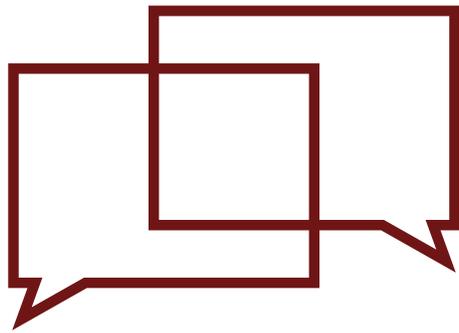


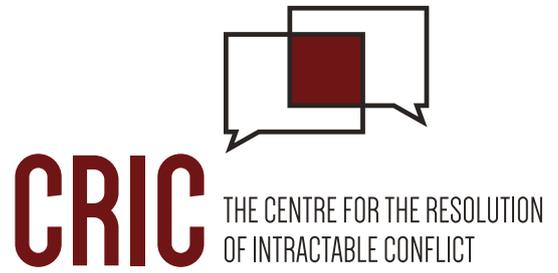
**CRIC** THE CENTRE FOR THE RESOLUTION  
OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT



# THE CENTRE FOR THE RESOLUTION OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT

2017



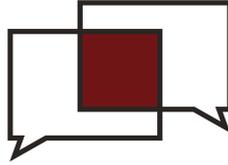


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# Conflict, Complexity and Cooperation

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Most people who grew up in Europe and the United States of America in the last two generations were used to a post-war world on a fairly continuous trajectory of economic development, political stability and physical security.

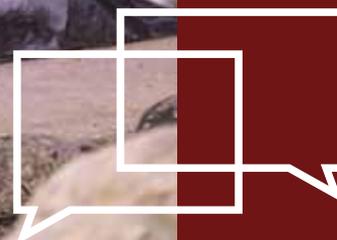
With the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall they were joined by an increasing number of other states in the old Soviet bloc, South Asia and Latin America, which were also becoming more democratic, stable, prosperous, peaceful, and relatively free. It seemed that we might be moving into a new era characterised by the more rational, stable and peaceful conduct of global affairs, and with people protected by the adoption and implementation of human rights instruments, not only in civil and political matters but also in social and economic development.

It was therefore a profound shock for many people to see all of this change in recent years with the rise of transnational terrorism, religious fundamentalism, extreme nationalism and a slide into deepening divisions and violent political conflict across the globe. As a result, questions about what creates and sustains intractable violent conflict and how it may be possible to find ways out of it, have not been so relevant in our life-time.

After the watershed 9/11 attacks in the USA, the World Federation of Scientists established a Permanent Monitoring Panel on Terrorism to explore the application of the physical and social sciences to both the motivation for, and the mitigation of, this new global threat. Out of these meetings grew an initiative to establish a centre that would draw together international expertise. The welcome and the warm, supportive attitude of the Principal and staff of Harris Manchester College, Oxford, along with the University of Oxford's long-standing concentration of top class researchers and teachers as well as its global accessibility, saw the



*In these difficult and uncertain times I think that you will be encouraged by what it has already been possible to achieve in CRIC, and I and my colleagues will be happy to give you further information both about what we have been doing and what we are planning for the future.*



establishment of the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict at the College in December 2013.

Within the University of Oxford, CRIC is a partner of the Centre for International Studies in the Department of Politics and International Relations and has a special relationship with the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnology, through the appointments of its four Founding Fellows. Scott Atran, Richard Davis and John Alderdice are Research Associates of the School and Professor Harvey Whitehouse is the Director of its

Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology.

Our work has already demonstrated why some of the old linear approaches to conflict have been unsuccessful both as explanations and as a guide to interventions. More importantly, through engagement and research we have been able to develop new evidence-based analyses which not only better address the complexity of the issues concerned, but show how genuine cooperation and progress in the resolution of some of these intractable conflicts is possible.

