Politics Is about Relationship

A Worldview for the Citizens' Century

Harold H. Saunders

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PREFACE: A PERSONAL ESSAY

This book presents the worldview and paradigm behind a comprehensive process for transforming destructive and dysfunctional relationships into constructive relationships to build peace and to advance social, economic, and political development. We now call that body of thought and practice the Sustained Dialogue® System. It comprises elements described fully in Chapters One through Four.

Most of those elements are conceptualizations of my intense involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace process in the 1970s and, after I left government in 1981, Cold War dialogue. Those conceptualizations have been tested and refined through hundreds of hours of Sustained Dialogue. This book now places those conceptualizations in the context of extensive reading about the twentieth-century paradigm shifts in the physical and life sciences that have fundamentally changed our Western worldview.

First was my intensive involvement as a senior U.S. diplomat in the Arab-Israeli peace process in the seven years after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, mentioned briefly in the Acknowledgments. A small U.S. team under three presidents and secretaries of state mediated six Arab-Israeli agreements. These included the three Kissinger "shuttle" interim agreements of 1974–75, the two framework documents known together as the Camp David accords in 1978, and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979.

The "shuttles" were the centerpiece of a relentless political process. Trip after trip was made to the Middle East to prepare the ground for intensive mediation in which we "shuttled" daily on Air Force Two between Jerusalem and Cairo or Damascus and consulted in other Arab capitals. On the Israeli-Syrian shuttle, we made twenty-six roundtrips in thirty-five days. It was the only time in my life when I asked myself whether I could stay on my feet. We began by calling what we were doing the "negotiating process." When we saw how the first agreement between Egypt and Israel in January 1974 and the persistent U.S. commitment affected the political environment in the Middle East— creating a sense of the possibility of change—we began calling it the "peace process."

During those seven grueling years—and my wife had died in October 1973, the day before the war broke out—I learned four lessons:

- The power of a continuous political process to transform relationships.
- The importance of the human dimension of conflict. One could not deal with the survivors of the Holocaust, the Palestinians who had lost their homes in 1948, or the Arabs who had been humiliated in two previous wars without realizing we were dealing with people in pain.
- The importance not just of what governments do, but also of the interaction of whole bodies politic. Sadat's visit to Israel in November 1977 was not a trip to negotiate. I believe he said to himself: "The stalemate results not from the inability of the U.S. to draft terms of reference for a peace conference; the obstacle is that no Israeli believes an Arab state will accept Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East. In the peroration of his speech to the Israeli Knesset (parliament) after defining the issues that blocked agreement, he said:

> Yet there remains another wall. This wall constitutes a psychological barrier between us, a barrier of suspicion, a barrier of fear, of deception....It is this psychological barrier which I described...as constituting 70 percent of the whole problem.
>
> Today through my visit to you, I ask why don't we stretch out our hands with faith and sincerity so that together we might destroy this barrier?[1]

I have always felt that this speech so affected the Israeli people that they figuratively gave their government "permission" to explore negotiation of peace with Egypt. Sadat had addressed the whole Israeli body politic, not to mention that of the United States.

- By the end of the decade as we turned to the Palestinian problem, I recognized that a process like this unfolds in stages. Some things need to be done before others are possible. As the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations unfolded, observers became accustomed to diplomats negotiating texts, soldiers working on maps to arrange redeployment schedules, leaders signing agreements. When we began talks in the spring of 1979 on creating the Palestinian authority envisioned in the Camp David accords, journalists began asking, "When will the negotiations begin?" My answer was, "Not soon; they don't even recognize each other's existence yet."

A fuller account of the Peace Process may be found in the new Appendix.

When I left government in 1981, the one thing I could take with me was the idea of a "peace process." As I began writing from my experience, I reflected on the implications of that experience.

The first piece I published was a review in the *Harvard Law Review* of the now classic book by the late Roger Fisher and Bill Ury, *Getting to YES*, a book on "principled negotiation." My message was: "Negotiation is an essential tool in resolving disputes, but it is only one part of a larger process. Breaking through stubborn standoffs and getting to negotiation may be even more difficult than 'getting to yes' once negotiation has begun....the barriers to international agreement in the prenegotiation phase—feelings of fear, suspicion, anger, and rejection—require different treatment. Nations and peoples are divided not only by differences over rationally definable interests, but also by deeply rooted convictions about what they need to achieve: security, identity, dignity, honor, and justice."[2]

Then in 1985, I published my book on the Arab-Israeli peace process. I drew my title from Sadat's speech to the Israeli Knesset: *The Other Walls: The Politics of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process.*[3] It was not the story of negotiated agreements. It was a picture of the identities of the peoples involved in the conflict—what they feared, what they hoped for, how those fears blocked mediation and negotiation. It was about the human dimensions of the conflict. "If I ever forget that I am dealing with people in pain," I had said to myself at one particularly difficult moment in 1974, "I will not be doing my job as a diplomat."

I described the peace process as a five-stage process and characterized it as a series of agreements between governments but embedded in a larger political process. It was in that larger process that relationships changed. It was the interaction between the official and public levels that we on the Kissinger shuttles in early 1974 intended to capture in coining the phrase, "peace process," in contrast to our earlier phrase, "negotiating process."

Beginning to probe the human dimension of the peace process in that book, I wrote a chapter on each of the central parties to the Arab-Israeli peace process to illustrate how focusing on human obstacles might enrich the official peace process. At the same time, I published an article building from my review of the Fisher-Ury book, "We Need a Larger Theory of Negotiation: The Importance of the Pre-Negotiating Phases,"[4] emphasizing steps in the often-long periods before negotiation that could overcome human obstacles to negotiation. This was often work done in the nongovernmental arena, where I was gaining experience.

Second, the Cold War dialogue took place in the context of the Dartmouth Conference, the longest continuous bilateral dialogue between Soviet, now Russian, and U.S. citizens, having begun in 1960.

As of this writing, one hundred and thirty-five three-day meetings have been held under the Dartmouth umbrella over fifty-three years. I have co-moderated some one hundred of them. They have included a continuous Soviet/Russian-U.S. dialogue group focusing in one form or another on the bilateral relationship. Between 1993 and 2005, we conducted thirty-seven meetings of a dialogue among factions in the civil war in Tajikistan. Between 2001 and 2005, we conducted nine meetings of a dialogue engaging participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno Karabakh to address a long-standing conflict among them.

Those experiences moved me beyond the traditional so-called realist paradigm and "politics is about power" mantra of late twentieth-century U.S. political science, with power defined as coercion and control. They triggered my broader reading to discover what confirming insights I might find for my own conceptualizations.

Between 1985 and 1991, I wrote a number of papers, articles, and chapters developing a new paradigm that would include citizens outside government in the peace process. I had concluded that until leaders and citizens could see the world around them through lenses appropriate to the changing world, they would not act differently. I shaped a concept of relationship to give analytical and operational rigor to transforming the dysfunctional relationships that often blocked peace.

In 1991, I began to think of dialogue sustained over time as developing through a discernible progression of experiences in which relationships were transformed. In 1993, a Russian colleague and I published the first version of the five-stage dialogue process under the title, "A Public Peace Process," to distinguish it as a citizens' rather than an official process.

In the mid-1990s, I began to speak of the "multilevel peace process" to include both the official and the public processes but also to recognize the key role of what we were by then calling "civil society." A precipitating moment came in 1996 in a dialogue among participants from different factions in the civil war in the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan. One participant, then a member of a joint (government and opposition) commission to oversee cease-fire agreements, described in the dialogue how the commission had worked with field commanders, local notables, and municipal authorities in negotiating a regional cease-fire. After his account, another participant reflected: "The reason cease-fires have broken down is that they have been negotiated at the highest political level without reference to local citizens with the guns and the interests at stake. What we need is a multilevel peace process that connects the local and the official levels."[5]

On a related track, I had been associated since 1982 with the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio, and Washington, DC, which focuses on the politics of citizens outside government dealing with their communities' problems. During my government years working with five U.S.

presidents and other world leaders since 1961, I had become vividly aware of the necessary sensitivity of a president to what citizens regarded as important. This was a level of politics that reached beyond parties and legislatures—although obviously closely connected. That level of politics led me to the first subtitle of my book on the official peace process, *The Politics of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*. As I got to know the Kettering Foundation in the 1980s, I saw in their work on citizens' politics a concept of politics that resonated strongly with my own experience.

