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The Combined Ripeness Model: Becoming a Ripeness Generalist

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Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Ripeness and Readiness	6
1.1 Ripeness Theory	7
1.2 Second Generation Ripeness	9
1.3 Political Stability Model of Ripeness	10
Table 1 - Conditions Under Which Insurgents and Regimes Would Consider Entering into Negotiations	11
1.4 Four Ripeness Models	12
1.5 Readiness	14
1.6 Negotiation Readiness	15
Chapter 2: Related Theories	16
2.1 Resistant Reactions	16
2.2 Rational Choice	17
2.3 Schrödinger's Cat	18
2.4 Central Coalition Theory	19
2.5 Shock Theory	20
2.6 New Leaders	20
2.7 Third Parties	21
2.8 Turning Points	22
Chapter 3: Engaging With Ripeness	22
3.1 Creating Ripeness	22
3.2 Combined Ripeness Model	24
Table 2 – Summary of Ripeness/Readiness Theories	25
Diagram 1 – Combined Ripeness Model	27
Chapter 4: Applying the Combined Model	27
4.1 The Philippines	27
4.2 Northern Ireland	30
4.3 Usefulness	31
Conclusion	32
Bibliography	33

Abstract

This paper deals with the subject of negotiation ripeness, that is the timing of when to enter negotiations in a conflict situation. There are many theories of ripeness, none of which are useful in all conflict situations. In the same manner that physicists are searching for a unified field theory, the author posits that conflict analysts should be searching for a combined ripeness model that will help scholars and practitioners better understand the factors leading to and influencing ripeness. Pruitt's work on readiness theory was able to improve and expand Zartman's ripeness theory, and it is thought that by looking at other ripeness theorists' work it will be possible to expand it even further. In order to do so, ripeness and readiness models from Zartman, Haass, Druckman and Green, Mitchell, Pruitt, and Spector are described and criticisms offered. Related theories are also examined and some thoughts on fostering ripeness are presented. A Combined Ripeness Model is proposed, integrating elements from all of the theorists above. The model is tested against two conflict situations, one of which was predicted to be in a ripe moment and was not, the other that was predicted to not be in a ripe moment and was. The combined ripeness model is able to answer the questions raised in each case, showing that the combined model is far more robust and useful than any one theory on its own. The Author's intent is to convince the reader of the merit of becoming a ripeness generalist as opposed to a ripeness specialist.

Introduction

The great physicist, Albert Einstein, spent much of the latter part of his life trying to discover a Unified Field Theory that would integrate the known forces¹ of physics into a single, underlying force. Success remained ever out of his grasp. Indeed, the unification of the forces has yet to be accomplished, though the attempt continues. Ideas continue to be generated on how they may be unified, and the lay observer questions why, in fact, it is important that we make the attempt. Physicists believe that the theory could explain the elementary workings of the universe -including the true nature of matter and physical laws- allowing us to understand the physical world around us and the universe at the most fundamental level.

It can be said a similar quest is ongoing within the field of conflict resolution. That is, scholars and practitioners alike are searching for some universal theory that will explain to us on a fundamental level when and how to conduct conflict resolution activities such that we can ensure success in all cases. We are not just looking for the steps that are used to get disputants to the table, but also those that will promote successful negotiations, a lasting peace, and assured reconciliation. It is not sufficient to only start negotiations. As in physics, there isn't a consensus as to how to get from here to there, or sometimes even where here is, and even if it's possible at all. Regardless, there has been significant effort expended in the pursuit and advancements have been made.

A great deal has been said regarding the correct time at which to enter into negotiations by many different theorists and practitioners. In general, parties in conflict, negotiators, and mediators are looking for a 'ripe' moment at which to start negotiations. Conflict analysts agree that a ripe moment is necessary to successfully enter negotiations, but there is much disagreement as to what ripeness is, its objective and subjective factors, how internal and external elements affect it, and in general is a greatly misunderstood theory.

A 'Theory of Everything' has eluded physicists thus far, but since the postulation of string theory a framework now exists within which to test theories. It is a complex framework that contains a reality consisting of eleven dimensions, but it is this 'out of the box' thinking that has allowed physicists such as Brian Greene (2000) to progress with their research. I would suggest that similar 'out of the box' thinking has occurred in the field of conflict resolution, and that more is required to make significant advances. An example of past innovative thinking is the creation of the theory of ripeness. In this paper ripeness in many forms, and associated theories, will be used as the theoretical framework within which to examine the processes that lead to it. A Combined Ripeness Model -'unified' is too strong a word- is created by joining various aspects of ripeness theory together. This is not conflict resolution's equivalent to a Theory of Everything, but perhaps may be seen as something smaller, such as Maxwell's work on the unification of electric and magnetic fields in the 1800s. The creation of a Combined Ripeness Model may also lead to a more predictive capacity for ripeness, but minimally it will create for scholars and practitioners an expanded idea of what ripeness is. The model will exhibit its usefulness by showing how integrating different ripeness theories together can explain

¹ Gravitational Force and Electromagnetic Force. Since Einstein's time physicists have also discovered the weak and strong nuclear forces.

irregularities that are not satisfactorily explained in any single theory on its own. The paper will endeavour to convince the reader of the utility of becoming a ripeness generalist as opposed to a ripeness specialist, that is subscribing to multiple ripeness theories as opposed to only one. This combined model will assist scholars and practitioners in guiding conflicts to ripeness (where required), and will create a robust diagnostic tool. It is recognised that regardless of how robust the model is, there will always be a disjuncture between theory and practice as people and their actions are not absolutely predictable.

It is far beyond the scope of this paper to try to create a unified theory of conflict resolution. Neither is it the intention to create a predictive model. The improvement of existing theories will not be attempted except in the way that they may be improved by combining other ripeness theories with them. The scope of this study is to look at the ‘giants’ in ripeness and associated theories to see how their ideas can be combined together into a single model of ripeness. After some introductory remarks, a detailed synopsis of each theorist’s work will be presented to include some analysis of limitations. This will be followed by an explanation of related theories that are important to the study of ripeness. Next will follow an analytical section on creating ripeness. The Combined Ripeness Model will then be presented, with an explanation of its usefulness and an analysis of two case studies where the application of a single view of ripeness was insufficient to explain the events leading to ripeness. The application of the model to historical conflicts in the Philippines and Northern Ireland will be used to demonstrate how the model expands our understanding of ripeness and how it is useful to conflict resolutionists.

The idea of an integrated model of ripeness has been proposed by Coleman (1997), but his work focuses on ripeness from a social psychological perspective. In his model, ripeness is a commitment to change, “...passing a psychological barrier...” (Coleman 1997: 81) towards peace. While his work is of great importance to the field, this paper focuses on integrating the perceptual and structural elements of ripeness, and as such Coleman’s work is not included.

Chapter 1: Ripeness and Readiness

There has been a great deal said regarding the timing of negotiations, such as whether negotiation should start prior to a ceasefire or while hostilities are still ongoing. In this vein Mahieu (2007) states that attempts to negotiate early in the conflict can prolong the struggle, and so we start to see the importance of not only recognising ripe moments, but in working towards ripe moments with the parties to the conflict, and carefully exploiting the moment when it occurs. I. William Zartman first suggested ripeness as a structured theory in 1985. Ripeness happens when unilateral courses of action are abandoned in favour of either bilateral or multilateral solutions, and may involve the intervention of a third party. Negotiation is the last choice of parties in conflict and will only be attempted once the ability or willingness to pursue a unilateral solution fails (Pruitt 2007: 1526). Unilateral actions are always the preferred solution, as one side tries to militarily defeat the other. In the most brutal contexts, even the civilian population is targeted in an effort to sap the motivation of the enemy to fight and cripple the means of production. This was especially evident throughout the twentieth century.

As with any good theory, ripeness has spawned a large following -and more importantly detractors- amongst conflict resolution analysts and practitioners, and they themselves have been

challenging the theory in an effort to expand and improve it. This includes additional contributions and clarifications to the original theory and other completely different ways of looking at the problem. Zartman himself has not directly addressed other theorists, though some of his refinements respond to problems vocalised by others, so it is clear that he keeps himself informed on divergent thought. Unfortunately, there are many misconceptions and false assumptions regarding the meanings of key concepts in ripeness that give rise to many critiques which erroneously detract followers from the theories. That being said, ripeness is not a magical solution to problems, and there are seldom quick fixes to conflict. Ripeness merely serves to help bring de-escalation and impending negotiations into focus.

While Zartman has been the most outspoken proponent of ripeness theory, there is a significant body of work that has grown up around him. There is a need to define ripeness in order to be able to recognise it, and this has led to multiple theories being developed (Kleiboer 1994: 111), and there is no widespread consensus on what ripeness is which has led to widely varying models. This is not to the detriment of ripeness, as it will be shown that the varying theories make the field as a whole more convincing and useful (if viewed in a combined light). It is interesting to note that differing theories of ripeness always start with Zartman and not one of the other divergent theorists. Other contributors to the field are: Richard N. Haass, Daniel Druckman and Justin Green, Christopher R. Mitchell, Bertram I. Spector and Dean R. Pruitt. Each of these authors adds important work to the body of conflict resolution literature, while pointing out what they perceive as problems surrounding ripeness. However, none of them has an airtight theory that works in all cases and answers all questions. It is my thinking that as none of them has a universal model, but as each of them has something significant to contribute to the theory, perhaps somehow integrating them into one model is more useful than looking at them in isolation. Pruitt (2005) and Spector (2002) are the only ones who have explicitly tried to integrate their theories into Zartman's, and have made it a more versatile theory as a result. It will be shown that the other's theories, when combined into a coherent whole, do the same.