Beyond Oxford, CRIC now has a worldwide network of colleagues who work in other academic institutions and on the ground in areas of conflict. We come together in September each year at Harris Manchester College to exchange findings, develop projects and learn from each other's work, and we keep in contact throughout the year in meetings at the College and elsewhere and through electronic communications.

The College has been generous with support of all kinds, but the further development of CRIC will require more funding and Michael Cowan has been appointed to the Board of the Centre as Stewardship Director to undertake responsibility for this very necessary task.

## THE WORK OF CRIC ADDRESSES FIVE MAIN QUESTIONS.

- 1** *Why do people and communities become involved in violent conflict, especially if it does not result in better social and economic circumstances?*
- 2** *Why and under what circumstances do some violent community conflicts persist and defy resolution for long periods?*
- 3** *How and why can some apparently intractable conflicts subsequently find resolution?*
- 4** *What are the challenges of creating, conducting and completing such resolution processes?*
- 5** *What can we learn from research, evidence-gathering and engagement in such situations of intractable conflict?*

In these difficult and uncertain times I think that you will be encouraged by what it has already been possible to achieve in CRIC, and I and my colleagues will be happy to give you further information both about what we have been doing and what we are planning for the future.

**Professor, the Lord Alderdice**  
FRCPsych, Director

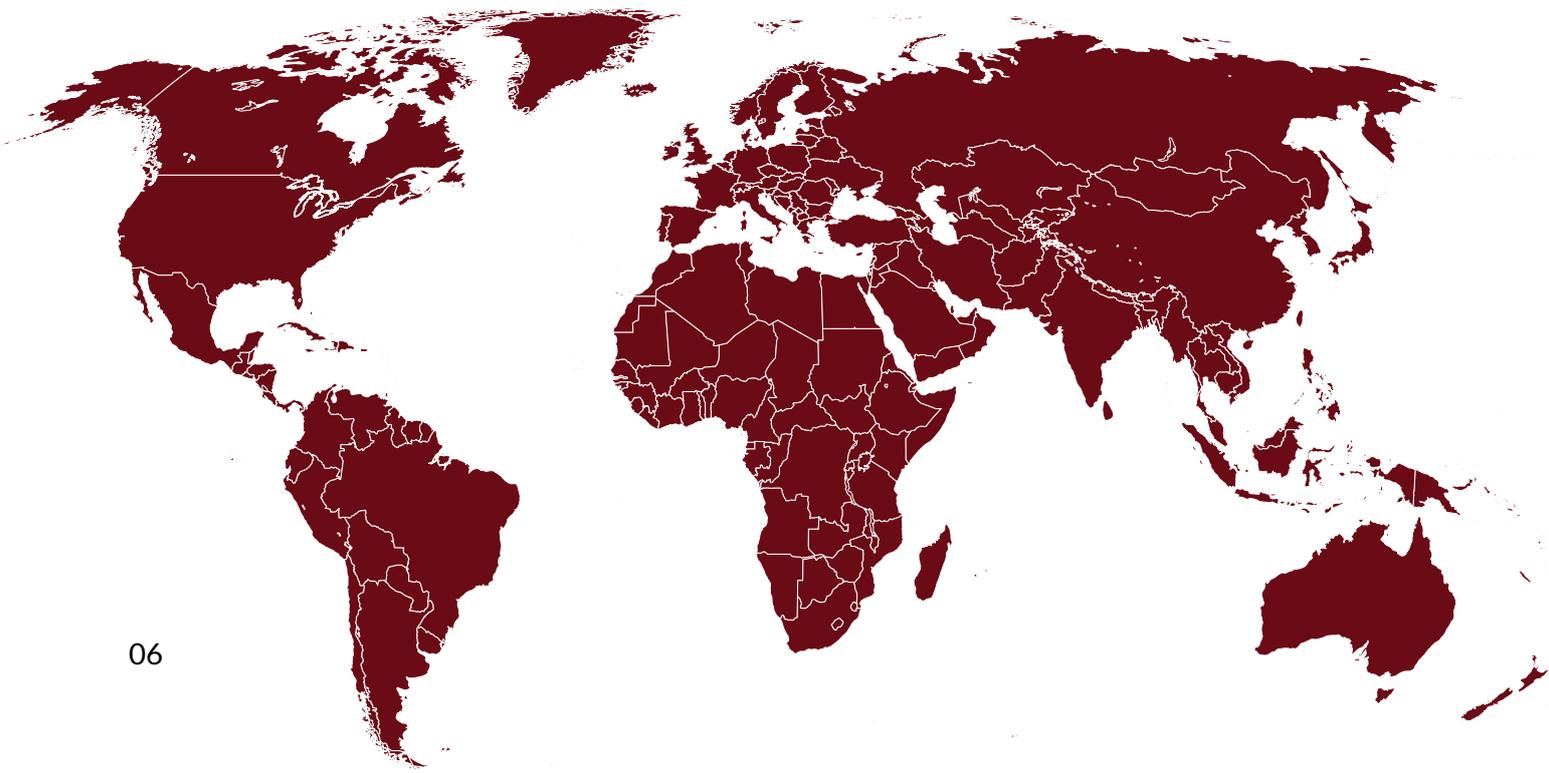


## About CRIC

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*What are CRIC researchers discovering about inter-group conflict? There is a dark side to the powerful bonds people develop toward their groups. When a group identity or its core values are perceived to be under existential threat, in-group bonds can be strong enough to motivate self-sacrificial acts ranging from taking a bullet for your regiment to suicide bombing. These bonds can also lead people to reject material trade-offs in ways that would seem irrational from a cost-benefit perspective.*

*CRIC's mission is to promote and develop scientific, field-based research so that we can better understand the root causes and processes of intergroup violence and tackle violent conflicts more effectively in collaboration with the public policy community.*





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# Our Founding Fellows



**John, Lord Alderdice**

**FRCPsych,**

Founding Fellow