In 1999, after almost two decades of intensive participation in nonofficial dialogues, I published *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts*.[6]

I conceptualized the "public peace process" as a five-stage process of systematic dialogue over time among citizens enmeshed in "deep-rooted human conflicts." I presented this as the instrument of citizens outside government—Sustained Dialogue—for dealing with conflicts not ready for formal mediation or negotiation. It is the citizens' counterpart to the formal instruments of statecraft—diplomacy, mediation, negotiation. Participants are members of what I called "the policy-influencing community"—members of groups that could influence policy and the course of events.

This is a book about "whole human beings in whole bodies politic." It states the need for a conceptual framework—a paradigm—for the study, teaching, and practice of politics that includes all levels of the multilevel political process, including citizens at the "grass roots." To repeat, only when leaders and citizens have lenses that bring events into focus will they act effectively. The prevailing paradigm for the past two generations or more has focused on states and governments; it left out most of the world's people. This book suggests a wider angle lens—a broader paradigm—to recognize citizens outside government as political actors. I call it the *relational paradigm*.

Since 2002, this body of thought and practice called the Sustained Dialogue® System has been vested in the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, a not-for-profit organization that I incorporated in collaboration with the Kettering Foundation. In addition to continuing our work in the Dartmouth Conference task force, we have conducted one dialogue involving five Americans, five western Europeans, and twelve Muslim political reformers from the Near East and another dialogue involving citizens from across the political spectrum in Iraq at the height of their civil war. Between 2000 and 2005 we worked with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa. One of the Sustained Dialogue Institute's programs, which began in 1999, is the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network. As of this writing, the Campus Network works with students on some forty college campuses in the United States, Central America, and Africa who engage in dialogue on such divisive issues as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and religion. And we are beginning to work in U.S. communities.

As I reflect on my experience in the 1970s and 1980s, I can now identify more precisely roots of my present thinking, which is a conceptualization of that experience repeatedly tested and deepened in the years since.

The concept of relationship has been increasingly important in my thinking since the early 1980s. Experience demonstrates that focusing on relationship enlarges the frame for policymaking and action—whether by officeholders or citizens outside government. I have tried to enlist the help of scholars in probing the dynamic process of continuous interaction within, between, and among groups—their relationships—as a focus for research. Rarely have I found readiness to tackle *interaction*—relationship—as something happening *between* the parties to an interaction and worthy of focus in its own right. Yet, intensive experience in the Arab-Israeli peace process in the 1970s and in sustained dialogues since taught me that it is possible to conduct that process of *interaction* so as to change conflictual and dysfunctional relationships. I am told that the winds of change are blowing in the social sciences. I hope this book will bring forward some allies.

My purpose is to introduce the relational paradigm and to offer evidence that it makes a difference in the lives of citizens. I invite readers to explore this proposition with me.

One further personal comment is necessary. The more I recognized my purpose as introducing a new political paradigm, the more I needed to understand how a paradigm shift takes place.

Since a major shift had taken place in physics at the turn of the twentieth century, I read Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.*[7] Most exciting for me as I read more about twentieth-century science was that physicists as well as biologists were replacing the precepts of the worldview rooted in Newtonian and Enlightenment thinking with principles very close to those that had emerged from my experience in the Arab-Israeli peace process and subsequent nonofficial dialogues. Since the broader cultural worldview is more likely than a political paradigm to affect how citizens act, I felt it essential to devote a chapter to "a proper world view, appropriate for its time."[8] It turned out to be the perfect introduction to the relational paradigm and the concept of relationship that are central to this book.

In including that chapter, I risk flak from all directions. A rigorous analyst-practitioner I try to be, but not a scientist. At the same time, since our worldview underlies how we relate to each other, it seemed important to be explicit about the worldview that lies behind the relational paradigm. I also found it affirming that insights I had come to through experience seemed parallel to insights from a quite different realm of experience.

In taking this step, I found comfort in the words of physicist and Nobel Laureate the late Richard Feynman in a public lecture in 1963: "In talking about the impact of ideas in one field on ideas in another field,

one is always apt to make a fool of oneself." Then he plowed ahead as a "citizen-scientist" to speak about "how society looks to me."[9] Perhaps that is humanity at its most authentic—speaking from experience, both personal and professional.

Let us—citizens all—now turn the pages.

HAROLD H. SAUNDERS
International Institute for Sustained
Dialogue and the Kettering Foundation
Washington, DC
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INTRODUCTION

Meeting the Challenges of a World Divided: Engaging Whole Bodies Politic

Our country and our world are deeply divided. Too many people have lost the capacity to listen thoughtfully, to talk respectfully, and to relate constructively. A culture of dialogue generated and sustained over time by citizens outside government is critical to peace and to equitable and sustainable economic, political, and social development.

The challenges of our troubled world require political—not just technical—responses. In this book, I present an approach to political life that taps humankind's greatest untapped resource—human beings themselves, the citizens of our world. Its organizing insight is that some things only governments can do—negotiate binding agreements, make and enforce laws, provide for the common defense, fund public projects and programs. But some things only citizens outside government can do—transform conflictual human relationships, modify human behavior, and change political culture. As I have often said, only governments can negotiate peace treaties, but only people can make peace.

The prevalent approach to the study and practice of politics has been to focus on the structures of power and their elites. Power has been defined as control or the ability to coerce. I suggest ways for citizens outside those structures to think about political life, peace, and sustainable development that enable them to find dignity and the capacity to change what they need to change. I offer a human framework for citizens to use in naming their problems and engaging fellow citizens in tackling them. I describe instruments within their reach. These are the essence of democracy.

"What is it that the poor reply when asked what might make the greatest difference in their lives? They say, organizations of their own so that they may negotiate with government, with traders, and with nongovernmental organizations. Direct assistance through community-driven programs so that they may shape their own destinies. Local ownership of funds, so that they may put a stop to corruption. They want nongovernmental organizations and governments to be accountable to

them. . . . These are strong voices, voices of dignity."[1] These words introduce a courageous World Bank study titled *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* These are the voices of citizens outside normal power structures reaching for political engagement.

As John Gaventa writes so cogently in the Foreword, "At the heart of this book is an important core proposition: when aware of their rights and agency, and when organized with others, citizens have the power and capacity to bring about fundamental and lasting change." Looking ahead to this book's call for a new paradigm, he adds: "While the idea of citizen-driven change has been around for a long time, it still stands in sharp contrast to many other paradigms which dominate public affairs."

The conceptual lenses we use to understand events determine how we act. Achieving a fresh way of understanding the world around us requires new conceptual lenses to bring a rapidly changing world into focus. Thus we must spend some time reflecting on how we think about politics. Please bear with me. Finally, you will see the world through these new lenses and will have new tools in your hands.

People ask why I as a political practitioner write about such things as worldviews, paradigms, concepts, and political instruments. These are not as strange to us as they may sound; they are tools we all use daily to make sense of what happens around us; we just do not use those names. Working with five U.S. presidents and other world leaders convinced me that the conceptual lenses that leaders wear determine how they act. So it is for every citizen.

To act more productively, we must change our way of understanding how our public world works—a world that is falling behind in meeting its challenges. Helping each of us see the world through new lenses and demonstrating that these can change how we act are this book's aims.

The Challenges

Five challenges top the human agenda at the beginning of the twenty-first century. You may add your own. Responses to all depend on citizens outside government as well as on the governments *they* constitute.

First is whether and, if so, how people of different racial, ethnic, cultural, historic, and economic backgrounds can coexist peacefully, justly, and productively. Can they live and work together, or must they segregate into different social and political entities? Large multiethnic units have greater populations, land areas, resources, economies of scale, and energy from diverse traditions. More homogenous single-ethnic units offer comfort zones where people live with others like themselves. Peoples in the twentieth century made vastly different choices, ranging from Yugoslavia's breakup to South Africa's transformation and the anxious but glacial consolidation of the European Union. Whatever the specific arrangements, the choice is between a productive peace and

dehumanization and destruction. How such choices are framed, made, and executed is the essence of politics.

Second, the gap between the rich and the poor widens—both within and between countries. Governments frame solutions in economic and bureaucratic terms, not in political and human terms. Instead of collaborating to channel the resources turned loose by globalization, demonstrators simply rail against it, and managers do not see beyond their own gain. Societies are increasingly fragmented, crime-ridden, and violent; we neglect the power of citizens to build whole bodies politic worthy of defining their identity. Countries clash, and we talk in diplomatic language, not as citizens who care and want to try to change. Sustainable and just economic development requires building productive relationships within and across polities.

Third, ideological gulfs within and between societies widen and deepen. The attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, in Israel, Indonesia, Spain, and a mounting number of other countries demonstrate that alienation, hopelessness, ideological extremism, and anger can be expressed in devastating ways by tightly organized, committed, and marginalized individuals. Why do people become terrorists? While often well-educated leaders pursue their own ideological fanaticism, those who face this question daily say young people are drawn into extremist groups by loss of hope—hope of meaningful work, hope of a voice in their future, hope of dignity, inclusion, and purpose. The challenge to polities is political—creating an environment that offers dignity and realistic engagement to all. A violent response alone cannot make the world either more peaceful or more just.