The biggest critique about ripeness is that most of the things it heralds can only be seen in retrospect; unfortunately an oxymoron characterises this crucial theory. However, the various aspects of ripeness discussed below should provide signposts that will give the keen observer at least some warning that ripeness is looming. Integration should make ripeness hypotheses at least somewhat testable. If the original theory can be expanded to integrate other ripeness theorist's work then we are at a minimum creating a diagnostic tool and could possibly expand the applicability and usefulness of ripeness to the point that predictive elements may eventually be discernable.

1.1 Ripeness Theory

First proposed by I. William Zartman, Ripeness Theory comprises many elements, and can be briefly summarised by saying that there are better times than others to conduct negotiations, and that the best time is when a conflict is ripe for settlement (that is, timing of negotiations is key) (Zartman 2001: 8). But what is meant by ripeness? Ripeness can be "...viewed in relation to escalation of or to critical shifts in the intensity of a crisis." (Zartman 1985: 9). That is to say that ripeness marks a de-escalation of a conflict such that negotiations on both sides become desirable. Ripeness is often misunderstood. Acting on a ripe moment will

not guarantee a lasting peace or even a successful negotiation, however its absence portends failure. It is only the initiation of negotiations that concerns ripeness (Zartman 2006: 148). The theory was originally developed to be applied to bilateral conflicts and subsequent negotiations, whether mediated or not (Pruitt 2005: 12). Zartman has refined his ripeness theory over time (discussed below), but in the beginning it was comprised of the following three elements:

...(1) as mutual, painful stalemates marked by a recent or impending catastrophe; (2) as a time when both parties' efforts at unilateral solutions or 'tracks'² are blocked and bilateral solutions or 'tracks' are conceivable; and or (3) as a place on a long slope where the 'ins' start to slip and the 'outs' start to surge (Zartman 1985: 9).

The foundational concept of ripeness is that of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate, that is that the situation has denigrated to the point that it is unlikely that either side can win (Hancock 2001: 196). It is the perception of a stalemate that makes negotiation attractive, to the point that previously discussed and discarded options *may* unexpectedly become acceptable, though it is not exclusively previous options that may be considered. The stalemate must be perceived by each of the parties in conflict (that is they cannot be told that they have reached a stalemate by an outside party or each other), may not occur at the same time on both sides, and may not be the same reason on each side. The Mutually Hurting Stalemate is often precipitated by a catastrophe (recent, impending, or avoided) affecting one or both sides.

Zartman describes the Mutually Hurting Stalemate as being "...grounded in cost-benefit analysis³, fully consistent with public choice notions of rationality and public choice studies⁴ of war termination and negotiation..." (Zartman 2001: 8). Game theory factors into each parties' decision to negotiate, with each choosing the positive-sum over zero-sum options (Zartman 2001: 9). It is thought that parties following the entrapment or true believer models discredit the theory of a mutually hurting stalemate and on their own they may. In a combined model they add to the robustness of the overall theory, as will be discussed below.

For ripeness to be reached, there is a requirement that each side must believe that the negotiations are represented on both sides by a valid spokesmen empowered to enter into agreements (Zartman 2000: 235). There must also exist a belief that there is the possibility of a solution. The solution does not have to actually take form in the minds of each side; just the belief that it is possible is sufficient (Zartman 2000: 228). Ripeness seems to fit in more appropriately when leading to a Track One process than Track Two negotiations⁵, though the possibility exists that previous Track Two negotiations can contribute to ripeness, and the process is fulfilled upon successful transfer to a Track One process (as in the example of the Oslo Accords). Zartman adds:

² Zartman's reference to tracks is not in regards to multi-track diplomacy. He uses first and second track to refer to unilateral and bilateral activities (Zartman 1985: 9).

³ After Sen (1970), Arrow (1963), and Olson (Olsen 1965).

⁴ After Brams (1990) and Wright (1965).

⁵ Here I refer to multi-track diplomacy and not Zartman's use of the terms above.

Ripeness is only a condition, necessary but not sufficient, for the initiation of negotiations. It is not self-fulfilling or self-implementing. It must be seized, either directly by the parties or, if not, through the persuasion of a mediator...Not all ripe moments are so seized and turned into negotiations, hence the importance of specifying the meaning and evidence of ripeness so as to indicate when conflicting or third parties can fruitfully initiate negotiations (Zartman 2001: 9).

O’Kane notes that ripeness is conceived around bilateral conflicts and “...appears to struggle to cope with multi-party conflicts” (2006: 271). This is problematic as conflicts increase in complexity, and it is questionable if ripeness theory can be useful in a situation such as the war in Afghanistan where the sides are represented by the Taliban, the United States, NATO forces, and the Government of Afghanistan. It could be said that the combination of the US, NATO and Government of Afghanistan represent one side, and the Taliban the other thereby creating conditions for negotiation in a bilateral setting. In reality there are policy differences between the three that could make bilateral negotiations impractical, and an impasse amongst the allies could cause an un-healable rift that would lead to ripeness being lost or never attained. Another problem in cases of bilateral negotiations with a multi-party side is who needs to feel the hurting stalemate before ripeness is reached? Is one enough or does it have to be all? It is unlikely that the US will feel a hurting stalemate in Afghanistan, though it seems that NATO may have reached one already. The Afghan government, I would predict, has some way to go as there is too much at stake to concede a stalemate exists. This assumes that the Taliban is a united group and that moderates and extremists would feel their hurting stalemate at the same time and choose to negotiate as a block, which is difficult to believe based on other, similar conflicts based on ideologies.

Zartman has made several refinements to his theory since its first inception. As of his most recent criteria, the catastrophe is preferred but not necessary (though still linked to the mutual hurting stalemate). Additionally, the criteria of a valid spokesman has been removed, not because one is not necessary -one is- but because he believes that a valid spokesman is “...a structural element and it is of a different order than the other two defining perceptual elements” (Zartman 2000: 235).

1.2 Second Generation Ripeness

Another view of ripeness, what will be referred to as second generation ripeness to differentiate it from the theory discussed above, has been put forward by Richard N. Haass (1990). This view of ripeness is almost entirely structural in nature.

Except in those situations where one party is sufficiently strong to impose its preferences on others, it is ripeness more than anything else that plays a decisive role in negotiating regional disputes (Haass 1990: 8).

He was writing at a time when ripeness theory was in its infancy and largely ignored by practitioners as they tended to focus on the process itself rather than the conditions leading up to it (Haass 1990: 7). Attempting to address the lack of theory, Haass laid down what he theorised were the four prerequisites for ripeness. The first condition is that there must be a shared

perception of the desirability of the accord. Secondly, leaders must be either sufficiently strong to permit compromise or sufficiently weak that compromise cannot be avoided. Next, leaders must be able to persuade their constituents that the national interest will be served in the agreement. Last, the process used to negotiate or mediate the agreement must be acceptable to all parties involved (Haass 1990: 27-28). Haass argues that “Ripeness is anything but a natural condition...” (1990: 139) and blames its absence most often on leaders who prefer to continue the conflict in an effort to pursue unilateral solutions rather than negotiate. Leaders may also lack Haass’ second and third criteria above and therefore ripeness remains absent. In these circumstances a change in leader may lead to ripeness, discussed in more depth below. While he does not explicitly require a mutually hurting stalemate in his criteria for ripeness, he does say that “...exhaustion can be a powerful inducement to parley” (Haass 1990: 143).

Haass’ model is not contingent on solving the entire conflict in one process in order to declare success. Indeed he encourages, where possible, that the issues in contention be broken into smaller parts. This serves many purposes, such as de-escalation and trust building. It also shows the belligerents that there is potential for advancement towards ending the conflict as a whole (Haass 1990: 144). For example, a peace agreement was possible between Israel and Jordan without solving the whole of the Middle East conflict. Peace may come sooner if ripe moments for individual issues are seized rather than trying to resolve every aspect of the conflict all at once.

1.3 Political Stability Model of Ripeness

Druckman and Green (1995) define a ripe moments in terms of the relative levels of power and legitimacy on the part of each party to the conflict. This provides another way to evaluate ripeness in the absence of a mutually hurting stalemate and other criteria from previous theories. In their study of ripeness they are evaluating the Philippine National Democratic Front insurgency which took place from 1972-1992, and as such their model of ripeness is centred around an insurgent group on one side and the government (regime) on the other. With some modifications, I believe the model could also be applied to interstate conflicts through adaptations of some of the assumptions made in their model. If so, Table 1, illustrating conditions under which negotiations may start, would need to be modified, though this is beyond the scope of this paper. The model is predicated on obtaining a ceasefire first and then negotiating the follow-on political elements.

The theory states that when the combination of power and legitimacy of a group, in relation to the other, meets with certain combinations of the power and legitimacy on the other group, ripeness is reached and they will be prompted to enter negotiations (see Table 1). Varying levels of both will cause parties to choose one of several options: to negotiate, continue the conflict, or choose another course of action such as moving from armed resistance to political activism, or vice versa (Druckman and Green 1995: 306). Entering into negotiations can be prompted by being in a position of relative power (in ‘triumph’) or as a last ditch effort to salvage what they can from the conflict, that is, out of desperation. These cases are illustrated on the table by case 1A, 9A, 1B, and 9B. When relative levels of legitimacy and power on both sides dictate ‘negotiate’ as the course of action, ripeness is achieved and negotiations can begin

(Druckman and Green 1995: 306). This model is also based on bilateral negotiations -with a mediator or not- and as such it is unclear as to how well it would apply in multilateral settings.

Their analysis of ripeness during the Philippine National Democratic Front insurgency is based on their political stability model (Druckman and Green 1987) which

...suggests that the outcome of political interactions is based on the balance of strength between the actors as measured by the difference between them in effective power and legitimacy (Druckman and Green 1995: 306).

