Ambidextrous Civil Military Relations: Integrating the Two Hands of Peace

Keynote Address to the 2016 Meeting
of the
Association for Civil-Military Studies in Israel

Kinneret College, Isreal
January 27, 2016

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Key Words: civil-military relations, *Shalom*, positive peace, Jane Addams, ambidexterity

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Abstract/Context

In January of 2016, Patricia M. Shields, the editor of *Armed Forces & Society*, addressed the Association of Civil Military Studies of Israel at their bi-annual conference at Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee. The following is the text of her speech. The speech has been slightly modified to incorporate references.

Shalom

It came to my attention that many of you are unfamiliar with the term "ambidextrous." Ambidexterity is an *ability* prized in sports and music. It is the *ability* to use the right or left hand (or foot) with equal skill. Basketball, football and piano are examples where ambidexterity is prized.

I had trouble formulating a message for this presentation. What could I tell such an esteemed group of scholars? Eventually, I decided to follow my heart and talk about things dear to me – ideas of Jane Addams the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

When I discussed this with Reuven at the IUS meeting, he suggested that I also explore the works of Israel's Peace Prize winners Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres. In the process I found a wonderful Shimon Peres (2011) quote in his forward to *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* by Dan Senor and Saul Singer (2011). "People prefer remembering to imagining. Memory deals with familiar things; imagination deals with the unknown. Imagination can be frightening – it requires risking a departure from the familiar (xi)." As I read *Start-up Nation* I learned that Israel is, indeed, the *Land of Imagination*. As we shall see, pragmatic and imaginative approaches go hand in hand. They lead to a distinction between positive and negative peace whose establishment implies a balancing of sorts or, an ambidexterity when it comes to civil military relations.

Prologue – early scholarship

In many ways I am an odd person to be the editor of a journal like *Armed Forces & Society*. I have never served in the military or was I a student of Morris Janowitz. Also, I am not a military sociologist or specialist in International Relations. My home disciplines are economics and public administration/public policy.

My route to the study of civil military relations begins in the 1960s during the height of a seemingly endless Vietnam War. I was a freshman at the University of

Maryland, situated about 20 minutes outside Washington DC. Vietnam War protests were at their peak. Anti-war bonfires regularly lit up the midnight sky of the university mall. During the spring of 1970 student protests led to violence. Four students died at Kent State. The University of Maryland responded. Subsequently, the Maryland National Guard, along with their machine guns, kept peace on campus.

The Vietnam War and the protest movement just confused me. The protesters continually vilified the military. It was an evil institution, fighting an evil war, unfairly drafting men to die in Vietnam. I found their rhetoric compelling and confusing. It did not make sense to me that the military, which my father and brother had served, was evil. Yet the policy did not make sense. What were we fighting for? I was an uneasy spectator during this high intensity period.

Dissertation/early scholarship

By the time I began graduate school, the war was over, the draft ended. I was at Ohio State working at a research center, which examined the US labor market using longitudinal data. I was assigned to the young men's cohort; a pool of young men many of whom served as soldiers in Vietnam.

This data offered me a chance to discard my spectator status and a way to contribute to our understanding to that troubled period in US history. My dissertation, which looked at the equity of the recruitment process during the Vietnam era, was published in *Armed Forces & Society* (Shields, 1980). I found that the US patchwork

system of draft deferments and exemptions unfairly placed the burden of the draft on black high school graduates[1]. My scholarship caught the attention of Charlie Moskos, who invited me to contribute to a conference at the US Air Force Academy (Moskos & Wood, 1988). Here I examined the role of women in the military through the lenses of Moskos's institutional/occupational dichotomy (Shields, 1988). And, it was here where I met Reuven Gal.

My interest in Moskos' (1977) Institutional/Occupational model eventually led me to an Israeli American sociologist – Amati Etzioni.   His theory of socioeconomics (an alternative to neoclassical economics) provided a deeper theoretical home for the Institutional/ Occupational model by balancing self-interest with values such as justice, sacrifice and equity (Etzioni, 1988; Shields, 1993). My encounter with Etzioni also indirectly led me to the study of philosophical pragmatism. For the last twenty years I have been contributing to this literature by applying its tenets to methodology and public administration[2].

It was in this literature that I leaned about Jane Addams. Over 125 years ago she formed a non-profit residential community center in the heart of Chicago's contentious immigrant slums. Here she worked to make the voice of women heard, which led to reforms in sanitation, child labor laws, and women's suffrage. Her activities as

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[1] See also Shields (1981).