E-mail: [john.alderdice@hmc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:john.alderdice@hmc.ox.ac.uk)

As Leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, Lord Alderdice played a significant role in the Talks on Northern Ireland including negotiation of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. He was the first Speaker of the new Northern Ireland Assembly and on retirement in 2004 was appointed to the Independent Monitoring Commission, tasked with closing down terrorist operations and overseeing normalization of security in Northern Ireland. Previously Treasurer and a

Vice-President of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, he was from 2000 until 2009 Deputy President and then President of Liberal International (the world-wide network of more than 100 liberal political parties). He is now Presidente d'Honneur.

In 2010 when the Conservative/Liberal Coalition Government was formed in the UK, he was elected Convenor (Chair) of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party in the House of Lords. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, also appointed him to the UK Committee on Standards in Public Life. In 2014 he retired as Convenor to focus on his academic work at Oxford.

Lord Alderdice was formerly Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy in Belfast, Senior Lecturer in Psychotherapy, Queen's University, Belfast and Visiting Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia (USA). He is currently a Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College, Oxford and a Research Associate both in the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography and at the Centre for International Studies in the Department of Politics and International Relations of the University of Oxford. He is also a Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Maryland in Baltimore (USA). His research interests are the individual and group psychology of violent political conflict; the psychology of religious

fundamentalism; and the psychology of large group relations particularly between indigenous people and settler communities.

His many honours include the International Psychoanalytic Association Award for Extraordinarily Meritorious Service to Psychoanalysis, the World Federation of Scientists Ettore Majorana Prize for the application of science to the cause of Peace, honorary doctorates from the University of East London, Robert Gordon University (Aberdeen), the Open University (UK) and Queen's University at Kingston (Canada). In 2015 Liberal International gave him their highest award, the Prize for Freedom.