Power and legitimacy are measured as increasing, constant, or decreasing, and the intersections of each side's values, represented on the ingenious table, will determine if ripeness has been achieved (Druckman and Green 1995: 307).

Overall, there are seven of nine possible conditions under which the government will negotiate, as opposed to only four under which the insurgents will. This difference is accounted

Table 1 - Conditions Under Which Insurgents and Regimes Would Consider Entering into Negotiations

		Relative Power (Insurgents vs. Regime)		
		Decreasing	Constant	Increasing
Insurgents – Relative Legitimacy	Decreasing	1A Negotiate	2A Do Not Negotiate	3A Do Not Negotiate
	Constant	4A Do Not Negotiate	5A Do Not Negotiate	6A Negotiate
	Increasing	7A Do Not Negotiate	8A Negotiate	9A Negotiate
		Relative Power (Regime vs. Insurgents)		
		Relative Power (Regime vs. Insurgents)		
		Increasing	Constant	Decreasing
Regime – Relative Legitimacy	Increasing	1B Negotiate	2B Negotiate	3B Negotiate
	Constant	4B Negotiate	5B Negotiate	6B Negotiate
	Decreasing	7B Do Not Negotiate	8B Do Not Negotiate	9B Negotiate

Source: (Druckman and Green 1995: 307)

for through the understanding that, as long as government military forces remain loyal (constant or increasing power), the government will negotiate in all cases that its legitimacy is constant or

increasing. The government maintains a relative advantage with regards to legitimacy against an insurgent group except in extreme circumstances, and so will still always be willing to negotiate with decreasing power (Druckman and Green 1995: 307-8).

The position of an insurgent group is more tenuous, and as such it will only choose negotiations out of desperation (decreasing-decreasing), triumph (increasing-increasing), or when one factor is increasing and the other constant. Insurgents will not negotiate with only one factor decreasing as their survival is not (yet) in jeopardy. With both factors constant or with only one increasing (while the other decreases) insurgents do not yet have the needed leverage to make gains at the negotiating table (Druckman and Green 1995: 308).

An interesting note to using the table is the example used by the authors in their analysis of the Philippine conflict. In one case the government was in an increasing-increasing position and the insurgents were in a decreasing-decreasing position, and later the positions were reversed. Even though the table would dictate that this is a ripe moment and negotiations should have been initiated they were not. The authors give reasons as to why they think they did not, i.e. if X had of happened in addition to an increasing-increasing/decreasing-decreasing scenario, then they would have entered into negotiations, but that almost negates the validity of the model. I would like to postulate that the negotiations did not happen in each case due to the severe power imbalance. One side was 'triumphant' and the other was 'desperate' and therefore it is possible that sufficient impetus did not exist for the increasing-increasing side to enter into negotiations. Where such a power imbalance exists, it may still be possible to impose unilateral solutions, such as deciding not to negotiate. This is supported by Haass in Rubin (Rubin 1991: 244) where it is observed that near power parity is necessary before ripeness is achieved. Further, he puts forward the idea that an asymmetric power distribution will cause the stronger side to have little motivation to negotiate and the weaker to have little optimism, knowing that they will likely have to accept whatever decision is forced upon them in a near unilateral act. I think that it is appropriate to state that negotiations will ensue when the 'negotiate' factors intersect each other (as per the table), except in the case of an increasing-increasing/decreasing-decreasing combination. As will be demonstrated below, the combined model offers an explanation as to why negotiations were not started in each case.

1.4 Four Ripeness Models

Mitchell (1995) classified four ripeness models that can contribute to de-escalation: a mutually hurting stalemate, an imminent mutual catastrophe, the entrapment model, and the enticing opportunity model. The mutually hurting and catastrophe models (what he describes as plateau and precipice, respectively) are based on Zartman's work, except that Mitchell separates the two, at least for the purposes of analysis. Zartman links them closely together stating that it benefits ripeness if the conditions of a mutually hurting stalemate are compounded by a catastrophe. The interesting thing is that while Mitchell makes the catastrophe mutual, Zartman only states that it is useful, being neither mutual nor necessary (Zartman 2000: 228).

The entrapment model is described as the opposite of a hurting stalemate (Mitchell 1995: 4). In the same way that a hurting stalemate is rooted in a cost benefit analysis or utility maximisation, the entrapment model is concerned with investments:

Underlying this model is an apparently irrational process by which ‘costs’ become transformed into ‘investments’ in a victory that must be complete. Hence, the more costs that are incurred, the more reasons exist for carrying on. In the [entrapment] model, the hurt itself, paradoxically, becomes a reason for continuing; the greater the hurt, the more the need to continue towards victory in order to justify both the psychological and political sacrifices already made (Mitchell 1995: 4).

The impetus of the entrapment model is that if the conflict is stopped now, short of unilateral victory, all that has been suffered to date will have been for naught. Further, it may be framed that future costs will be a pittance compared to past costs. Regardless, entrapment can still lead to ripeness through four stages: focus on achieving goals, the exculpation of the expenditure of resources towards additional goals, the attempt to inflict greater damage on the other while minimising own costs, and depletion of resources and the search for a resolution. At some point between stage three and four there is a turning point that leads from justifying what has been spent to salvaging what is left, leading to ripeness and the commencement of negotiations (Mitchell 1995: 5).

Mitchell describes the entrapment model as a ‘standalone’ theory (conditions) leading to ripeness. There are problems with this line of thinking, and I consider that entrapment is simply a more detailed explanation of how to reach a hurting stalemate and thereby ripeness. The turning point that happens between stage three and four seems to be a re-evaluation of previous cost benefit analysis -or a new one-, and entrapment simply becomes a way station on the road to a hurting stalemate (with or without a catastrophe). The same can be said in a conflict where one side is composed of true believers. Both true believers and those described in an entrapment model will eventually become exhausted and reach a hurting stalemate, assuming no other ripeness factors are present and that a unilateral solution is not possible.

A last model in Mitchell’s evaluation of ripeness theory is that of an enticing opportunity, sometimes called a mutually enticing opportunity. An enticing opportunity involves a shift in thinking on the part of leaders. “The emphasis is on new benefits rather than existing or anticipated costs, on rewards for adopting alternatives rather than on sacrifices that have to be compensated.” (Mitchell 1995: 6). This is a more positive way of reaching ripeness, and can take the form of power sharing or better relations with a third party such as a negotiation sponsor or mediating party (Zartman 2001: 14). It is interesting to note that Zartman (1997) at one time called enticing opportunities “contrived ripeness” and questioned its validity as a strategy in reaching a ripe moment, specifically in the case of the Madrid process in the context of Middle East peace negotiations (1997: 211). Mutually enticing opportunities can be viewed as negotiating based on opportunity costs rather than the real costs (cost benefit analysis) associated with a mutually hurting stalemate (Pruitt 1997: 238). Mitchell (1995), using Crocker (1992), lists factors influencing enticing opportunities such as: the unacceptability of unilateral options, new channels through which to communicate (e.g. third party intervention), and Track II processes. Third party intervention, either as mediator or benefactor, often plays a large role in creating enticing opportunities (1995: 6-7), though they may also be created by one of the parties to the conflict. It has been shown that an enticing opportunity on one side can balance a hurting stalemate on the other and together produce ripeness, as was the case in the Paris Peace

Talks that brought the Vietnam War to a close (Pruitt 1997: 238). Such an occurrence is not explained by Zartman's theory alone but as will be shown the combined model takes this possibility into account.

1.5 Readiness

Readiness theory is a critical reaction to ripeness, and serves to expand or refine ripeness theory and has been put forth by Dean R. Pruitt (1997). He was not entirely satisfied that ripeness was complete, and used his expansion of the theory to compensate for what he saw were four⁶ problems with Zartman's ripeness theory: 1. Ripeness Theory only seeks to explain entry into negotiation; 2. Ripeness is viewed as a state rather than a variable; 3. The antecedents of ripeness are viewed as *joint* states that simultaneously affect both parties to the conflict; and 4. Ripeness theory has a list-like quality that does not distinguish between types of antecedents (Pruitt 1997: 239).

The main additions that Pruitt makes to ripeness are the concepts of variables (as opposed to Zartman's states) in the form of motivation and optimism; both parties are motivated to achieve de-escalation and both are optimistic about reaching an agreement:

...a party will move toward resolution of a heavily escalated conflict (entering negotiation, making concessions, etc.) to the extent that it is (a) motivated to achieve de-escalation and (b) optimistic about finding a mutually acceptable agreement that will be binding on the other party. The motivation to achieve de-escalation is the driving force behind conciliatory behaviour, but optimism about the outcome of negotiation is also necessary because of the danger that unilateral conciliatory efforts will be exploited by the opponent and viewed as weak or even treasonous by one's supporters (Pruitt 1997: 239).

He distinguishes readiness from ripeness by these variables, that is that ripeness is a state: either a situation is ripe or not, and both sides must be simultaneously ripe (either *mutually* hurting or enticed) whereas motivation and optimism can be felt independent of each other, of each side (one side may experience one or both but not the other), and at differing levels from each other (Pruitt 1997: 239). While these variables increase or decrease independently of the other party's, there must be reciprocity before conflict resolution can occur:

Full readiness for conflict resolution is attained when the situation is symmetrical, such that *both* parties are motivated to achieve de-escalation and *both* are optimistic about reaching agreement (Pruitt 1997: 239).

Both parties exist in varying states of readiness until symmetry (some minimum threshold value) is reached and negotiations can begin. It is not a given that symmetry will ever be reached, which means it is not certain that ripeness will ever be reached.

