifying emerging or potential leaders whose community position can get them attention and whose experience commands peers' trust. Such individuals positioned to influence their communities will, we believe, benefit from negotiation training to increase their effectiveness as catalysts for internal change and agents to the external structures.

Table One differentiates the elements of the required leadership skills, matching them with tools that can contribute to their development for those who already have some of the KSAs that have enabled them to move into leadership positions in their communities. There are many executive-style training modules that address these skills in the context of the major professions, but none are tailored for the specific needs and circumstances of community leaders.

Table One
Leadership Qualities and Related Teachable Skills

Leadership Qualities	Negotiation-Related Teachable Skills
Understanding of issue and stakeholder diversity	Framing, interest and issue identification Elicitation/identification of identification of interests, goals of involved stakeholders Recognizing interests behind positions
Intervention initiation	Identifying/coalescing with champions of community well-being
Identity reframing	Convening Moving from conflicting identities/values to interdependent/mutual interests
Organization	Agenda setting; coalition building; relationship building; meeting and time management; reaching outside for resources and assistance
Communication	Mutual commitments, mutual compromises
Collaboration	Understanding needs, processes, local abilities and barriers, external opportunities and threats
Vision/goal setting	Learning by example ^a Teaching, drilling, and expanding the tool box
Defining operative actions/process design	More in-depth understanding of the why
Incremental/multidimensional	General versus specific, systemwide balancing Learning to outline priorities and update them with new information An active search for counter-arguments to a chosen strategy (rather than the supporting arguments that come naturally) Information validation: devising ways to test assumptions about others' interests and moves
Innovation/creativity in devising solutions	Knowledge, risk taking, dealing with diversity Brainstorming Envisioning alternative outcomes Willingness to risk making mistakes and the ability to fix them ^b

^a Teaching by repetition and patterns often results in students having difficulty gaining the ability to design from scratch for the situation at hand. This will have to be balanced with the introduction of new situation challenges.

^b These skills are not directly teachable. What is teachable are skills that foster risk calculus and the means to adjust the course if a solution does not work as expected, resulting in the self-confidence that stems from adequate preparation. For example, exploring consequences of alternative strategies and preparing to fix problems predicted to crop up may increase one's willingness to take the risks necessary for championing creative solutions. Thorough preparation includes exploring contingencies and figuring out how to respond to them. This level of preparation — which provides a net of sorts — may well encourage a community leader to take risks with high beneficial potential that he or she might otherwise avoid, favoring instead the (unsatisfactory) status quo. One teachable skill during preparation is exploring "what if" scenarios and devising fixes for unwanted consequences.

To design and implement a training program of the kind proposed here, diagnostic tools would first have to be developed to identify specific needs in specific cases. Instead of the traditional role-playing games, for instance, training sessions for these groups may require different delivery approaches that are directly relevant to the interests and needs of community leaders. For example, once leader-participants are identified, they and other community members could be interviewed to elicit from them stories of the situations in their communities they would like or need to remedy. Materials could then be developed that incorporate these participants' narratives.

These context-sensitive training sessions would likely be resource-intensive at least at the development stage. They may require a concurrent formative evaluation process to closely track their effectiveness from the participants' viewpoint, as well as summative evaluations after some period of time has elapsed. At the outset we envision constructing a template for developing a short one- to three-day community leadership enhancement training session. The template process would begin by identifying participants who are most likely to benefit from the training and who recognize the need for such assistance and are therefore interested in taking part in the program. Their "stories," as well as the stories of community members willing to contribute, would be elicited in advance. These stories would then be used as narratives and as a basis for developing simulations and other materials (such as checklists, or diagnostic tools) to be used during the training.

Using the specific conflicts facing the community leader-participants to develop context-specific materials and training for community leaders would, we think, be challenging because the context — whether an inner-city neighborhood or a Bedouin village, as in our examples — may be rather alien to designers and trainers. Nevertheless, given the needs of disadvantaged communities and the likelihood of improving negotiated outcomes in what are otherwise socially costly conflict situations, we believe that testing executive training of the kind proposed here is worth the investment of effort and resources.

NOTES

1. We define civic capacity in this article as the ability to leverage knowledge and assets to connect effectively to, and rally, community members, as well as to connect to outside people, institutions, and resources.

2. We have adapted for our purpose the term KSAs, coined by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration in their federal job application processes (see, e.g., <http://www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm> or http://www.doleta.gov/jobs/Federal_Application_Process/Knowledge_Skills_Abilities/).