Fourth, we are taxing the earth beyond its ability to sustain us. Since 1972, periodic global conferences have placed the environment on the global agenda and urged multilateralism to protect it. Their cry: "Protection of the environment is a noble endeavor in itself. But the survival of the environment is also the strategic basis of human survival. . . . The protection of Earth must go hand in hand with measures to fight poverty and enhance human dignity and security. Development and environment are interlinked."[2]

Reports leading up to the Johannesburg summit in 2002 posed the challenge:

> Given current trends in production and consumption, social and environmental strains threaten to derail development efforts and erode living standards unless we design better policies and institutions. . . . If we stay on the road we are on, the signs do not appear very encouraging. By 2050 the world's annual output of carbon dioxide will have more than tripled, while 9 billion people—3 billion more than we have today and mostly living in developing countries—will be tapping into the earth's water, adding more stress on an already strained water supply. Food needs will more than double. . . . Globally 1.3 billion

people already live on fragile land—arid zones, wetlands, and forests—that cannot sustain them.[3]

The Rio summit in 1992 led to widespread national commitments "to protect one of the planet's most valuable natural resources: the tremendous variety and diversity of plant and animal species." Since, "…humanity is squandering this biological bounty at such a high rate that scientists describe the current era as the greatest period of mass extinction since the period of the dinosaurs."[4] Enough to say that the challenge is without adequate response. Technical remedies may meet some challenges, but we lack political capacity to right the balance.

Fifth, some see the new century as a crossroads for humankind, but governance falls far short of the challenge. In the words of Czech President Václav Havel: "It is not that we should simply seek new and better ways of managing society, the economy, and the world. The point is that we should fundamentally change how we behave."[5]

The global project of the twenty-first century is political: to engage citizens in and out of government in whole bodies politic in responding to these challenges. With some leap of faith, I have called this "The Citizens' Century." Only citizens can change political culture. Only citizens can decide to work and relate in different ways. Only by engaging the resources of whole bodies politic can we as citizens meet our challenges. Bodies politic that exclude or ignore much of their populations are not whole, nor are they engaging the full richness of resources they need to meet the challenges of this new century. Engaging whole bodies politic is both a practical and a moral imperative. This book is for all who feel compelled to engage in this project—beginning in our own communities.

Hear the words of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001: "In the 21st century I believe the mission of the United Nations will be defined by a new, more profound, awareness of the sanctity and dignity of every human life, regardless of race or religion. This will require us to look beyond the framework of states, and beneath the surface of nations or communities. We must focus, as never before, on improving the conditions of the individual men and women who give the state or nation its richness and character."[6]

If we are, in Havel's words, to "fundamentally change how we behave," we must begin by seeing the world—and politics—differently. We must change how we relate to others and deepen how we think about relationships.

Whole Bodies Politic

We need a way of understanding politics that embraces citizens both inside and outside government since each have work that only they can do. If we see them as parts of a whole dividing the labor, the challenge to each

group is to enlarge their own capacities—and then to stretch those capacities by learning to work together to build *whole* bodies politic.

Concretely, governments face more and more problems both internally and across borders that no government can deal with alone. Internally, they need new cooperation with and among their own citizens. Across borders, problems such as global warming, drug trafficking, disease, terrorism, global trade and investment, and environmental degradation require intergovernmental collaboration and the contribution of international nongovernmental groups. As a corollary, citizens outside government increasingly influence the policies of their governments and the interaction between bodies politic. The challenge is to find more effective and fairer ways of conducting relationships within and between bodies politic. The challenge is to develop, enrich, and sustain the relationships needed to deal with problems that no one group, government, or country can deal with alone and to overcome differences—often violently expressed—that would undercut their efforts.

Western democratic thought has evolved along two lines of concept and practice—not just one. One has focused on the machinery of democracy: principles such as one person/one vote; free and fair elections; protection of the fundamental civil rights of citizens; free and responsible media; checks and balances among units of government; independent judiciary. The second tradition focuses on the citizen as political actor—the citizen outside the structures of governmental power. It starts with a simple human proposition: "We have a problem; let's talk about it." It has roots in the forums of ancient Greece and Rome. It comes to us in the United States through our early town meetings and to peoples in other cultures and civilizations through their own traditions of dialogue.

In the late 1980s, as a new wave in the ongoing democratic revolution began, many of the political transformations resulted from citizens working together—from the "vote no" campaign against Chilean military dictator Augusto Pinochet to the demonstrations in Wenceslas Square and then a decade later in Belgrade. But rather than building political practices from that experience, these citizens—many of whom had never known a free and fair election—understandably turned to the machinery of democracy. They focused on written constitutions, political parties, parliaments, electoral machinery, respect for basic human and civil rights, and rule of law. This was understandable and important.

The great eye-opener of the mid-1990s, however, was the insight that one tradition without the other will not work—that both traditions must work hand in hand. Barely five years after the installation of democratic methods, we began to hear plaints such as the following from a woman who had played a key role in the "vote no" campaign in Chile: "When we had Pinochet, we as citizens could work together against him. But when we elected and installed a democratic government, those citizens

went back to pursuing their own interests and their own competitions with each other. Then they discovered that the government was not solving their problems. How can we bring the citizens back into the life of the country?"[7]

This book weaves these two threads of democratic thought into one tapestry depicting whole bodies politic. It starts from the second—citizens organizing to meet their challenges—but it certainly does not exclude government. It enters politics through an old but recently neglected door—the principle that citizens constitute government. This was the founding principle of the democratic revolution.

Whole Human Beings in Whole Bodies Politic

The only form of politics that will meet the challenges we face is one that engages *whole human beings* in all their complexities in whole bodies politic.[8] Too often over the past two centuries we have thought of human beings only in terms of part of who they are. First, we separated the rational and the emotional or intuitive, glorifying the former. Then we studied them as voters, consumers, managers, welfare recipients, workers, politicians jousting for power, or members of one ethnic group or religious persuasion.

Citizens are whole persons with multifaceted identities and interests. They have within them the capacity to commit the noblest acts and the most horrible atrocities—sometimes rational and calculating, sometimes far-seeing and compassionate, sometimes self-centered, narrow-minded, irrational, and bestial. They pursue interests integrating the material and the spiritual. We must focus on the politics of these whole human beings in and out of government interacting to meet life-and-death challenges to the whole body politic.

The new wave in the democratic revolution is slowed by two shoals. A purpose of this book is to help free that wave to realize its potential.

First, we do not have a large enough conceptual framework to bring together the two main lines of Western democratic thought in the right balance—the practices of democratic government and the potentially powerful capacities and energies of whole human beings outside government. In thinking about politics, people commonly focus heavily on institutions and organizations struggling for power—not on whole human beings as political actors or on the collaboration among these whole human beings outside and inside government.

Second, we are suffering a crisis in the conduct of relationships. Neither government nor civil society is strong in its own right because citizens in and out of government are not conducting their relationships in productive ways.[9] They wrestle over competing interests rather than building relationships to meet their challenges. The 9/11 Commission spotlighted

the failure of intelligence agencies to cooperate fully; in my view this was a failure of human beings to relate—not primarily a structural problem with structural solutions. The growing polarization and paralysis in the United States Congress since 2009 and the government shutdown in 2013—not to mention the deepening divisions in the American body politic—are dramatic examples. Relationships involve whole human beings with multiple and even conflicting interests, who nevertheless are willing to seek and find bases from which to work together for the public good.

Some scholars have turned their attention to human motivation and basic human needs and, eventually, to the implications of these for resolving deep-rooted human conflict in political life. Psychologist A. H. Maslow in the 1940s, for instance, called attention to basic human needs such as physiological (food); safety; love, affection, belongingness; self-respect and the esteem of others that grows from capacity and achievement; and self-actualization (self-fulfillment).[10] From the late 1960s, John Burton, an Australian diplomat turned scholar, brought that focus on basic human needs—rather than sole attention to interests—into the budding field of conflict resolution as he and others developed processes of dialogue to probe the human roots of conflict and enable conflicting parties to transform their relationships.[11]

It is time to integrate the human dimension—whole human beings—fully into the study of whole bodies politic. The study and practice of politics today does not yet reflect the full range of thought and practice humanity requires to survive and to improve quality of life for all. The present practice of politics—mostly through institutions—has alienated citizens outside these institutions in country after country. Citizens too often do not relate peacefully or productively. This is a human or political—not a structural—problem.