“

**“Oxford is a wonderful place to study and reflect and it is full of stimulating and supportive colleagues, but if we are to deepen our understanding and make a real contribution to the resolution of intractable conflict we have to go to the places where the violence takes place and build working alliances with colleagues all around our troubled world.”**

**Professor, the Lord Alderdice**



**Scott Atran**

Founding Fellow

E-mail: [scott.atran@hmc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:scott.atran@hmc.ox.ac.uk)

Scott Atran is an anthropologist who experiments on ways scientists and ordinary people categorise and reason about nature, on the cognitive and evolutionary psychology of religion, and on limits of rational choice in political and cultural conflict. He has done fieldwork around the world and interviewed the leadership and members of many insurgent and extremist groups. As a result of this work and his extensive writing in both the academic and popular press, he has been much in demand to brief NATO, the U.S. Senate and House, National Security Council staff at the White House, the UN Security Council, EU Governments, the World Economic Forum and others on problems of youth and violent extremism. After many years as an academic in various

institutions in the USA and elsewhere he is currently tenured as Research Director in Anthropology at France's National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), Institut Jean Nicod – Ecole Normale Supérieure, in Paris. He is a Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College and also has a research appointment in the Department of Politics and International Relations. His ability to communicate lucidly in interviews and in print have ensured that his work and life have been spotlighted around the world on television and radio and in the popular and scientific press, including feature and cover stories of the New York Times Magazine, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Nature and Science News.



### Richard Davis

Founding Fellow

E-mail: richard.davis@hmc.ox.ac.uk

Richard Davis is a Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College and a Research Associate at the Centre for International Studies in the Department of Politics and International Relations and the Institute of Cognitive & Evolutionary Anthropology at the University of Oxford. He also holds the position of Professor of Practice at Arizona State University. Richard is the Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of Artis Research & Risk Modeling, Artis International and Artis Looking Glass. The suite of Artis companies conduct interdisciplinary field-based scientific research in conflict zones, build local programs and policies to move people toward less violent outcomes and develop technology applications to interface with social media platforms to understand and

model the dynamics of human behaviour in politically unstable conflict environments. Richard served at The White House as the Director of Prevention (Terrorism) Policy. Prior, he was the Director of the Task Force to Prevent the Entry of Weapons of Mass Effect (framework for the prevention of the smuggling of nuclear materials) and the Director of the Academe, Policy and Research Senior Advisory Committee for two different Secretaries at the United States Department of Homeland Security. Richard has been a Senior Policy Fellow at RTI international, a Senior Associate at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, led a non-profit international development organization dedicated to the education and development of youth, including crime prevention, prevention of radicalization and conflict mitigation, and a school administrator and teacher. Richard has authored or co-authored articles and publications on energy, international security, political violence and terrorism. He is the author of " Hamas, Popular Support & War in the Middle East", published by Routledge in 2016. His most recent collaborative written work addresses the neurological and behavioural factors for the willingness to fight and die – an empirical study from the front-lines in Iraq with Islamic State Fighters and other militias and fMRI studies of Al-Qaeda members from Pakistan. Richard has a PhD from the London School of Economics, an MPA from Harvard University, an MA from the Naval War College and an MA from Azusa Pacific University. He holds Baccalaureate Degrees in Finance and Social Science from Hope International University.



### Harvey Whitehouse

Founding Fellow

E-mail: harvey.whitehouse@anthro.ox.ac.uk

Professor Harvey Whitehouse holds the statutory Chair in Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford and is a Professorial

Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. In the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnology he is Director of the Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology. His research focuses on the evolution of social complexity. One of the founders of the cognitive science of religion, Harvey is well known throughout the world for his theory of "modes of religiosity," which explains how the frequency and emotional intensity of collective rituals influence the scale and structure of religious organisations. He has then explored other collective rituals that bind groups together in what he calls 'fusion' and researched how different kinds of rituals produce different intensities of commitment to group values and causes, including in violent conflict or strategic alliances. He is has been able to obtain a number of very large national and international research grants and has a network of research colleagues and projects across the globe. He is also currently developing the world's largest and most complex database of violent conflict.