3. This difference can be observed in the intensity and realism students inject in a role play about a used car sale compared to the sometimes surprising indifference they display toward the relatively higher stakes of role plays involving interorganizational negotiations that are outside their experience.

4. For example, a young gang member in the Benning Terrace community in Washington, DC was shot while coming out of his apartment building on Christmas day. It signaled to the community that the violence was out of control.

5. Conflict interveners were advocates for the process, in which both parties are treated in the same way. However, as “insider-partials” (Lederach 1997), the interveners were also clear about advocating for certain relationship changes as well as changes in oppressive institutional structures.

6. To date, the truce between that generation of gang members may have held, but there has been gang-related violence resulting in deaths in recent years. ACM has arranged other gang truces since then.

7. The Islamic Movement in Israel is a movement that advocates Islam among Israeli Arabs. It operates on three levels: religious (Islamic education, religious service), social (welfare services), and political. Politically the movement is split into two branches: the southern faction headed by Sheikh Abdallah Darwish, the founder of the movement, who opted for joining Israeli national politics (and the leader profiled is affiliated to this southern faction), and the extreme northern branch led by Sheikh Ra' id Salah, who has chosen opposition to the State of Israel and support for Hamas and Palestinian terrorism.

8. “Followers” seems an inadequate designation for those who responded to the ACM initiatives. Gang members, community residents, and public officials were not so much followers in a broad sense; rather, they were susceptible to being influenced by ACM. In the Bedouin communities, community members indeed “follow” the designated leader in a more general sense — more so when his internal and external negotiation skills are effective.

9. Several authors have overlapping definitions of human needs (e.g., Maslow 1943; Burton 1990).

REFERENCES

- Avruch, K. 2009. What is training all about? *Negotiation Journal* 25(2): 161-169.
- Ben-David, Y. 1982. Stages in the development of the Bedouin spontaneous settlement in the Negev. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Geography, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem (Hebrew).
- Bernard, P. Forthcoming. Beyond distributive and integrative bargaining to principled negotiation based on shared cultural values. In *Rethinking negotiation teaching*, edited by C. Honeyman, J. Coben, and G. De Palo.
- — —. 2009. Bringing soul to international commercial ADR. *Negotiation Journal* 25(2): 147-159.
- Burns, J. M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Burton, J. 1990. *Conflict resolution and prevention*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Bush, R. A. and J. P. Folger. 1994. *The promise of mediation: Responding to conflict through empowerment and recognition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Elliott, M. and S. Kaufman. 2003. Building civic capacity to resolve environmental conflicts. *Environmental Practice* 5(3): 265-272.
- Fox, K. Forthcoming. Negotiation as a post-modern process. In *Rethinking negotiation teaching*, edited by C. Honeyman, J. Coben, and G. De Palo.
- Gardner, J. W. 1990. *On leadership*. New York: The Free Press.
- Lederach, J. P. 1997. *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington, DC: USIP Press.
- Maslow, A. H. 1943. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review* 50: 370-396.
- Meir, A. 1990. Provision of public services to the post-nomadic Bedouin society in Israel. *The Service Industries Journal* 10: 768-785.
- — —. 1999. Local government among marginalized ex-nomads: The Israeli Bedouin and the state. In *Marginality in space: Past, present and future*, edited by H. Jussila, R. Majoral, and C. Mutambirwa. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Nolan-Haley, J. and E. Gmurzynska. Forthcoming. The body/soul connector in negotiation ethics. In *Rethinking negotiation teaching*, edited by C. Honeyman, J. Coben, and G. De Palo.
- Parker, T., 2001. Interview by W. Warfield, September 26, Washington, DC.
- Pruitt, D. G. and S. H. Kim. 2004. *Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate, and settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Shmueli, D. 2008. Environmental justice in the Israeli context. *Environment and Planning A* 40(10): 2384-2401.

-
- Smith, H. and M. Ariadne. 1999. *Teen violence: Seeking solutions*. South Carolina Educational Television Network. Hedrick Smith Productions. Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities and Sciences.
- Volpe, M. and J. Cambria. Forthcoming. Negotiation nimbleness when cultural differences are unidentified and unidentifiable. In *Rethinking negotiation teaching*, edited by C. Honeyman, J. Coben, and G. De Palo.
- Warfield, W. 1993. Public policy conflict resolution: The nexus between culture and process. In *Conflict resolution theory and practice: Integration and application*, edited by J. D. Sandole and H. van der Merwe. London: Manchester Press.
- Woodson, R. 2001. President of the National Center for Neighborhood Alliance. Interviewed by W. Warfield, October 3, Washington, DC.