While this chapter was being drafted initially, a remarkable op-ed piece appeared in the *International Herald Tribune*. It was written jointly by the president of the World Bank, the chairman and chief executive officer of Conservation International, and the head of the Global Environment Facility under the title, "How Biodiversity Can Be Preserved if We Get Smart Together." Three extracts underscore my point:

> ...overall we are failing to stem the lethal dynamic of chronic poverty and growing population, which is destroying species a thousand times faster than ever before....
>
> ...for poor people in the developing world...conserving biodiversity is not just about long-term welfare. It is about survival, because so many of them depend on the habitats that support biodiversity for their daily needs.
>
> If we are to make a real difference, we must involve poor people and communities more centrally in the management of their lives and the stewardship of our shared natural resources.[12]

To paraphrase in the terms of this introduction, institutions alone will not solve the problems of humanity; only if the human beings whose lives are at stake become involved is there a chance of resolving them.

In the same *International Herald Tribune,* three of the six main front page headlines were: "A Tamil Guerrilla's Story, Starting at Age 7," topping a picture of an attractive fourteen-year-old girl; "Digging for Roots of Youth Racism in Eastern Germany"; and "American TV's New Stars: Rapists and Murderers." These in one of the world's outstanding and responsible newspapers dramatize the violent dimension of failed politics.

A Conceptual Framework for Whole Human Beings in Whole Bodies Politic

To repeat, the approach to the study and practice of politics prevalent for two generations at the end of the twentieth century has focused on government and other political institutions such as political parties and interest groups— the structures and wielders of power. In internal affairs, the mantra has been "politics is about power" with power defined as control or the ability to coerce. In international politics, we have spoken of the "realist paradigm" or "power politics model" focusing on states pursuing objectively defined interests in zero-sum contests of power with other nation-states.

This book presents new conceptual lenses—new assumptions about how the world works, a new political paradigm, and an operational concept with a practical instrument for putting that paradigm to practical use. The paradigm and the assumptions behind it are the starting point for changing how we act.

The proposed paradigm: *politics is a cumulative, multilevel, and open-ended process of continuous interaction over time engaging significant clusters of citizens in and out of government and the relationships they form to solve public problems in whole bodies politic across permeable borders, either within or between communities or countries.* This focus on a *multilevel process of continuous interaction among citizens* contrasts to the traditional focus on a linear sequence of actions and reactions among institutions as in a chess game. Continuing *interactions* are the essence of that process. What is important are the interplay and inter-penetration between entities—not just the action by one on another.

To capture this process of continuous interaction, I have used the human word *relationship,* carefully defined in terms of five components. It is a diagnostic tool because it enables practitioners to organize the elements of complex interactions for analysis. It is an operational tool because practitioners can get inside each component of relationship to change it.

This paradigm and the concept of relationship bring human beings— citizens outside as well as inside government and related institutions—into

the study and practice of political life. That does not denigrate the importance of states and governments. I spent twenty-five years in government and am proud of many of our accomplishments. Government remains one of the most important instruments that citizens can build and use in solving their problems. By itself, however, government is not enough. Citizens need their own instruments. The paradigm, the concept of relationship, and the instrument of dialogue broaden our focus to include the rich resources of whole bodies politic.

I am not alone in the search for a new paradigm. Underneath the surface of the old paradigm, many social scientists and practitioners have been working their way toward a new conceptual framework, building from the realities they encountered and often instinctively using language resonant with the paradigm proposed here.[13] Listen to a few of the actors whom you will meet in later chapters:

A citizen of Tajikistan, the poorest of the former Soviet republics: "The government has neither the capacity nor the resources to put every town in our country on its feet economically. If anyone is going to do that job, the citizens of the towns themselves will have to do it."[14]

A strategist of the resistance to apartheid in South Africa: "There was a picture of change made up of more than just who sits in power. There was a complex understanding about what the nature of change would be. If you see your objective as dismantling one system and replacing it with another, change is of a holistic order. In the first instance, yes, you have to have access to political power; in the second instance, that access would allow you to have the resources, the authority, and the legislative means to introduce other changes; third, that would have to be underpinned by changes in the economy; fourthly, there would be a social element to this change which involved a change in relationships—the development of a nonracial culture, reconciliation of sorts between black and white, introducing a new set of values which would enable people to respect each other, to accept each other as equals, etc."[15]

Or a citizen of West Virginia: "When people come together for the common good, power springs up there."[16]

In early 2012, one working group in the most comprehensive study of East–West relations since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975—the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative—addressed the fundamental problem:

...an unprecedented pace of change...[has] transformed the relationships between those who govern and those who are governed...the[se] changes have unleashed new energies and capacities of citizens outside government....

...the overall approach in both East and West has been to ignore the need for the involvement of civil society....Efforts...to build fruitful cooperation through the tools of traditional diplomacy...have failed....Our most important recommendation is that...the vastly changed social, economic, and political landscape brought about by the emergence of new and rapidly expanding forms of civic participation must take a central place in defining our efforts....There is a clear need to go beyond governments...and to find means of building support for peace among elites and the wider publics of conflicting parties...expansion of traditional diplomacy to include Dartmouth-style Track II dialogue, "next generation" meetings, and use of social media to prepare the peoples involved for accommodation and development of a non zero-sum narrative should be employed to alter the present dynamic.[17]

In this report, former foreign ministers, ambassadors, and senior private sector executives said, in effect, that our traditional ways of thinking about politics are inadequate.

This book is written with the hope that we can find common purpose across this spectrum of scholars and practitioners in meeting the challenges humankind faces. The success of our attempt depends heavily on recognizing that there is nothing more authentic than the experience of whole human beings tackling their most difficult challenges in whole bodies politic. Experience nurtures a different way of knowing. I have had a career in which analytical rigor was demanded of me—writing options papers for five presidents, drafting disengagement and peace agreements between governments that parliaments ratified, and working in sustained dialogues with those whose groups have hated, dehumanized, and killed each other. I know of no fuller way to understand political life than to plumb the complexity of human experience.

The formulation of a new paradigm reflects a broadening of approach that embraces important thinking from the past; it does not reject past concepts. It responds to new problems not earlier addressed. Albert Einstein and his fellow physicists did not reject Newtonian physics; they discovered that—while it remained accurate in addressing the visible world—it did not explain the subatomic world. So today, past thinking about institutional politics provides much insight into that part of political life, but it is not broad enough to embrace whole human beings in whole bodies politic.

A Concept of Governance in Whole Bodies Politic

Having proposed what I call the *relational paradigm* as a conceptual framework for whole human beings interacting in whole bodies politic, I want to go one step further and introduce a concept to help us analyze and develop the effectiveness of those interactions. From experience in watching bodies politic fail to achieve their potential, I have taken a familiar word and given it new meaning for the Citizens' Century.

According to most dictionaries, the word *governance* is defined as *government*. I have joined a few others to give it broader meaning as we shift our attention to whole bodies politic.

As a framework for analysis, I suggest—and a few others are moving in this direction—thinking of a body politic as embracing five components: government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), business, informal associations that citizens form to pursue their interests, and the norms and practices that govern the interactions among the other components. The manner in which these elements interact defines the "governance" of a body politic. The focus is on the *interaction*. Do they act in authoritarian, competitive, or conflictual ways? Or do they interact in complementary or collaborative ways respecting such principles as reciprocity? The question is not only whether government can attend effectively to the needs of citizens but also whether citizens can interact productively to do the work that only they can do. The norms and practices that govern the totality of those interactions may grow out of years of experience, or they may need to be negotiated as in the wake of a revolution or the sudden overthrow of an authoritarian regime.

Effective, creative, and just government is, of course, a key actor in promoting development, but as the citizens in later chapters have said, government cannot do it all. Sustainable, just, and equitable development requires constructive interactions among all elements of a body politic—good *governance*.

The Line of March in This Book

The author of the new Foreword, John Gaventa, sets the stage by throwing a spotlight on "the notion of citizen-centered and citizen-driven change" as "a core proposition" of this book. He writes from experience at the Highlander Research and Education Center as an educator of workers in the Civil Rights Movement and from years of research and now as Director of the Coady International Institute educating men and women around the world engaged in development. He prepares us for "a paradigm that considers politics and power to be about broad citizen engagement in the public sphere, not only about the coercive power of elites in relation to the state." This Introduction has used the language of "whole human beings in whole bodies politic" instead of the traditional state-centered language. This new edition is thus explicitly planted in the field of social, political, and economic change and development broadly defined.

The Acknowledgments and Preface describe the roots of the thinking in this book in my lifetime of learning from experience. The worldview and paradigm presented here are my conceptualization of experience now

planted through my study in the rich soil of the scientific revolutions of the past century and a half.