World class research is led by world class scholars and individuals. The CRIC has drawn together tremendous leaders in their respective research fields.

## Our Senior Fellows

### Senior Fellows:

- Honorable Juan C. Zarate
- Robert Axelrod
- Sundeeep Waslekar
- Deniz Ülke Ariboğan

### Visiting Senior Research Fellow:

- Jeremy Ginges
- Kumar Ramakrishna
- Charles B. Strozier

### Stewardship Director:

- Michael Cowan

## Our Research Fellows

### Research Fellow:

- Lydia Wilson

### Visiting Research Fellow:

- Hammad Sheikh
- Koert Debeuf

### Field Research Project Manager:

- Andrea Fatica

## Science and Policy Advisory Committee

- Sarah Spencer
- General (ret.) Douglas Stone
- Sir Simon Wessely

# Workshops, seminars and conferences

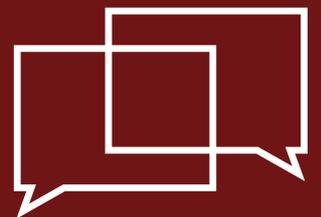
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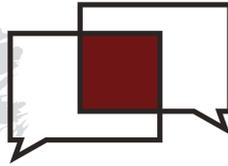
*Throughout the year we hold events addressing subjects such as Water and Conflict in the Middle East (with Strategic Foresight Group, India), the Psychology of Religious Fundamentalism, Learning about ISIL – for US and UK policy-makers (with ARTIS International, USA). One example of how we respond to current issues was a conference on Iran. In Vienna on 14 July 2015 an agreement on nuclear weapons limitation was reached between Iran, the United Nations and the EU. When we discussed it with nuclear science colleagues at the World Federation of Scientists meeting in Erice, Sicily the following month we agreed that it should be encouraged. With support from British Council, we brought together theologians from Iran and the UK at the College to exchange views on 'Faith and Modernity'. This meeting, and the visit we arranged for them to the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace, were regarded as a helpful demonstration of respect when President Rouhani was under pressure in Iran because of negative reactions in the West. Interviews and information from the meeting were broadcast on Teheran radio and television, and the papers presented will shortly be published in English and Farsi.*



# Annual Conference

Over three days in September each year we bring together our network of CRIC colleagues from around the world to present papers, engage in discussion and plan collaborative ventures. Last year, in addition to the UK, we had academics and policy makers from the USA, Australia, Singapore, Turkey, Cyprus, Belgium, Spain, Lebanon, India, Iraq and Jordan. Presentations covered developments in our studies of Islamist inspired terrorism (including fMRI brain studies), changes of attitude and community problems in the United States, dealing with the human tragedies of disasters and conflicts, why young women join ISIS, and the role of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. Each year we open up two of our Annual Conference key-note lectures to the public, as we do for most of the other lectures we organize during the year.





# Research

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*The Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict is a multi-disciplinary research centre, which undertakes innovative, impactful, world-class projects.*

*Our Fellows apply cutting edge field-based research methods from the cognitive and behavioural sciences in collaboration with the policy community to better understand and address politically motivated violence.*

## Research highlights:

### Harvey Whitehouse:

### Researchers test what lies behind the extreme self-sacrifice of fighters

*Published: Mar 16, 2017*

The extreme self-sacrificial behaviour found in suicide bombers and soldiers where they are even prepared to die for one another presents an evolutionary puzzle: how can a trait that calls for an individual to make the ultimate sacrifice, defending a group of people they are not related to, persist over evolutionary time? A new study, published in *Nature's Scientific Reports* and led by the University of Oxford, provides insight into the causes of self-sacrifice in violent conflicts around the world, from holy wars to gangland violence.