⁶ See Pruitt, 1997 pp. 238-39 for the complete list and further explanation.

The variable nature of motivation and optimism creates a “compensatory model” (Pruitt 2005: 9) in which, for example, motivation levels may be equal on each side of the conflict, but the reasons to end the conflict (or enter into negotiations) may be different. Pruitt (2005) postulates that this distinction more accurately reflects conditions in real life than a rigid model involving an absolute condition of mutually hurting stalemate. He goes on to say that motivation and optimism can balance one another, with a low value of one compensated for by a higher value of the other. Take a hypothetical example of a conflict where symmetry is reached when $M \times O = S$, where predictably M = motivation, O = optimism, and S = symmetry. Therefore, in a bilateral conflict (which could theoretically be extrapolated to multilateral conflicts through Central Coalition Theory discussed below):

$$M_1 \times O_1 = S = M_2 \times O_2$$

In this case, the product of the varying values of each motivation and optimism can equal the necessary value of S for each side such that symmetry is reached, thereby a state of readiness is attained and negotiations can start. It is easy to see that a lower value of M , say $M = 3$, can be compensated for by a higher value of O , say $O = 7$, such that symmetry can be achieved (if $S = 21$, whatever that could mean). It is also possible that levels of motivation and optimism may be opposite between the two sides and symmetry (readiness) still reached, such as high motivation and low optimism on side A, and low motivation and high optimism on side B, but such that $M \times O$ for each side still equals the minimum threshold of S . Perhaps the most important addition to ripeness that Pruitt makes is that under his modifications, the hurting stalemate no longer has to be mutual (depending upon the motivation and optimism of the other side), and in some conditions one side may be experiencing a hurting stalemate while the other is experiencing an enticing opportunity⁷, and accounts for the possibility of differing reasons for motivation in wanting to end conflicts (Pruitt 1997: 238). When ripeness is expanded and its various parts are treated as variables rather than an absolute state, hypotheses become testable to a much greater degree (Pruitt 2005: 12). Motivation and optimism are invaluable in a combined ripeness model.

1.6 Negotiation Readiness

Negotiation readiness is a theory separate from readiness and is put forth by Spector (2002). It also is meant to be an addition to Zartman’s ripeness and is based on the concept of military readiness “...which emphasises both the willingness *and* capacity to act or respond in armed conflict situations.” (Spector 2002: 79). Willingness and capacity also form the basis for whether or not a party is ready to negotiate. Spector is unwilling to concede that the perception of a hurting stalemate and the motivation to negotiate represent a sufficient condition to initiate negotiations without adequate capacity to successfully negotiate. Capacity is defined as a reasonable “...degree of political skill, resources and power...” (Spector 2002: 90) necessary to have the potential to succeed. He postulates that should a party not have sufficient negotiation capacity (tools, training, resources) they will be more willing to fight out of fear of a power or skill imbalance that could lead to their exploitation, or being forced into making unwanted concessions. This could be the result of either structural or perceptual factors. He believes that in this case negotiations will be avoided, even if other criteria of ripeness are present and they

⁷ Pruitt (1997) gives the example of the US and North Vietnam in ending the Vietnam War. The US was in a hurting stalemate and North Vietnam was experiencing an enticing opportunity (238).

possess the requisite amount of willingness (Spector 2002: 79-80). Capacity links to optimism in Pruitt's model: in a case such as the one described above their optimism would be sufficiently low, based on their acknowledged lack of skill, so as to preclude reaching symmetry. Willingness and capacity are perceptual factors that make ripeness more responsive and helps to provide a better explanation of why parties enter into negotiations (Spector 2002: 95).

Chapter 2: Related Theories

Other theories related to ripeness and readiness add to the completeness of a combined model. They help to explain how additional inputs into the model affect impediments to negotiation and potentially lead to ripeness. In the study of other theories it is important to look at both those that add and those that detract in order to gain a more complete understanding.

2.1 Resistant Reactions

A limitation of ripeness is referred to as 'resistant reactions' (Zartman 2000: 238). Comprised of four categories, only two will be examined here.⁸ The first is that of a true believer. This is when, due to ideological or religious beliefs, increases in pain lead not to a hurting stalemate, but to an increase in resolve to continue the fight, believing in the superiority of one's beliefs over the other (Zartman 2000: 239). It is easy to imagine a situation where, for example, an extremist religious group believes that suffering and pain are a test from their deity. This causes a situation where the pain justifies the renewal of efforts. Decisions to continue the conflict in spite of a hurting stalemate can make it difficult to know when a ripe moment is reached as faith may render a hurting stalemate meaningless. Conflict resolution efforts between distinctly different true believer groups are made more difficult due to communication problems resulting from a failure to understand the other side's interests and find common ground (Leng and Regan 2003: 433) which may delay the onset of ripeness or prevent the ripe moment from being seized. Svensson (2007), interpreting Leng and Regan (2003), says: "Studying interstate conflicts, they report that difference in religious identities in conflicts fought between countries significantly decreases the likelihood of settlement." (Svensson 2007: 932). Fortunately, this paper deals with ripeness and not lasting settlements, and as was seen in 1993 ripe moments can still be reached assuming a unilateral solution is not possible. It is difficult to imagine how a ripe moment could exist for a true believer, but they can, as seen in the Oslo Accord between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Israeli government. Note that a failure to implement the outcomes of the accords does not take away from the fact that the moment was ripe for negotiations (Zartman 1997: 198).

Related to the concept of a true believer is the culture that supports the notion of true believers (Ekwuachi-Ford 2009: 29). This is clearly seen in both secular and religious groups. Japanese self-sacrifice during the Second World War is an example of the former and the belief by extremist Muslims of immediate reward in the afterlife as a result of dying for their cause is an example of the latter. Cultures that support the true believer notion are the nemeses of ripeness as they are willing to push beyond the bounds of a hurting stalemate in the hopes that their ideology will win out over the other (again perhaps rendering it useless). It may be that

⁸ The other two are 'don't give up without a fight' and the use of excessive force by one side against the other (Ekwuachi-Ford, 2009: 28).

ripeness is not achieved between belligerents of this nature. The ideological grounds that characterise the Cold War is one such example. Western democratic/capitalist states faced off with socialist/communist eastern states for over forty years. The ‘victory’ of the West came not through a negotiated settlement, nor an admission of the superiority of one over the other, nor was there ever a conflict-ending ripe moment. In this situation it was unilateral ideological means that won the conflict, without the losing side actually explicitly admitting that the other had a superior system.

Walter (1997) notes that religious differences play no significant role in the difficulty experienced in the settlement of intrastate conflicts though, as above, they do in interstate conflicts. “...weak support was offered for the connection between religious wars and the absence of settlement” (Walter 1997: 356). This is simply due to the general difficulty in the pursuit of bilateral solutions to civil wars (Walter 1997: 356) and not somehow a mitigation of true believers/cultures that support true believers.⁹ Svensson has this to say about solving conflicts in a true believer context:

...multi-faith dialogue may not be the most important priority if we want to seek ways to reduce armed conflicts. Much of the policy programs dealing with religion and conflict have been building on the implicit assumption that religious cleavages enhance intractability of conflicts and that religious dissimilarity therefore constitutes a severe obstacle to peaceful solutions. Yet this assumption is not empirically supported. Conflicts with parties belonging to different religious traditions are not more difficult to settle than conflicts where parties belong to the same religious tradition (Svensson 2007: 944).

If true, this supposition can provide optimism for those involved in conflicts where different religions are represented on various sides. However it also means that there needs to be a refocus of efforts away from trying to reconcile religious differences and focus on the direct causes of the conflict.

2.2 Rational Choice

Part of shock theory (discussed below) states that impediments are often based on irrational choices made by leaders of the parties to the dispute, and something such as a shock can cause leaders to rethink their strategy in a more rational manner. This assumes that the decisions have been irrational. Rational choice theory contradicts this assumption, and rather than rationality as a psychological concept (i.e. rationality = sense and sound judgment), it is largely an economic one (which is applied in other social sciences) in which actors will always maximise utility (or expected utility) based on the information at hand with which to make their decisions (very similar to cost benefit analysis as discussed above). According to this theory, if a decision is not rational it must therefore be either ‘extrarational’ that is utility maximisation in the interest of the group at an individual cost; or ‘irrational’ which in this instance means that the decision neither maximises utility for the individual or the group (Chong 2000: 12).

⁹ During the period 1940-90 only 20 percent of intrastate conflicts reached a negotiated settlement as opposed to 55 percent of interstate conflicts (Walter 1997: 335).

Decisions are not made *a priori*, and are subject to several factors. One such factor is constraints, such as the number of trained soldiers or tanks available to commit to a battle, and “...an agent is assumed to make the feasible choice (feasible in that it is not prohibited by constraints) that results in the highest possible value of his or her utility value...” (Green 2002: 5). An important shortcoming is that it is a static model, that is it only accounts for a choice made at a specific time and cannot take into account changing circumstances once the decision is made (Green 2002: 5). Flawed or wrong information used to make the decision does not make the decision inherently irrational if the ‘decider’ believes the information to be accurate, or at least the best information available, nor does *our* imperfect understanding of what information *we* think another actor is basing their decision on make it irrational (see Popper (2000) for a more exhaustive discussion on Rational Choice Theory). An example of an observer’s flawed understanding of another’s rational choice is found in Allison (1969):

...nations quit when costs outweigh the benefits. North Vietnam will surrender when she realizes ‘that continued fighting can only generate additional costs without hope of compensating gains, this expectation being largely the consequence of the previous application of force by the dominant side.’...Bombing North Vietnam increases the pain and thus increases the probability of surrender. This proposition and prediction are not without meaning. That -‘other things being equal’- nations are more likely to surrender when the strategic cost-benefit balance is negative, is true (717).