To develop our insights, I pursue a progression of questions in the chapters that follow. These questions shape the three parts through which the book develops:

Following this Introduction's posing of the challenge, chapters one and two describe *our starting points.* Given the challenge, what is the thinking that has shaped our responses? In chapter one, how have scholars and citizens outside government thought about politics? In chapter two, how have other thinkers—especially the physical and life scientists and some practitioners—shaped an alternative worldview?

Chapters three and four explain *the new paradigm and the concept of relationship* through which that paradigm reveals itself, is studied, and can be put into practice. They are a conceptualization of experience in the last third of the twentieth century. They offer the new lenses that I believe are essential to ways of relating that are necessary to meet the challenges of this century.

Chapters five through the new chapter eleven respond to the inevitable questions: *What difference does it make to think this way? How is dialogue appropriate to this new way of thinking?* Chapter five lays out a framework for analysis built around the concept of relationship and identifies instruments of change that citizens uniquely use within the relational paradigm and the concept. Chapters six—eleven test the paradigm and the concept of relationship against a range of significant recent experiences to suggest both a systematic way of organizing analysis of real-world situations and ways of using that analysis to change relationships.

The final chapter presents closing thoughts in reflecting on exactly *what makes this difference* and on the effect of "a different way of thinking— another way of relating."

Because words such as *worldview, paradigm, concept,* and *instrument* are often used in different ways, I want to explain the simple meanings that I assign to them.

Our *worldview* determines how we instinctively think about experience. It is the collection of assumptions about how the world and human interaction work that most of us absorb in childhood and carry through life in our minds, almost without recognizing them. It is the mental filter that helps human beings organize and give meaning to their experience. It shapes our way of thinking about—interpreting—experience. It lies behind the habits, customs, rules by which we conduct our lives together. Often, we think of it as the culture that surrounds us. Do we see the world as a series of discrete actions and reactions, each to be analyzed? Or do we see a complex of interactions? Do we see a whole as a collection of parts or as more than the sum of its parts? Because it reflects our view of what is and what works, it shapes our view of truth. It provides a benchmark for judging what is effective and what is right. Chapters one and two describe the prevailing Western worldview at the end of the twentieth century

along with the elements of an alternative worldview that is the starting point for the paradigm proposed in chapters three and four.

A *paradigm* is a statement intended to provide a starting point for further analysis and more effective practice in a significant area of research and human life. What is the focus of research? What do we need to understand more deeply in order to act more constructively? As one historian of science suggests, it "defines the legitimate problems and methods of a research field" and is "sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for subsequent researchers to resolve."[18] For citizens, it can be the guide in their minds to where it will be most useful to apply their energies to achieve their goals. Research could suggest more effective political practices for citizens, or citizens' experience could pose perceptions of how politics works that call into question the starting point for scholarly analysis. The paradigm presented in chapter three suggests a starting point for research that would relate it more directly to the world that citizens experience and a way of interacting to make the most effective use of citizens' energies and capacities. It is conceptualized from this experience and continuously tested in it.

A *concept,* as used here, is a carefully defined idea that captures the essence of a paradigm in practical terms and provides a framework for analyzing complex experience or data and for acting in relation to them. The concept of relationship presented in chapter four—the centerpiece of this book—is laid out in human terms that citizens can use to understand everyday situations.

An *instrument,* in this discussion of political life, refers to possible ways in which citizens may organize themselves and their work to effect change. I think, for instance, of the Citizens' Political Process and the five-stage dialogue process employed by the Sustained Dialogue System, which are described later, as political instruments uniquely available to citizens.

With these words of introduction, we now turn in the next chapter to a fuller discussion of the traditional thinking about politics that the new paradigm seeks to enlarge.

Our Starting Points

A grove of aspen trees is said to be one of the world's largest organisms. Above ground, we see individual trees. Below ground, they are connected through one ever-spreading root system.

First glancing at the image above, we see a sturdy trunk carrying nourishment from those roots through the limbs to the leaves above, which in turn cleanse the surrounding atmosphere. On second look, we see that the lines defining the trunk also profile the faces of two persons in dialogue—a source of nourishment for social change. Aspens are often called "quaking aspens" because their leaves move constantly in the slightest breeze. One could imagine this motion as the energy and excitement of dialogue.

Our experience in the perceptual shift from trunk to faces is similar to the shock and struggle of shifting from one paradigm to another. We will see the network grow as we read more deeply into the paradigm shift. At the end, we will have trouble seeing anything but faces—dialogue.

CHAPTER ONE

Politics Is about . . . ?

If we are to talk about a new paradigm, scholars and practitioners together need to define our starting line—the prevailing paradigm's contributions and shortcomings and its underlying assumptions. As Thomas Kuhn says about paradigm shifts in science: "The decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgment leading to that decision involves the comparison of both paradigms with nature *and* with each other."[1] Starting points for thinking about the character of politics have varied widely. It is worth taking a few moments to situate the paradigm presented here in that larger spectrum.

On one side of the spectrum have been scholars of politics understandably concerned to define the study of politics as an academic discipline. Their need was to define their field rigorously so as to make research manageable and to distinguish it from others. As noted in the introduction, the prevailing mantra has been "politics is about power" with power defined as control or coercion. This approach led to a focus on institutional politics. Others in the field argued for a broader approach. Many in the field have defined problems in terms amenable to mathematical analysis.

Across the spectrum have been some political and other social scientists, philosophers, practitioners, and citizens at large who felt that the capacity of citizens outside the structures of power to relate constructively has been neglected, yet it is critical to human survival and progress. They have relied more on description and conceptualization of experience than on quantification.

I dare to suggest that the mantra of the second group might be "politics is about relationship," of which power is one component—only one and frequently not the most important. But this is the subject of the dialogue I hope this book will stimulate.

My own deep concern is that focus on the structures of power leaves out most of the world's citizens. Yet many of today's conflicts and problems are beyond the reach of governments acting alone. Power as traditionally defined—whether the power of office or the power of a gun—has proven

itself a deadly principle around which to organize politics. It is divisive, exclusive, and too often destructive.

That politics is a key to survival is captured elegantly by biologist John Moore: "Human beings are now making such extraordinary demands on the environment that the natural cycles can no longer provide a seemingly unlimited supply of resources....And the waste products of civilization now exceed the ability of the environment to deal with them effectively...Very difficult decisions will have to be made if we are to have a sustainable human society in a sustainable environment."[2] The character of politics will determine whether and how those "very difficult decisions" will be made.

All of us have an interest in conducting human affairs more productively. To engage in dialogue about a new paradigm, we need to lay out the assumptions about politics that underlie these two approaches. They are capsuled below.[3]

Politics Is about Power

This was the prevalent paradigm for much of two generations in the last two-thirds of the twentieth century. Listen to the giants in the field:

> Hans J. Morgenthau: "Domestic and international politics are but two different manifestations of the same phenomenon: the struggle for power."[4] Or: "The political actor seeks power, that is to say, he seeks to reduce his fellow man to a means for his ends."[5] Or still another: "When we speak of power, we mean man's control over the minds and actions of other men."[6]
>
> Harold D. Lasswell: "The experiential data of political science are acts considered as affecting or determining other acts, a relation embodied in the key concept of power. Political science, as an empirical discipline, is the study of the shaping and sharing of power...."[7] Or: "The study of politics is the study of influence and the influential.... The influential are those who get the most of what there is to get.... Those who get the most are *elite;* the rest are *mass.*"[8]
>
> Bertrand Russell: "In the course of this book I shall be concerned to prove that the fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics....Love of power, in its widest sense, is the desire to be able to produce intended effects upon the outer world, whether human or non-human."[9]

The political scientist differs from the practitioner partly in needing to define a field of study distinct enough from others to allow rigorous study whereas the practitioner focuses on human relationships and

practical problems. Even Hans Morgenthau cautions: "By making power its central concept, a theory of politics does not presume that none but power relations control political action. What it must presume is the need for a central concept which allows the observer to distinguish the field of politics from other social spheres, to orient himself in the maze of empirical phenomena which make up that field, and to establish a measure of rational order within it."