[2] See for example Shields (1996, 1998, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2008), Brom & Shields (2006); Whetsell & Shields (2011); Salem & Shields (2011), Shields & Rangarjan (2013) and Shields, Whetsell & Hanks (2013).

spokeswoman led to books and articles, which are now considered part of the founding documents of philosophical pragmatism[3].

Janowitz & Pragmatism

My investigation into philosophy eventually provided opportunities to apply pragmatism to peacekeeping. As Morris Janowitz, the founder of *Armed Forces & Society,* notes, soldiers traditionally bring a kind of moral absolutism to their world. The warrior mindset contains ideas like friend/enemy, victory/defeat, and civilian/military, which help him win wars. In the *Professional Soldier*, Janowitz (1971) argues that these ideas have lost applicability in a nuclear world. Janowitz criticized the absolutist perspective as he introduced a more flexible, pragmatist perspective. Instead of treating dichotomies in fixed terms, pragmatists look at them as *useful distinctions* (Hildebrand, 2006). Contemporary scholars echo this sentiment in our post-modern world particularly when considering military led peacekeeping missions (Moskos, Williams, Segal, 2000). Certainly the UN Interim Force in Lebanon is an example where traditional absolute notions like victory/defeat or friend/enemy are blurred.

David Segal and James Burk, students of Janowitz and former editors of *Armed Forces & Society,* often told me, Morris Janowitz was a pragmatist in the John Dewey tradition; I did not see it. But as I was preparing to write a book chapter (with Joseph Soeters) on pragmatism and peacekeeping, I read Janowitz's (1971) *Professional Soldier* with fresh eyes and recognized how profoundly he was influenced by philosophical

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[3] See for example Addams, (1990/1910, 2002a/1902, 2002b/1922, 2007/1902)

pragmatism (Shields & Soeters, 2013). It was as if I was meeting Janowitz for the first time.

Sabbatical – Addams & Peacekeeping

As I applied pragmatism to peacekeeping I became intrigued with a possible connection between Jane Addams' ideas on peace and the field of peacekeeping. Addams first book on peace appeared in 1907. She entered the world stage, however, in 1915 when she organized and led a new international women's peace movement culminating in a Women's Peace Conference at The Hague. These efforts led to the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize. Subsequently, Addams scholars focused on her early ideas of democracy and inquiry and ignored her theories of peace (Hamington, 2009; Elshtain, 2002). The absence of her peace philosophy was perhaps a legacy of sustained public scorn she received during WWI. Her views on peace were viewed as traitorous (Knight, 2010). 2014 offered me the opportunity to take a Sabbatical and study Addams' books and articles on peace and see if they could perhaps contribute to peacekeeping theory.

Early on it became clear that peace theory was dominated by the ideas of men. Addams was among the earliest philosophers of peace to bring a feminine standpoint to the enterprise. *The Journal of Peace Research* helped give focus to her ideas. One article had a peculiar title "Peace Research – just the study of War?" (Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, & Strand, 2014). It demonstrated the dominance of negative peace (or absence of war) in the study of peace. By defining peace in negative terms (dichotomous variable), the

scholarship of peace was predominately the study of war. This seemed crazy to me and it also provided perspective for Addams ideas of positive peace.

According to Jane Addams, *There is nothing negative in the idea of peace. War is negative. Peace is the highest effort of the human brain applied to the organization of the life and being of the peoples of the world on the basis of cooperation*. (Addams, 2003/1915, p. 117)

I teamed up with Joseph Soeters a scholar with considerable fieldwork in peacekeeping operations. We have a forthcoming article in the *American Review of Public Administration*. In this article we coined the term *peaceweaving* to capture her rich concept of positive peace. Peaceweaving is a verb – it is an ongoing activity. Ideally the many possible strands that make up the fabric created through peaceweaving are in relationship. This relationship creates texture and form, which can be strong and flexible. Finally, weaving is an activity traditionally performed by both men and women.

"Peaceweaving is about building the fabric of peace by emphasizing relationships. Peaceweaving builds these positive relationships by working on practical problems, and engaging people widely with sympathetic understanding while recognizing that progress is measured by the welfare of the vulnerable" (Shields & Soeters, 2015).