Allison’s flawed understanding of North Vietnam’s rational choice in 1969 led him to conclude that it was only a matter of time until they surrendered to the U.S. due to mounting costs and attrition. Of course, this never happened and North Vietnam eventually succeeded in unifying itself with the South under communist rule. He failed to take into account the ideological reasons (see comments on true believers above) that motivated North Vietnam to continue the conflict. Allison based his understanding of North Vietnam’s rational choice on his own understanding of the conflict, not on theirs. Similarly, the United States continued fighting the conflict long after North Vietnam thought they would capitulate due to its belief in its own moral superiority over communism which fuelled its desire to achieve total victory.

2.3 Schrödinger’s Cat

Rational choice theory brings to mind another physics metaphor. One of the first times that I felt there could be similar concepts between the fields of physics and conflict resolution was when I studied rational choice theory. It brought to mind how it would be nearly impossible to have a perfect knowledge of the other side’s decision making information and factors at the time the decision is made, illustrated above. Only in hindsight can it be known if there was a perfect knowledge. This is also a critique of ripeness -often it can only be known to have existed after the fact- and if a negotiation is successful most scholars will then point to the ripeness of the situation. This brought to mind the case of Schrödinger’s cat.

Erwin Schrödinger (1980) created a thought experiment¹⁰ in 1935 to counter the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics (Faye 2008), which basically states that is not

¹⁰ To my knowledge Schrödinger never *actually* performed this experiment.

possible to know the state of a subatomic particle until it is observed: “...each and every particle has a probability of being in any state. It does not exist in a particular state until an experimenter observes it” (PBS 2011). Schrödinger proposed his thought experiment to demonstrate how the theory falls apart at scales larger than the subatomic (Unknown 2000). It is stated in simple terms as follows: a cat is locked into a sealed box. Inside the box are a small amount of radioactive material, a Geiger counter, a vial of hydrocyanic acid (poison), and a small hammer. The cat is prevented from interacting with the other items in the box. The items are rigged together such that if there is any amount of radioactive decay, the Geiger counter will detect it, which will cause the hammer to fall and break the vial of poison, which in turn poisons the cat, which then dies. It is equally certain that radioactive decay will and will not occur over a given period of time. Because the box is sealed, it cannot be known if the cat is alive or dead at any given moment, and therefore the cat is both alive *and* dead at the same time. It is only when the box is opened and it is possible to observe the cat that we know if it is actually alive or dead, that is the state of the cat can only be “...*resolved* by direct observation.” (Schrödinger 1980).

This particular thought experiment is relative to both rational choice and ripeness theory: so far only once the information used to make a decision is known can we understand whether or not the decision was rational; only once the negotiations are successful can we know if the situation was ripe. It can therefore be stated that the choice is simultaneously rational and irrational and that conflicts are both ripe and unripe for negotiation until we can observe the outcome. I find this intolerable, and in fact Schrödinger used the exercise to demonstrate the bizarre nature of quantum mechanics. I think that it does an admirable job of describing the problems I see with rational choice and ripeness. Schrödinger sums up by saying: “There is a difference between a shaky or out-of-focus photograph and a snapshot of clouds and fog banks” (Schrödinger 1980).

2.4 Central Coalition Theory

As discussed previously, a significant shortcoming of ripeness is that it is designed around bilateral conflicts. In order to overcome this deficiency we turn to the central coalition theory. Pruitt (2007) views belligerents who are working together from all sides as members of a coalition whose purpose is to engage in meaningful efforts to end the dispute. This common purpose can have a unifying effect though success is in no way guaranteed, but it allows a work around to the bilateral limitations of ripeness.

Central coalition theory is a generalization of readiness theory to the multiparty case. It assumes that the parties who enter and stay in a negotiation all share a readiness for negotiation and, hence, that they are motivated to end the conflict and optimistic about what can be achieved from negotiation. It does not assume that they see eye to eye on the issues, as do most other coalition theories, but only that they are willing to engage in a common task of seeking agreement (Pruitt 2007: 1531).

The most effective central coalitions will be comprised of members of the entire political spectrum involved the conflict, e.g. hawks, moderates, neutrals and doves from each side. The broader the coalition, the greater the agreement across the political spectrum, and the more likely

that the agreement will be adhered to (i.e. greater 'buy in' will make parties feel that they had a role in the peace process and therefore they have a vested interest in seeing the peace succeed). Part of the strategy of a central coalition is to include the majority of hawks on each side, such that the those who are not included (have not reached readiness) are isolated from the rest in an effort to politically isolate them. Note that not all hawks are capable of military or paramilitary action and therefore once isolated may not be able to act as spoilers. A more narrow coalition will make coming up with an agreement easier, but it is less likely that it will be respected by the parties (especially hawks) that were not part of the coalition (Pruitt 2007: 1531-36). There is strong impetus for groups to become a member of the central coalition to ensure that not only are they are part of the solution, but that their interests are protected in any settlement. Perhaps a process based on a central coalition can eventually help Afghanistan to resolve the insurgency and bring peace to that country.

2.5 Shock Theory

Shock theory states that "...there will be a return to rationality when a sudden striking event -a "shock"- jolts the mind and stimulates rethinking (Pruitt 2005: 4). This is similar to but not equivalent to the catastrophe in Zartman's model as spoken to above; the shock stimulates a reconsideration of the manner in which a party prosecutes the conflict. The shock can involve sudden, considerable cost or great risk, and depending on the exact nature of the shock it can be a negative or positive event. Pruitt (2005) lists the loss of life during the Tet offensive in Vietnam as an example of the former and the visit of Anwar Sadat to Israel as an example of the latter (2005: 4). Negative "Shocks...tend to cut through specious rationalizations and undermine the rosy predictions of people who have a stake in continuing the conflict" (Pruitt 2005: 4). I would further expand shock theory and link it to readiness by saying that a negative shock will increase motivation, while a positive shock will increase optimism.

2.6 New Leaders

The new leader theory posits that a change of leadership may be required -on one or both sides of the conflict- in order to be able to reach ripeness. This change in leader may displace a legitimate leader (valid spokesman), who is an obstacle to ripeness, with another who is more favourable to resolution. Yitzhak Shamir was the elected Prime Minister of Israel who took a hard line stance against Palestinian rights, and the election of Yitzhak Rabin in 1992 paved the way to the signing of the Oslo Accords. A change in leader often leads to a rethinking of the conflict, and the new leader has the opportunity to disavow the former policies (should they choose to do so).

...the right set of circumstances may result from the advent of new leadership not as committed to the goals or methods of their predecessors, a change of goals or level of commitment on the part of the adversaries' patrons, the availability of new resources from which to construct an innovative solution...and/or a change of priorities within the elite of one or both adversaries (Mitchell 1995: 7).

This move towards ripeness may be incidental and unintentional, that is the leader may have changed as a result of regularly scheduled elections (as in the case of Israel in 1992) and not

as a result of any conscious effort by a party to move closer to ripeness. While it may be beneficial, it might not be possible or advisable, to engineer such an event for the express purpose of reaching ripeness. It is important to note that a new leader does not in all cases necessarily bring a situation closer to ripeness, only that they *may*. New leaders are not required on both sides of the conflict in order to benefit ripeness. If the new leader believes in trying to move towards a process to manage or resolve the conflict, they may be in a position to remove spoilers and other impediments from ripeness (Pruitt 2005: 5). A new leader could find themselves in a position to apologise to the other party for past wrongs, i.e. blaming the former leader for past transgressions; an admission of guilt may be necessary before the process can move forward (Ekwuachi-Ford 2009: 107).

2.7 Third Parties

Third party intervention can also help to remove impediments to negotiations and lead groups in conflict to a ripe situation.¹¹ Third parties can bring a fresh and unbiased perspective to the conflict and can serve as honest brokers due to the fact that they are not directly involved in the conflict. They can offer good offices for the exchange of messages in order to build trust, provide facilities and funding for negotiations, and synchronise concessions between the parties. As a trust building exercise third party interventions often take the form of a Track II process (Pruitt 2005: 6). A third party does not have to be a super-power representative or head of state. They can be anyone who has a fresh perspective on the conflict and is trusted by the belligerents. It is often an indication that ripeness has been reached when both sides request third party intervention (Rubin 1991: 243).

Rubin (1991: 243) warns against blindly requesting or accepting third party intervention. Not all mediators are equally skilled, and in fact many may be incompetent. An incompetent mediator risks prolonging the conflict through ineffective conflict resolution skills. If chosen unwisely, parties to a conflict may select a mediator who is not truly impartial, one who could try to guide the negotiations to a conclusion either unfairly in favour of one side or in a direction that neither want. If this last point were to happen, it is unlikely that the agreement would endure, as neither side would have the necessary buy-in to the solution.

The definition of ripeness depends on the identity of the third party, and thereby the scale of possible interventions will vary. Kriesberg (1992) in Hancock (2001) proposes that the possible definition of ripeness is more limited when scrutinized by official third parties such as governments than by an unofficial negotiator such as a university professor. This is due to the relative amount of resources available to each, that is if a government intervenes it will be on a much larger scale and therefore the consequences of failure will be greater. These potential negative consequences put limits on how an ‘important’ third party will define ripeness and under what circumstances they are willing to intervene (Hancock 2001: 202-203).

¹¹ I think that this is rather obvious, but stating it explicitly brings it into the fold of ripeness and adds to the completeness and versatility of the theory.