Morgenthau's distinction between economics and politics shows the scholar's need to define disciplinary boundaries in focusing research: "As economics is centered upon the concept of interest defined as wealth, its accumulation and distribution, so political science is centered upon the concept of interest defined as power, its accumulation, distribution, and control. A central concept, such as power, then provides a kind of rational outline of politics, a map of the political scene. Such a map does not provide a complete description of the political landscape as it is in a particular period of history. It rather provides the timeless features of its geography distinct from their ever changing historic setting."[10]

Toward the end of the twentieth century and beyond, some scholars— often outside the mainstream of U.S. political science—defined power more broadly. Listen to these different voices:

> Kenneth Boulding, "an economist and a Quaker" with interests reaching beyond any discipline: "My own interest in the problem of power goes back to a very early interest in the integration of the social sciences and the deep conviction that they are all studying the same thing, which is *the total social system,* from somewhat different perspectives....In social systems and human behavior there is a larger concept of power: To what extent, and how, can we get what we want? Within this there is a smaller concept of power, somewhat beloved by political scientists, which is our capacity to get other people to do things that contribute to what we want [emphasis added]."[11]
>
> Erwin A. Jaffe in a book with the human title, *Healing the Body Politic:* "...many Americans—including journalists and scholars— equate power with control or domination or influence....I do ask the reader, however, to set aside the formula 'power = control' and consider an earlier one: 'power = the ability, capacity, or faculty to do, to act, to accomplish something.'...The initiation and foundation of a polity depends upon recognition and acceptance of human beings' connections to one another....'Political power' is what human beings generate when they operate together to get things done as choosing, selecting, evolving, transforming beings."[12]
>
> In the early 1990s, Joseph Nye coined the phrase "soft power": "What is soft power? It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises through the

attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced."[13]

Anne-Marie Slaughter citing Lani Guinier: "From 'power over' to 'power with' is precisely the transformation from hierarchy to network, from hard power to soft power."[14]

Other political scientists moved across a spectrum in arguing for an even broader approach in defining their field of research. For instance: "While the academic discipline of Politics tends in general to focus on the narrowly 'political' institutions of government in a manner that may be more analytical, it nonetheless leaves out *most* collective human activities *within* modern states as well as in historical and contemporary non-state societies," wrote British scholar Adrian Leftwich in 1984.[15]

In the field of international politics, scholars have concentrated on state sovereignty, on government, and on power narrowly defined. For two-thirds of the twentieth century, events surrounding two world wars, a great depression, and the Cold War between nuclear superpowers supported this thinking. Even democracies increasingly relied on big governments to solve countries' social and economic problems. Elsewhere, authoritarian and totalitarian governments dominated.

The traditional paradigm in international affairs—the "power politics model" or "realist paradigm"—could be captured in a formulation like this: *leaders of nation states amass economic and military power to pursue objectively defined interests against other nation states in a zero-sum contest of material power.* The metaphor was the strategic chess game.

Three assumptions have been central to the realist paradigm. In the words of Robert Keohane: "(1) states (or city-states) are the key units of action; (2) they seek power, either as an end in itself or as a means to other ends; and (3) they behave in ways that are, by and large, rational, and therefore comprehensible to outsiders in rational terms."[16]

As Keohane notes, an important thread in this approach to politics has been the theory of the "rational actor" or "rational choice." As one scholar puts the point: "Rational choice is a simple idea: Actors do what they believe is in their best interest at the time they must choose."[17] Argument over how actors determine their best interest, what actions might support that interest, what the consequences of those actions might be, and so on has produced a mountain of literature and mathematical calculations in both political science and economics.

Underlying the prevalent political paradigm in the last half of the twentieth century was a worldview rooted in the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in Newtonian physics. The image of billiard balls colliding, exchanging energy with each collision, and moving away from each other according to Newton's laws of motion has been used to convey the essence of Newtonian physics as applied to the social and political world. "The balls are discrete, bounded objects; they have no permanent relationships; theirs is an individualistic universe," writes biologist Mary Clark.

> What happened in the West was that this same understanding of events as interactions between independent objects—so appropriate for a game of billiards—was extrapolated to all events, everywhere in the universe....
>
> ...It is relatively easy to frame an event in mathematical models if only one or two objects (or conditions) are varying....
>
> It is so convenient, it has even become *de rigueur* for those who study human societies and human nature...[in] disciplines that attempt to explain human behavior...now lumped together as the "social sciences." And in the standard tradition of the billiard-ball universe (also known as the "atomistic" or "individualistic" universe) human beings are imagined very much like independent, isolated, bounded objects having a variety of cause-and-effect "collisions" with each other.[18]

States and governmental and nongovernmental institutions have been the manageable units for study within the rules and methods of such a worldview.

Increasingly toward the end of the twentieth century, however, we recognized that governments alone cannot solve all problems, and the political upheavals of 1989–1991 demonstrated that active citizenries as critical parts of bodies politic can produce decisive change. Citizens outside government with no raw power toppled governments despite governments' material power.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, many in and out of academe are formulating new assumptions. I must be open in stating my own view: *A paradigm that limits thinking about politics to the actions of governments and institutions is incomplete. A paradigm that builds thinking about politics around the struggle for power defined as control cannot capture the complexity of human efforts to act together peacefully and constructively. A paradigm that leaves out most of the world's people can only be of limited use. Most important, such a paradigm ignores human resources critical to meeting the countless challenges to our survival.*

Politics Is about Relationship: Citizens' Capacity to Concert

Toward the other end of the range of approaches to the study of politics is another point of entry—and a different definition of power. This starts with the citizen—not the state, its leaders, and its institutions. Here we find numberless citizens outside formal structures of power with varying capacities to concert—to act together or in complementary ways that reinforce each other and can produce change.[19]

At this end of the spectrum, *politics is what happens when citizens outside government come together and build relationships to solve collective problems. Power—their capacity to influence the course of events—is generated by their capacity to concert.* This seems quite different from governments' power to control, to coerce, or to impose punishment or sanctions. The capacity to influence the course of events through an open-ended political process seems sharply different from "producing intended results."

In the words of one of the political scientists—Adrian Leftwich—who has argued for a broader approach: "Politics is *not* a separate realm of public life and activity. On the contrary, politics involves all the activities of cooperation and conflict, within and between societies, whereby the human species goes about organizing the use, production and distribution of human, natural and other *resources* in the course of the production and reproduction of its biological and social life."[20] Or, as David Mathews, president of the Kettering Foundation, puts the point succinctly: "Politics is not a separate area of life. It is not doing something different. It is doing what we do every day differently."[21]

Five ideas are basic to this view of politics: First is the concept of the citizen as a political actor. Second is the concept of civil society as the complex of associations that active citizens form and through which they interact with other groups to do their work and to extend their reach. Third is the view that politics is a cumulative, multilevel, open-ended process of continuous interaction—not just action and reaction—involving these citizens and associations. Fourth, the interactions of citizens around a particular problem seem to unfold and deepen through a progression of stages outlined below that I call the "Citizens' Political Process."[22] *Fifth, as I will discuss in more detail in chapter four, since citizens do not normally exercise power in the form of coercion, power in their context must be defined as the capacity through the relationships they form to influence the course of events.*

Through the Citizens' Political Process, a disparate collection of citizens taking responsibility to deal with problems can form itself into an engaged public with capacity to change the course of events. The process, in effect, provides the public space in which citizens can come together to make the choices and form the relationships and associations within the civil society that they need to solve their problems in the larger body politic. That public space is the physical and psychological space where each citizen can feel he or she belongs, which is not the territory of any single faction. It is psychological in that participants experience the views and feelings of other citizens in a way that creates a new context for personal thought and a different way of relating. By working within that process, citizens can generate their form of power, which lies partly in their effective conduct of the process.

Lest I be charged with idealizing this process or ignoring that many citizens choose not to engage, let me say that this is a conceptualization of the experience through which citizens seem to progress when they tackle a problem together over time. In transforming their relationships, they develop the capacity to talk, plan, and work together to accomplish

goals on which they agree. This conceptualization is rooted in participation with and observation of countless groups that have chosen to engage. Conceptualizing the process enables citizens to move it from one problem to another and to teach it. I make no claim that this experience is normal; the stories in chapters six through ten, however, suggest that it is not uncommon, that it can be analyzed, and that it can be taught and spread. I describe it here as a way of saying that a framework for research at this end of the spectrum exists.

The Citizens' Political Process

Following briefly are the stages through which the Citizens' Political Process seems to evolve. I present them as a vehicle for reflecting on the process that citizens with no formal structures to rely on use to accomplish their goals. To speak of a sequence of stages is not to present a rigid template for action. Citizens move back and forth through the stages to rethink, to absorb new events or insights, to reframe problems, and to judge progress. Defining a process simply opens the door to studying how citizens act together. Each stage reflects the broadening and deepening of a process of interaction—relationships—among citizens.

Stage One: Coming Together around a Problem

This process begins when a citizen concludes that a situation hurts her or his interests badly enough to require change. Seeing a connection between personal interests and this situation, the citizen reaches out to other citizens whose interests may also be hurt. Citizens with comparable concerns talk informally. This can take time. The problem may seem daunting; citizens may fear the reactions of those who oppose change; widening circles of talk may be needed to create a critical mass who are ready for systematic talk.