Positive and negative peace are more than poles on a continuum. Rather they are perhaps two distinct concepts - one representing the short-run the other the long view. One curious thing Addams emphasized was that promoting positive peace often took courage. Particularly during war, peace advocates can be viewed as traitors or as warped and twisted sentimentalists (Roosevelt, 1906). Israel's other Nobel Peace Prize winner,

Yitzak Rabin, courageously shifted the peace process toward positive peace and paid dearly for this decision. His death is a tragic reminder of the cost of courage in giving that "highest effort" Addams spoke of.

Sermon Series

While I was in the middle of reading about Addams, peace and peacekeeping it dawned on me that the rich concept of "peace" would make a great sermon series. My Lutheran pastors are always looking for good topics and so I approached them with the idea. The unexpected consequence was a sermon series, which along with myself included various Christian clergy and Rabbi Alan Freedman. The sermon series went on to become a special issue in a forthcoming ethics journal. Rabbi Freedman (forthcoming) spoke of the many meanings of *Shalom* and of Psalm 72.[4]

He explained that *Shalom* sometimes translated as prosperity and wholeness. *Shalom* was "almost always tied to the twin concepts of justice and righteousness. If you're going to have peace, if you're going to have a society, which is whole, that society must be righteous and that society must be just. …. Peace comes from truth and acknowledging people's truth. Peace comes from a society in which everyone feels included. …Those are the concepts that underlie *Shalom*. It's not just the lack of war. It truly is a sense of wholeness within the society" (Freedman, forthcoming).

    Shalom is a very special word. It comes closer than any other I know of capturing the complex and nurturing meaning of positive peace.

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[4] The sermon series special issue includes Highum & Sorensen (forthcoming); Freedman (Forthcoming); Floyd (forthcoming); Springer (forthcoming); Alanis (forthcoming); Shields (forthcoming) and Shields & Rissler (forthcoming).

Ambidexterity

In the article where Joe Soeters and I coined the term *peaceweaving,* we applied "Ambidexterity" a notion borrowed from business as a way to take into account the contradictions of positive and negative peace. Business scholars advocate ambidexterity as a way to face the twin challenges of attending to routine matters or *exploiting* the current business environment and *exploring* to ensure future success (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2004). Management's inability to accomplish these two seemingly contradictory challenges can result in firms' ill prepared for the future or neglecting their current customers. Ambidexterity gives organizations the ability, "Like piano players and percussionists who need to be equally skillful with their right and left hand … to develop their 'weak' hand… Organizations nowadays need to be ambidextrous" (Soeters, 2008, 120). It is perhaps a short leap to see how this idea could be fruitful for civil and military leaders as they deal with contradictory demands of a fractured, postmodern, security environment.

While getting ready for this presentation, I asked James Burk, respected military sociologist, "Where is the notion of *peace* in civil military relations?" His dumbfounded response was – That is a good Question? My short investigation has revealed that on the rare occasion peace is mentioned – it is conceived as negative peace. Take for example, Yagil Levy's fine recent article in *Armed Forces & Society* on militarism and civil military relations theory. In it he developed a pacifism/militarism scale, which used a negative definition of peace (Levy 2016, 79).

For the last two years I have been on a Tilburg University dissertation committee with Joseph Soeters. We are working with an Indian graduate student – A. K Bardalai. General Bardalai was, for a while, Acting Force Commander of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL). He is studying the effectiveness of UNIFIL. His interviews and fieldwork reveal a mission coping with a Southern Lebanese population known to support Hezbollah in hiding and storing weapons and where remnants of Israeli aerial mines kill innocents. It is a postmodern mission tasked with managing a seemingly endless negative peace.

Positive peace represents the long view here exploration and moral imagination are nurtured. I am not arguing that the notion of negative peace is problematic. Clearly politicians and the military must be free to use force (or its threat) to deter aggression. Rather dominance of negative peace is pervasive. We need more ambidexterity as we think about civil military relations. We need to develop the hand of exploration and moral imagination (Lederarch, 2005). An ambidextrous Civil Military Relations would contain an organic concept of positive peace.

As researchers we might ask questions like -- is there a different conception of peace between civil and military practitioners and does that cause communication challenges when the two are asked to collaborate? How do we build (or rebuild) relationships that support positive peace? What impact does acknowledging truth (in Rabbi Freedman's explanation of *Shalom*) have on how we approach research on war and peace?

And so, I have followed my heart.

I ask – that in this *Land of Imagination,* we imagine a civil-military relations theory that incorporates positive peace….. We imagine the meaning and application of positive peace in our research, and we continue to imagine….

Finally, in the words of Rabbi Alan Freedman   ***Shalom!***

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