2.8 Turning Points

Turning Points are also part of the negotiation process, and can happen during stage of a conflict cycle. Daniel Druckman (2001) defines turning points as: “events or processes that mark passage from one stage to the next, signalling progress from earlier to later phases” (Druckman 2001: 520). Turning points, distinct from ripeness and readiness, are characterised in negotiations by events such as: signing agreements, removing boulders from the road, or developing new formulas for bargaining -obviously this is not an exhaustive list. Turning points can be internal or external to the negotiations, and something as random as a change of public opinion can signal a turning point (Druckman 2001: 520). While Druckman conceptualises turning points as positive events, I would say they can lead either closer to or farther away from ripeness depending on the actual event. The election of Hamas in the West Bank in 2005 is one example of a ‘negative’ turning point. Reaching ripeness is a positive turning point.

Chapter 3: Engaging With Ripeness

Ripeness and the associated theories can be used to create a theoretical framework within which to examine the processes that lead to it. The foregoing theories, if adopted by practitioners, can help them to recognise ripeness and work towards it with parties in conflict. What follows is some methods of creating ripeness and the introduction of the Combined Ripeness Model.

3.1 Creating Ripeness

Ripeness comes and goes (Haass 1990: 145) and when it appears it must be seized -but not forced (Zartman 2001: 9). Perhaps the greatest criticism of Zartman’s early work on ripeness, conceivably through misunderstanding, was by Haass (1990). Speaking about the dilemma faced by those -such as great powers- in a position to intervene in the hopes of helping to create ripeness, he advocates caution and warns of the possibility of creating more harm than good if one were to do nothing while waiting for a mutually hurting stalemate. Regarding the need for a mutually hurting stalemate and potential for the associated catastrophe, Haass has said:

This is not an argument for doing nothing...Standing back may also be irresponsible. And to allow a catastrophe to happen in the mistaken view that crisis and tragedy are prerequisites to successful diplomacy not only ignores the costs of conflict but is shortsighted: some costly conflicts have not led to settlement, and some settlements not been preceded by costly conflicts (Haass 1990: 141).

Perhaps it was due in part to Haass’ criticism of his work that Zartman chose to refine his theory and has stipulated many strategies for parties and negotiators to foster ripe moments. All of the theorists whose work is examined in this paper agree that ripeness can be influenced, and that it should be undertaken in a cautious and informed manner. But what can a party in a position of influence do to help bring the parties to ripeness?

Zartman, perhaps as a direct response to Haass' earlier criticisms, writes: "The absence of ripeness is not a valid reason for inaction" (Zartman and Soto 2010: 6). He is once again the most prolific writer on this subject, and has co-authored a book entitled *Timing Mediation Initiatives* (Zartman and Soto 2010). The manner in which belligerents or third parties can bring about ripeness is discussed at length. One way is by indicating to the belligerents the objective conditions that exist that point to the existence of a mutually hurting stalemate in the hopes that perceptions will change. As a defining characteristic of a mutually hurting stalemate is the perception that one exists, convincing the parties of it will influence the moment of ripeness. It is equally important to promote the belief in the existence of a way out to each side, the other precondition for ripeness (Zartman and Soto 2010: 7). Zartman's mediator is no bystander waiting to seize a ripe moment; she is actively engaged with each side by encouraging the perception of a stalemate either directly or indirectly, selling possible solutions, encouraging perceptions of stalemate, and showing creativity in being able to reframe the conflict in an effort to bring the parties to the table (Zartman and Soto 2010: 29-33). Interveners need to be able to influence the creation of ripe opportunities:

If those tomatoes are not ripening fast enough to suit us, then perhaps we will just have to pluck them and ripen them artificially; they may not taste quite as sweet as they would have had they been allowed to ripen in the sun's natural rays, but the disadvantage is more than offset by the fact that we have seized control of nature and have helped it along to suit *our* needs and tastes (Rubin 1991: 240).

Diplomatic, economic, and military measures are tools an intervener can use to create an enticing opportunity to negotiate if they represent a sufficiently powerful intervener (Zartman and Soto 2010: 35-39) and if these enticements are attractive to at least one of the parties (Rubin 1991: 241). These measures may take the form of 'carrots' or 'sticks' and both may represent an enticing opportunity (i.e. a stick is nothing more than a negative enticement). Care must be exercised when coercion is used to create ripeness; apart from the obvious risks involved, the method may be perceived as unethical and therefore any output may be seen as disingenuous. Enticements may be something simple, such as facilitating an exchange of information or providing a venue. Such was the case during the Camp David negotiations leading to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. The negotiations over the Sinai were at an impasse: Israel wanted to keep it and Egypt wanted it back. This went on until the mediator was able to have them explain to each other why they each wanted it. For Egypt it was a matter of sovereignty; Israel was concerned about security. Due to the facilitation of the exchange of this information, Israel agreed to return the land to Egypt who in turn agreed to demilitarise parts of it (Fisher and Ury 1991: 41-42).

A further way to help create ripeness is to do nothing. "The passage of time often has the effect of changing elements in such a way that a new reality emerges..." (Rubin 1991: 241). This type of intervention is tricky and must be monitored closely to ensure that the hurting stalemate does not go too far, and that the moment of ripeness is not missed completely. Note that there is a difference between deciding to do nothing as a strategy and doing nothing through lack of strategy (though the outcome may be the same, one speaks of competency and the other speaks of incompetency).

One of the most innovative ways that I have come across towards influencing ripeness is through capacity building. Spector (2002) hypothesises that in development situations parties are reluctant to negotiate due to insufficient negotiation capacity and that disagreements are prone to escalate into conflicts (Spector 2002: 79). Providing greater capacity, either through training or additional resources, makes it more likely that parties will have sufficient optimism to negotiate rather than fight (Spector 2002: 88). The advantage is that parties may feel confident enough to enter into negotiations, or remain at the negotiating table if already there, and avoid conflict altogether.

Influencing the move towards ripeness is not the exclusive purview of third parties; parties to conflict can do so also. A way that this is accomplished is through what is referred to as a game of chicken, where one or both sides threaten or otherwise coerce the other into believing the direness of the path upon which they have embarked (Rubin 1989: 204). This ties into the imminent catastrophe model where each ponders the consequences of continuing the conflict, possibly realising that they have reached a hurting stalemate.

A more constructive way of reaching ripeness is

...through the introduction of new opportunities for joint gain. If each side can be persuaded that there is more to gain than to lose through collaboration -that by working jointly, rewards can be harvested that stand to advance each side's respective agenda... (Rubin 1989: 205).

This could be seen as a stalemate (new cost benefit analysis) without the imminent catastrophe necessarily lurking over the heads of each side, potentially turning the situation into a mutually enticing opportunity.

Other ripeness building activities can include: education, such as learning the actual costs of the conflict (Haass 1990: 146), being available to the parties so as to take advantage of the ripe moment when it occurs (Crocker in Zartman 2000: 243), helping leaders develop viable options leading to negotiations and freeing them from constraints (Mitchell 1995: 6), and through helping to initiate a conciliatory spiral. This last is the opposite of a conflict spiral where each side makes moves to de-escalate the conflict through small concessions to the other. The concessions can be real or symbolic and each side takes turns making them. They serve two purposes: to de-escalate the conflict and to build trust (Rubin 1991: 242). In the same way that the entrapment model can lead to a hurting stalemate, in these circumstances the conciliatory spiral can entrap parties into a constructive cycle of de-escalation. Through this, the parties could eventually feel that they have invested too much in the peace to go back to conflict (Rubin 1991: 242).

3.2 Combined Ripeness Model

After all this, why look at an integration of the theories? I think it is amply clear that no one theory of ripeness can point or lead to ripeness in all cases, and there are many limitations of each which means that they can't always work in real time or explain past conflict situations. Zartman (1997: 211) notes the lack of ripeness' satisfactory explanation of the processes leading

up to the Oslo Accords, which was clearly a ripe moment. If this is true, then conflict resolution practitioners must be able to have as many options available to them as possible. Practitioners need to eschew specialisation in one specific theory of ripeness and embrace becoming a ripeness generalist. In the present climate of complex conflict environments, the practitioner of only a single school of ripeness will eventually fail.

In order to start the integration process, it will first be useful to summarise the main concepts of each theory as they are described above (see Table 2). It is quickly apparent that the various parts of ripeness and readiness can be divided into two categories: structural (green) and perceptual (grey), and in fact this is what Zartman did when he refined his theory by dividing his criteria into the two categories and shifted the criteria for a valid spokesman from the perceptual to the structural (Zartman 2000: 235).

It is clearly shown that the majority of concepts related to ripeness are perceptual, and that all of these factors can help contribute to ripeness (but are not all necessary simultaneously). It is up to the astute belligerent or third party to recognise which factors are currently contributing to ripeness and to act upon them once sufficient perceptual factors are recognised by both sides in order to initiate negotiations. As these factors are often subjective (even if based on objective criteria, such as real costs, actual deaths, amount of destruction) a certain closeness to the conflict is necessary in order to recognise ripeness. It is imperative that the conflict resolution practitioner realise that the various principles and theories are not mutually exclusive.

Table 2 – Summary of Ripeness/Readiness Theories

Theory	Concepts			
Ripeness	Mutually hurting stalemate	Recent or impending catastrophe	Perception of a way out	Valid spokesman
Ripeness (Y2K+)	Mutually hurting stalemate		Perception of a way out	
Second Generation Ripeness	Accord is desirable	Leadership is sufficiently strong to compromise or too weak to avoid compromise	Formula involving benefits for all participants	Commonly accepted process
Political Stability Model	Power		Legitimacy	
Four Models	Mutually hurting stalemate	Impending mutual catastrophe	Entrapment	Enticing opportunity
Readiness	Motivation		Optimism	
Negotiation Readiness	Willingness		Capacity	

Note: Colours show the division between perceptual (grey) and structural (green) elements of Ripeness and Readiness.