Beyond the internal interactions that define individual groups are the interactions among groups. Much new thinking about politics recognizes that many fundamental problems are problems of relationships. Some citizens' organizations have concluded that basic change can be made only by fundamentally changing working relationships—how people habitually deal with one another. The idea is to construct relationships that can solve problems whether the individuals involved like and fully trust each other or not.

The associations that citizens form are held together by the promises citizens make to each other—their covenants. "A covenant," writes David Mathews, "contains certain principles for structuring the way people work together....the partnerships are voluntary; no one can be forced. Each party remains independent; no one is asked to merge her or his identity into some collective melting pot. People are not asked...to like

one another. They just have to be willing to work together. The [association's purposes] have to be agreed upon mutually.... The partners 'own' the association; they are not employees or clients. Partners need not have equal resources.... [Yet] everyone has to treat everyone else as an equal... [b]ecause everyone is dependent on the agreement of others, and everyone has a say in what the association's purposes are."[23]

Stage Two: Mapping the Problem, Naming It, and Framing Choices

When the group meets, participants need to spend time talking about the situation to identify its important dimensions, the relationships that cause it, and the interests affected by it. I call this "mapping" the problem—laying out its main elements. As participants say how the problem affects them, they provide the ingredients for a definition—a naming—of the problem from the citizen's viewpoint, not the expert's or the government's.

An important task at this stage of their talk is to learn why and how the problem threatens what these citizens value. Unless they name the problem in a way that reflects their connection to it—why it hurts their interests—their efforts to deal with it will not be as effective as they might be. Naming the problem in a way that engages each participant is essential in building the common ground necessary to start tackling the problem.

When the group has named the problem in this way, they need to probe its dynamics in ways that help them frame the questions that enter their minds about possible approaches, opportunities, and consequences as they prepare themselves to weigh possible directions for dealing with it. Citizens do not frame questions as experts do in terms of technical approaches; they frame choices in terms of what they value. This stage moves toward conclusion when participants have defined the problem they must deal with.

In situations where tension and conflict divide participants, a second challenge in this stage is to create space and conditions that encourage them to "open up"—to be willing to share honestly some of their deeper feelings. This sometimes requires them to make themselves vulnerable by seeming to agree with the adversary. A breakthrough statement that is essential to the beginning of genuine dialogue will show empathy in some form: "I don't agree with you, but if I had had your experience, I would probably feel the same way you do."

Stage Three: Framing Choices, Deliberating, and Setting a Direction

As a bridge to systematic deliberation, participants will need to respond to the obvious question: If this is the problem, what might we do about it? What are our choices? Two approaches are possible.

In a more formal or less conflictual situation, they may stop and ask a group or an experienced organization to provide an analysis of the problem and several options for dealing with it, even stating the pros and cons for each approach. When that guide to the issues is available, they may appoint someone to moderate the deliberation.

Next, participants deliberate. They weigh possible approaches in light of what they value. To deliberate is not just to "talk about" problems; to deliberate is to agonize within oneself and with others over the advantages and disadvantages—the consequences—of each possible approach they have framed. Often more than one approach contains elements that a person values, so they must make difficult trade-offs. As they weigh the approaches with others, they deepen their understanding of the consequences of different approaches for themselves and for those whose cooperation is critical in dealing with the problem. Their deliberation gradually identifies common ground. This defines the starting point for setting the broad direction in which they want to move together to create a situation that all can live with. It does not signify total agreement—just enough agreement to under-gird shared purpose in a particular situation.

As citizens grapple with their questions and possible approaches together, they begin to change the quality of their relationships. They emerge with a sense of what is tolerable and intolerable for each actor—and why. They consider their commitments to engage in the common task of dealing with the problem. The mutual promises they make will bind them in whatever associations they form to accomplish the task.

Deliberation involves choice. Citizens must choose before they can act. Taking responsibility for their future begins with citizens recognizing that *they* have choices. They remain subject to forces beyond their control, but choices come partly from the way they deal with those circumstances.

David Mathews says that choices are made in two different ways. In one case, politicians and government propose options that are often framed in complicated technical terms. Citizens are expected to choose among them. Alternatively, "the most basic choices citizens make are about what kind of community and country they want. These choices aren't the same as preferences for one solution or another. People really can't select a particular solution until they have made more fundamental choices about purposes."[24] The alternative to making public choices is likely to be relatively uninformed, knee-jerk reactions. We call the outcome of deliberation "public judgment "not "public opinion," which one practitioner calls "what people think before they think."[25]

Deliberation leads to determining whether there is political will to pursue the course chosen. The final choice is: do the consequences of doing nothing outweigh the anticipated results of the chosen course, or not? If the consequences of maintaining the status quo are more serious than attempting the course chosen, there is presumably a tentative will to move ahead. The most important resource in a community is often political will: citizens' commitment to pursue a problem until they have it under control.

In a group that includes parties in deep-rooted conflict, the process of framing an issue will not be so orderly. Participants will throw out possible approaches and argue their merits as they come up. Ultimately they may settle down to a more systematic argument over pros and cons, but that is not assured.

Whichever approach the group pursues, the outcome will be some degree of agreement on a sense of the direction in which they "decide" to move.

Stage Four: Planning a Course of Complementary Actions—Scenario-Building

When citizens have determined the direction in which they want to move, they must then decide how to get there. One way is to work through these five steps:

- List resources they can marshal for tackling the problem. This step has been reinforced and developed by the work of John McKnight and John Kretzmann in what they call Asset-Based Community Development. In the past, it has been normal for community developers to do "needs assessments." McKnight and Kretzmann have, in contrast, gone into communities and asked, "What can you do? What assets do you have?" This approach has now been adopted by the Coady Institute for International Development headed by John Gaventa in Nova Scotia.[26]
- List obstacles to moving in this direction. Responses include not just physical obstacles but deep-rooted human resistance. Often cancerous relationships are more serious than practical obstacles.
- List steps for removing these obstacles. Again, these may include psychological moves to change relationships as well as concrete actions to remove material barriers.
- List actors who can take such steps. The aim is to engage multiple actors who can generate momentum through complementary actions.
- Try to connect actions so they become mutually reinforcing and encourage cooperation as one actor responds to a previous actor and stimulates another to join the process.

Unlike the discrete actions of institutions, complementary actions are not directed toward a single objective. Rather, they are more organic and repeating, like a jazz group in which each player supports the others within an overall theme but is free to improvise and express individual style without following a conductor.

I call this building a "scenario" of interactive steps because it unfolds much as a scene of a play might develop. Party A is asked whether it

could take Step 1 and responds that it could do so but only if Party B would respond constructively by taking Step 2. Party B agrees in principle but wants Party C to take supportive Step 3. And so on, until more and more actors join and momentum for change builds and is consolidated.

Stage Five: Acting Together

Once a scenario of complementary actions has been designed, the group must decide whether and how it will put that scenario into action. The options include moving insights from this small group out into the community through the associations to which members relate in order to engage a complex of groups. If the group has not consulted with others along the way, it may need to spend time within its own associations sharing the experience in the deliberation with others and allowing time for them to digest insights from the deliberation. The group might even engage others in a wider series of deliberations before surfacing an action scenario.

An essential component of each stage, but particularly of Stage Five, is taking stock: What did we set out to accomplish? How are we doing?

I have found that a relationship is not fully formed until parties to it have asked and responded to these questions together. The process of learning together—the systems analysts write of feedback—strengthens a relationship.

These five stages are not intended to be rigid or linear. A group can at any point go back and reexamine initial assumptions or judgments in light of new developments, learning, or insights. The human mind is not always bound by a conclusion that has been reached; it often washes back and forth through thoughts that are in formation or relationships that are unfolding in unexpected ways.

Some have argued that thinking of this kind ignores a central concept of politics: power. They ask how citizens get things done if they don't accumulate power. This framework does not ignore power; it recognizes broader bases for power and defines power in terms less absolute than control—as the capacity to make things happen that are within the reach of the actors. As John Gaventa says in his Foreword, citizens' capacities to influence the course of events have a different quality from governments' ability to coerce. I am not sure the Czechs, Serbs, or South Africans *forced* their governments to back down; by acting together with no apparatus of raw power they created conditions in which government could not function adequately. That is power defined differently.