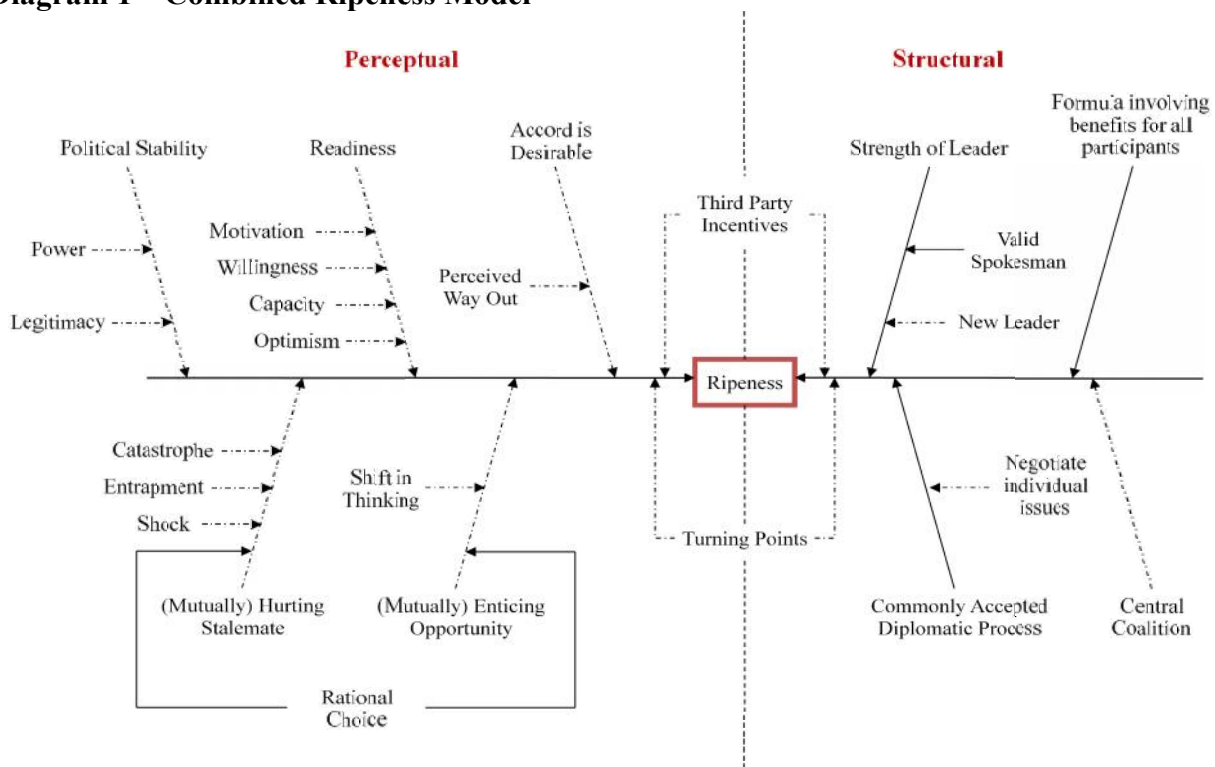
In a practical illustration of the abstract, Diagram 1 illustrates one way in which the various aspects of ripeness can be shown in a combined fashion (the diagram is not meant to be

viewed as a continuum or spectrum, but merely as a consolidated representation of the perceptual and structural elements that *may* contribute to ripeness). As can be seen, the diagram is divided along perceptual and structural lines as per Table 2 and outlined in Chapter 2 and 3. Hyphenated arrows are meant to indicate factors that may or may not be present; solid arrows indicate those criteria that are felt to be necessary. The various branches are cross-theory and have elements grouped together by similar criteria. The branches are not necessarily interdependent on each other, though in many cases they are complimentary. For example, a specific conflict may demonstrate a catastrophe leading to a hurting stalemate for one party, an enticing opportunity for the other, demonstrate sufficient motivation and optimism to reach symmetry, as well as the necessary structural conditions for the possibility of reaching a solution on the road to ripeness. It is equally possible that there is a mutually hurting stalemate and a perceived way out in a basic model of ripeness; circumstances will determine which parts of the integrated model are applicable.

An integrated model helps explain Paris Peace Talks relating to the end of the Vietnam war. The US position was clear: they had reached a hurting stalemate in budgetary, human, military and political costs. North Vietnam was offered an enticing opportunity: the US agreed to stop the unrestricted bombing of North Vietnam as a precondition of them joining the talks. Neither ripeness nor the four models of ripeness satisfactorily explain this condition on their own as in both theories the hurting stalemate and enticing opportunity are both mutual. This problem is resolved by looking at the peace process from an integrated perspective. As can readily be seen, the different theories find related concepts in other theorists' work and integrate together into a functioning, more robust whole. Some explanation of how and why the diagram is structured the way it is follows.

When we construct the combined model, there are no longer the absolutes of any one theory, allowing the analyst to use any of the elements in any logical combination to explain ripeness in a given situation. It is thought that the model may be useful at different levels of public or political conflict in the public sphere. Driving the branches of the hurting stalemate and enticing opportunity is rational choice as it is the cost-benefit analysis that compels perception of how a party is faring in the conflict, and what further costs (if any) are acceptable to expend in pursuit of future objectives. Some of the branches represent only one theory, such as the political stability branch, while others cross over and incorporate more than is hypothesised by a single theorist. The hurting stalemate branch combines theoretical elements of Zartman, Mitchell and Pruitt. One divergence from ripeness here is that the hurting stalemate and enticing opportunities are not required to be mutual (though they may be). The concept of catastrophe (recent or impending) is strongly linked to a mutually hurting stalemate in the original ripeness model by Zartman and in the discussion of four models by Mitchell. A shock can also cause, or cause the perception of, a stalemate; I have argued above so too is entrapment but a way station on the road to a hurting stalemate. Second generation ripeness adds the perceptual element that an accord is desirable, and I have linked the notion of a perceived way out to it (not that big of a mental leap to make). Readiness and negotiation readiness are closely related and so form the elements of the (combined) readiness branch. Enticing opportunity, and the associated shift in thinking that can lead to such an opportunity, is the last branch on the perceptual side of the model. Fewer and less complex are the structural elements of the model.

Diagram 1 – Combined Ripeness Model



Three of four of the branches are provided by second generation ripeness and comprise the commonly accepted process, the formula involving benefits for all participants, and the strength of leader (either sufficiently strong or sufficiently weak). To the latter branch have been added the valid spokesman and new leader concepts from Zartman and Pruitt. The central coalition may be present on the structural side in the case of a multilateral process. Turning points and third party interventions of all types span both the perceptual and structural sides of the model as these types of inputs can influence either type of element, depending on its exact nature. Note that the use of any given branch on either the perceptual or structural side of the model does not preclude the inclusion of any other. This means that multiple branches on either side can be used to explain ripeness and that the use of one theory does not exclude the use of another.

Chapter 4: Applying the Combined Model

To show the utility of the Combined Ripeness Model, it will be applied to two examples where the use of a single theory provided an inadequate explanation of what happened: in the Philippines the model predicted ripeness on two separate occasions where ripeness was not attained. In the Northern Ireland conflict ripeness was not predicted as the situation did not fit the model, but it was attained anyway.

4.1 The Philippines

The first example will be to apply the combined model to the Philippine conflict, where negotiations did not start when predicted by the stability model on two occasions (Druckman and Green 1995: 310). The first was in 1972 when the Marcos regime instituted martial law. The

explanation is: “Negotiations if the NDF had not been new and the regime had lacked confidence” (Druckman and Green 1995: 310 Table 12-2). The NDF *was* new and the regime *did not* lack confidence. Is this explanation reasonable and acceptable given the circumstances? Perhaps, but by looking at other theories a more comprehensive explanation is possible. Both sides had met the pre-conditions to select ‘negotiate’ as their course of action as described in detail by the authors, yet the ripe moment eluded the situation. The regime was evaluated as having increasing levels of both power and legitimacy (case 1B on Table 1), therefore dictating ‘negotiate’ as the course of action. The NDF insurgents were evaluated as having decreasing levels of both power and legitimacy (case 1A on Table 1), also dictating ‘negotiate’ as the course of action. According to the political stability model this is a ripe moment, but as has been previously noted negotiations did not ensue. By looking at the readiness branch of the combined ripeness model some insights can be gained to explain why it was not reached.

It can be said that the Marcos regime lacked sufficient motivation to initiate negotiations due to its ‘triumphant’ position, that is it was still in a position to pursue unilateral solutions to the conflict. The fact that the military remained loyal to the regime would have further reduced the motivation to negotiate as they continued to have the means to effectively combat the insurgency. The regime would have been optimistic that it could negotiate an agreement favourable to its cause, but optimism would have been reduced as this was a ‘people’s’ movement and perhaps viewed as irrational. The NDF can be said to have had a high level of motivation to reach an agreement without resorting to force out of a fear of loss of life, a lack of weapons and munitions, and other costs. They would have had a low level of optimism due to negotiating from a position of ‘desperation’. Applying the readiness formula/notation from above, it can be expressed that symmetry was not achieved, showing that negotiations would not have started in this case (where ↑, ↓ and ⇅ are high, low and neutral values, respectively; M is motivation, O is optimism and S is the desired state of symmetry; subscript R represents regime and subscript I represents insurgents):

$$(\downarrow)M_R \times (\uparrow)O_R \neq S \neq (\uparrow)M_I \times (\downarrow)O_I$$

Ripeness, Second Generation Ripeness, and Negotiation Readiness can also contribute to explaining the failure to reach ripeness. Simply stated, as the conflict was new, there had not yet been sufficient hurting on either side to create a mutually hurting stalemate; the presence of a catastrophe was absent (nor looming), nor had there been an appreciable shock. While an accord was desirable on the part of the insurgents, from the government’s point of view one was unnecessary as they held a position of high (increasing) power and legitimacy. The regime would have had a low level of willingness to negotiate because, well, it didn’t have to. The insurgents would have had a high level of willingness, but as a new, ad hoc organisation likely had very low capacity.

The second such occasion the tables were turned. In 1985 Marcos called a snap presidential election. The results of the election seemed to indicate that Corazon Aquino was the victor; however the National Assembly confirmed Marcos had won. At this time, the regime’s power and legitimacy were both declining as a result (case 9B on Table 1). Conversely, the insurgents’ power and legitimacy were increasing as a result of massive popular opposition to Marcos (case 9A on Table 1). The political stability model would indicate that each side would

select ‘negotiate’ as their course of action. No negotiations were forthcoming. The authors give the following reason for non-negotiation: “Negotiations if Marcos had stolen the election from Corazon Aquino and repressed People Power”¹² (Druckman and Green 1995: 310 Table 12-2). This reason is unsatisfactory; this action would have decreased legitimacy -stolen election- and increased relative power -control National Assembly- (case 7B on Table 1) and therefore the course of action would have been ‘do not negotiate’ in any case (the actual outcome). Once again, the combined ripeness model can provide some insights into what prevented negotiations at this time.

It seems that the winds of change were blowing, and this was likely perceived by the insurgents. If this is the case, entrapment may have prevented them from trying to open negotiations, sensing victory was within their grasp without having to give ground in negotiations. Certainly they would not have been able to perceive a negotiated way out of the situation with Marcos hanging on to power (as this had failed in the past). At the same time, they would have viewed the ‘official’ results of the election invalid and their motivation to negotiate with an illegitimate, election stealing regime would have been low. By the same token, their optimism for favourable negotiation results would have been low. Similarly, the motivation and optimism of the regime would have been low as: a. Marcos knew he had stolen the election; and b. support was growing for the insurgents, especially among the military. It can be expressed thusly (where ↑, ↓ and ⇕ are high, low and neutral values, respectively; M is motivation, O is optimism and S is the desired state of symmetry; subscript R represents regime and subscript I represents insurgents):

$$(\downarrow)M_R \times (\downarrow)O_R \neq S \neq (\downarrow)M_I \times (\downarrow)O_I$$

While in this case $M \times O$ for both sides will be low, and possibly nearly equal, it must be remembered that for readiness to function they must not just be equal to each other, but equal to symmetry, which is some minimum threshold value.

Ripeness was not met in this case for structural as well as perceptual reasons. For example Marcos, while technically being a valid spokesman for the government, no longer legitimately represented the people in the eyes of many of his citizens and the international community. Nor was he sufficiently strong or weak politically, either to force compromise or to have compromise forced upon him, due to the exceptional nature of how he had remained in office. In any case, Marcos stepped down in short order due to popular opposition and international pressure, and Aquino assumed the presidency. With a new leader, relative power and legitimacy levels shifted such that in the following year ripeness was attained, a ceasefire declared, and negotiations undertaken.

¹² This did in fact happen for an extremely short period of time, during which negotiations were not initiated. Shortly after the election Marcos did in fact step down in favour of Aquino, discussed further below.

4.2 Northern Ireland

The second case is the Northern Ireland conflict. The application of ripeness theory to the Northern Irish peace process is criticised in O’Kane (2006) as he seeks to evaluate the usefulness of its claims. He points out several limitations of ripeness in this context that show its weaknesses, however it will be shown that most of these limitations can be overcome if the combined ripeness model is used. In order to structure his argument, he follows several propositions from Zartman (2000) and offers critiques in the Northern Ireland context.

The article states that it is likely that a mutually hurting stalemate was reached between the IRA and the government of the United Kingdom in 1990, and this is evidenced by the fact that each side was able to hurt the other but not succeed in a unilateral resolution. It is indicated that a hurting stalemate simply between these two parties is insufficient as there were many more parties to the conflict than just the IRA and the UK government. A further argument is that it is unlikely that there was a perception of a way out amongst all the belligerents. He argues that the subjective nature of a mutually hurting stalemate (even if based on objective factors) is nearly impossible for outsiders to perceive, knowing when it has been reached to act upon, and therefore is not a practical theory. The article also talks about the shortcomings of ripeness in a multilateral scenario and the difficulty of all the sides perceiving a mutually hurting stalemate simultaneously. He concludes with: “But if one wants to understand why the peace process of the 1990s came about and resulted in the [Good Friday Agreement], a wider focus is needed than an application of ripeness theory would suggest one adopts” (O’Kane 2006: 283). Indeed O’Kane’s confusion and contentions with ripeness theory can largely be resolved by applying the combined model. Having the advantage of hindsight we can say that the moment was indeed ripe for negotiation as the Good Friday Agreement was signed, largely settling the disputes and ending the violence in Northern Ireland.

First of all, the subjective nature of the perception of ripeness cannot be easily overcome, however this can be mitigated by applying objective factors such as those contained in the political stability ripeness model. The following levels of legitimacy and power are estimations only -no empirical study was undertaken for this paper- but they are based on a good knowledge of the factors surrounding the situation. At a glance, it would seem that the regime, or UK government in this case, would have likely been experiencing constant levels of both power and legitimacy. According to Table 1 this indicates ‘negotiate’. The insurgent group, or IRA, was likely experiencing an increasing level of legitimacy as they had agreed to a ceasefire in 1994 (O’Kane 2006: 270) and either a constant or increasing level of power, both of which would indicate ‘negotiate’ and so lends support to the actual historical outcome.

Further, Pruitt (2007) has done an in depth study of the processes leading to the negotiations and has determined that readiness was present thereby indicating ripeness. He states: “Motivation to end conflict (and hence openness to negotiation) develops to the extent that all unilateral tactics seem unworkable...” (Pruitt 2007: 1526). Britain had exhausted unilateral tactics¹³ and therefore became motivated to enter into negotiations. The IRA found its unilateral options quickly being exhausted after the arms shipment from their ally, Muammar Gaddafi, was intercepted by the British and therefore they no longer had the tools to further

¹³ Continue current hostilities, Escalate, or Seek allies (Pruitt 2007: 1525).

escalate the conflict. The study also evaluates optimism where, due to a series of de-escalatory measures on both sides which included ceasefires and secret meetings, Pruitt reports that optimism was rising on both sides as early as 1988. Concessions continued in a conciliatory spiral up until the 1997 IRA ceasefire -with the effect of further increasing optimism- that caused symmetry to be reached paving the way for them to participate in the peace process. This can be notationally indicated as follows (where ↑, ↓ and ↕ are high, low and neutral values, respectively; M is motivation, O is optimism and S is the desired state of symmetry; subscript G represents government and subscript I represents insurgents):

$$(\uparrow)M_G \times (\uparrow)O_G = S = (\uparrow)M_I \times (\uparrow)O_I$$

Lastly, O’Kane points out that ripeness is meant to function in bilateral conflict settings. Again he is right in pointing out this shortcoming of ripeness, however, by looking at the combined ripeness model we see that there is a branch that addresses this shortcoming as well: the central coalition theory proposed by Pruitt (2007). This explains how parties on both sides from across the political spectrum were able to individually reach a state of readiness and then come together as a coalition whose purpose was to solve the conflict. Note that as per the description of central coalitions previously discussed the most extreme of the hawks were excluded from the talks, mostly as a result of their own ideologies that precluded them from attaining readiness, and therefore there was a form of self-exclusion from the process. All members of the coalition signed the Good Friday Agreement. So while the limitations of ripeness are well recognised, the combined model is much more versatile than any one on its own and provides a great deal more insight into the field.

4.3 Usefulness

The preceding examples have shown how the combination of the various concepts and related theories surrounding ripeness can lead to a more comprehensive model that explains far more than a single theory on its own. This is of great importance because it can show why ripeness was not reached in various types of conflicts. This can help in understanding the underlying processes that lead to ripeness which will make analysts and practitioners alike more adept at creating conditions for ripeness, negotiations, and eventually lasting peace.

Conclusion

While ripeness and the proposed model only address entry into negotiation, it is an area that was lacking as a coherent system to evaluate the reasons for which parties put aside unilateral courses of action and pursue bilateral or multilateral tactics. It is necessary to look at ripeness as a single pursuit of endeavour because any one theory on its own does not stand up to rigorous testing. That being said, it is not to be inferred that the combined ripeness model will stand up to all cases, just that it will stand up to an exponentially larger test sample than any one theory on its own, and that the explicit incorporation of related theories improves overall applicability. Understanding the reasons why ripeness has not yet been achieved will provide hints to parties in conflict and third parties as to what potential measures they can take that may lead to ripeness.

This paper has endeavoured to convince the reader that it is beneficial to approach ripeness from a combined perspective rather than with an individual theory, that is to become a ripeness generalist rather than a ripeness specialist. In order reach this objective, an overview of major ripeness theories were presented along with some acknowledgements of their individual shortcomings. Additional theories relevant to the study of ripeness were also presented in an effort to widen the theoretical framework of the field. Examples of strategies that parties can use to attempt to judiciously create ripeness were given with a view to showing how the preceding theories can be used in practice. The formulation of the Combined Ripeness Model was presented and explained, and its usefulness was demonstrated by applying it to two case studies. In one case it was able to show why ripeness did not occur when an individual theory predicted it should, and in the other to explain why it did occur when the theory did not support that outcome.

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