I do not suggest that any group will necessarily follow the stages of the Citizens' Political Process exactly as described here. Experience does suggest that these stages reflect a progression of interactions through which citizens seem to move in tackling a problem together. The process is a conceptualization of experience—not a theoretical construct. The purpose of

thinking of such a political process is to state that citizens outside formal power structures can have their own systematic processes, practices, and political strategies with a sense of direction, destination, and potential accomplishment. Through such processes, they can generate the capacity or power they need. Such a process is the citizens' instrument for change, *their* version of political instruments.

Focusing on citizens interacting in concert—human beings in relationship—enables us to integrate whole human beings in whole bodies politic into our view of politics. It includes the arena where political practitioners work, the arena where many conflicts are initiated and resolved, the arena where citizens build spaces for resolving differences peacefully, the arena where citizens improve the quality of their own lives. Above all, it includes the arena where most human beings live!

Citizens' Capacity to Concert as Social Capital

This view of politics as relationship—the citizens' capacity to concert—opens a door from politics to economics, particularly economic development. One exciting idea formulated in the 1990s was the concept named "social capital." This burst on the scene with Harvard professor Robert Putnam's 1993 book, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy.*[27]

As citizens interact through their associations, networks among these groups develop. These networks nourish continuous interaction that becomes the context for gradual development of what Putnam calls a "normal generalized reciprocity." As citizens observe the predictability and the reliability of how each interacts with others, trust grows, and the glue of potential cooperation is added to the social mix. This reservoir of predictable reciprocity becomes part of what Putnam calls "social capital." It is also essential to sound relationships.

More specifically, the economic premise underlying the concept of social capital is that the economy of a community with dense civic interactions is more likely to function effectively than one without. Citizens in a community with a rich civic culture have developed broadly accepted "rules" of interacting that provide the predictability of which Putnam wrote. One might call these accepted practices "unwritten covenants." The assurance that people will do what they promise reduces the costs of transactions. A consistent environment makes investors' calculation of risk more reliable than when economic behavior is unreliable or erratic. Habitual civic behavior in tune with understood "rules" makes an economic difference.

Economists at the World Bank, after analyzing this proposition in widespread communities, have generally accepted this analysis. The problem next is how to put the theory into practice. Michael Woolcock, then at the Bank, has distinguished between the "bonding" social capital of smaller,

coherent communities or regions where inhabitants know each other and "bridging" social capital when strangers interact.[28] In smaller regions, people are likely to meet commitments because they believe that a favor for a known person will be reciprocated or that a promise broken will be "punished" in some way. The greater economic opportunity results when communities of strangers develop shared rules of relating—covenants.

Major funders have difficulty "operationalizing" this theory because only citizens outside government can grow or change political culture. Big lenders feel they need to work through established organizations. To use the graphic words of a young colleague, "the thick fingers of the World Bank" have trouble working with citizens. The Bank recognizes that lending at the wrong time or through the wrong channels can damage or destroy growing sinews in a community where citizens are developing their own capacity to concert. A project underwritten with development assistance before a community has consolidated its capacity to concert is likely not to be sustained when the external money runs out. In this frustrating situation, some analysts at the World Bank have given currency to medicine's historic warning: at least, "do no harm."

It is now clear that a long missing ingredient in economic development theory is the citizens' capacity to concert.[29] Placed in the context of the Citizens' Political Process, the common practice of international organizations providing development assistance has been to enter the picture when a community has a problem. They bring experts, design a solution for the problem as they define it, and offer money to implement that solution. They ignore or short circuit these stages in the Citizens' Political Process when people in the community name the problem themselves and decide what needs to be done, utilizing methods and materials consistent with their culture and skill level. International grant-makers began to recognize in the mid-1990s that loans for big projects had not produced the broadly based, sustainable development that funders had anticipated.

Ramón Daubón's new Chapter Eleven provides a full analysis of the relevance of the relational paradigm to the approach to development of the large funding organizations as well as citizens' organizations.

Dialogue: The Citizens' Instrument

Those who say that politics is about power defined as control or coercion focus on instruments that institutions of state and government use—force, economic sanctions, taxation, law enforcement, mediation, negotiation. Those whose point of entry into the study and practice of politics is the citizen as political actor focus on the instruments for change that citizens use—their instruments of power. If citizens generate the capacity to change through the relationships they form, the key to their generation of that capacity is the instrument they use to form these relationships.

At the heart of the Citizens' Political Process is dialogue in some form. Its exact form as a political instrument depends on the setting in which it is used.

In some communities with well formed relationships, citizens can talk together reasonably, even when they disagree sharply about how to approach a problem. Relationships and political practices are strong enough to enable citizens to resolve their differences collaboratively I refer to an elaboration of dialogue in such settings as a *deliberative* or *collaborative process*. Citizens work their way through the Citizens' Political Process in a more or less orderly way.

Toward the other end of the spectrum are communities that are divided by deep-rooted human conflicts, ranging from violent intercommunal wars to subsurface tensions not yet violent that nevertheless block collaboration. For these situations, we have developed a body of thought and practice that we call the *Sustained Dialogue*® *System* to transform relationships that block collaboration and must be changed if citizens are to work together. The Sustained Dialogue System comprises five components:

- The relational paradigm, which will be introduced in Chapter Three.
- The concept of relationship, which will be introduced in Chapter Four.
- A five-stage dialogue process.
- A community of practitioners.
- The concept of governance defined in the Introduction.

The five-stage dialogue process is similar to the five stages of the Citizens' Political Process, but with distinctive attention to a *dual* agenda— *both* the practical problems at hand *and* the relationships that may be the main cause of these problems. This process can extend over months or even years.

Although the five stages of the dialogue process used in Sustained Dialogue are essentially those of the Citizens' Political Process, the process is anything but neat and orderly. When they sit down together, participants are often so angry that they can barely look at each other. Their language for mapping problems and relationships is often accusation and vituperation at the outset until they have been together for several meetings. The framing of issues often becomes an informal weighing of their merits. One stage does not fully end before the next begins. Participants move back and forth across the stages when they need to update a situation, rethink an earlier judgment, or tackle a new problem. Or their minds may be all over the place when they are groping for focus. Despite their rocky path, they continuously deepen their experience with their relationships through dialogue.

In short, Sustained Dialogue can create a microcosm of the relationships between whole groups and an experience in analyzing and changing these relationships. The body of thought and practice we call the Sustained Dialogue System is a conceptualization of experience in dialogues in the 1980s among Americans and Soviets and Israelis and Palestinians. In the 1990s, it was tested and refined by Americans and Russians working together in conflicts that broke out in the territory of the former Soviet Union—Tajikistan beginning in 1993 and Armenia-Azerbaijan-Nagorno Karabakh beginning in 2001. It is now being used on university campuses and in community organizations in North America and South Africa to reduce ethnic and racial tensions and to deal with visceral issues such as sexual orientation and the extremes of the conservative-liberal divide.

Between these two well worked out and widely tested processes of dialogue and deliberation are variations on both that citizens have devised to meet their needs. But the essence of their work is dialogue.

Citizens in Relationship as the Starting Point

At the heart of citizens' capacity to concert are nonviolent and constructive ways of relating. Human beings in relationship—acting in concert with one another—have too long been neglected in the study of politics.[30] It is time to highlight the human dimension of politics and the enormous potential of citizens working in concert to complement the work of governments in meeting the world's challenges.

As a practitioner, I am interested in what would happen to political thought if one started from citizens outside formal structures of traditionally defined power as a point of entry into the study and practice of politics.

Some conflicts seem beyond the reach of governments until citizens achieve understanding on living together in peace. Some problems such as drug addiction, alcoholism, and AIDS will not be dealt with until human beings change their behavior. Even corruption has roots in what citizens will tolerate in their daily interactions. It is unfair to expect governments to solve problems that can only be dealt with by citizens in and out of government collaborating as citizens of whole bodies politic.

As the twenty-first century unfolds, many of us hold to an aspiration of whole bodies politic in which governments and citizens each take a strong place and, in the best of worlds, collaborate creatively. As this happens, political thinking must respond to the new reality. Not to change lenses to bring this emerging, troubled, and demanding world into focus seems unthinkable and possibly catastrophic.

As our political thinking makes room for multiple actors, the focus of our lenses widens. Whereas we used to focus on a few key institutions, we

must now find a way to keep track of a complex of continuous human as well as institutional interactions. It probably never was adequate to think only about how institutions *acted on* each other. Even in the simplest of communities, human beings shaped *interactions*. Now we must focus on politics as a multilevel process of continuous interaction among citizens in whole bodies politic. This is the subject of chapter three—the relational paradigm.

Before moving to that subject, I must address the second of our starting points—the thinking of the physical and life scientists through the twentieth century that shaped the principles of a post-Newtonian worldview. It is a worldview that underpins the broader approach to politics presented in this book.