First author Professor Harvey Whitehouse, from the School of Anthropology, explains: 'The theory that sharing negative experiences produces powerful social bonds was initially inspired by my fieldwork among the tribes of Papua New Guinea, where warriors often went through extremely painful initiation rituals. Since then we've found these effects in a much wider range of groups, from Libyan insurgents to Americans affected by the Boston Marathon bombings. This new paper presents a mathematical model that might explain why shared suffering leads to such strong commitment to the group, alongside a very broad range of evidence from the real world.'

**Scott Atran:**

## The Devoted Actor: Unconditional Commitment and Intractable Conflict across Cultures

*Published: Feb 29, 2016*

**Richard Davis:**

## Hamas, Popular Support and War in the Middle East: Insurgency in the Holy Land

*Published: Feb 19, 2016*

**Lydia Wilson:**

## Understanding the Appeal of ISIS

*Published: Mar 20, 2017*

**Jeremy Ginges:**

## How Moral Perceptions Influence Intergroup Tolerance: Evidence from Lebanon, Morocco and the United States

*Published: Dec 11, 2016*

An in-depth report on the inconclusive battle to take one small village exposes the weakness of the strategy to retake Mosul, Iraq's second-biggest city.

"The devoted actor" is a theoretical framework developed by a group of scholars and policy makers at Artis International - a nonprofit group that uses social science research to help resolve seemingly intractable political and cultural conflicts - to better understand the social and psychological mechanisms underlying people's willingness to make costly sacrifices for a group and a cause. Our research indicates that when people act as "devoted actors" they are deontic agents who mobilize for collective action to protect cherished values in ways that are dissociated from likely risks or rewards.

The theoretical framework applied in this volume provides a simple construct to understand the dynamics that result in use and non-use of violence under changing environmental conditions by Hamas, but could be applied more broadly to other power-seeking insurgent groups, including ISIL. The book weaves together the dynamics between violent actions and internal and external influences on Hamas, including: expressed values of the group, Palestinian popular support measures, leaders' personalities and innovation (weapons and tactics), Israeli influence and targeted killings, peace processes and conflicts in Gaza, Syria, Iraq and Egypt. With newly assembled datasets on Hamas' violent acts and public statements, Israeli Targeted Killings, historical measures of popular support and extensive field interviews, the book offers a fresh perspective on insurgent group violence by demonstrating under what conditions the group exercises violence or refrains from doing so.

The Islamic State, or ISIS, has proven to be persistently successful in attracting people from all over the globe to join in its state-building and state-defending enterprise. This article explores the messages it has crafted, from the utopian to the militarily defensive, and the techniques it uses to propagate these messages (including on social media), which includes some historical comparisons to communism and Nazism. It goes on to provide initial research findings from the field to show how their message is working among (a small percentage of) the target audience, sketching the theory of identity fusion to argue that it is a sense of belonging to one group above all others that persuades people to travel to another country to kill and die for a cause.

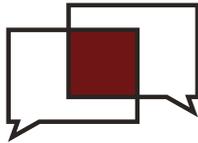
Intergroup boundaries are often associated with differences in moral codes. How does the perception of similarity and dissimilarity in moral worldviews influence tolerant relationships between members of different groups? We theorized that the relationship between perceived moral similarity and intergroup tolerance is domain specific. Specifically, we proposed that because people treat autonomy values (e.g., caring for others, being fair) as denoting universal rights and obligations, but binding values (e.g., purity) as denoting rights and obligations that apply preferentially for their own group, perceived similarity on autonomy values should be more relevant than perceived similarity on binding values to intergroup tolerance. Here we describe correlational and experimental evidence to support this prediction from studies carried out in Lebanon (with sectarian groups), in Morocco (with ethnic groups), and in the United States (with ideological groups). Implications for understanding intergroup relations and theories of morality are discussed.

## Contact

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CRIC, Harris Manchester College  
Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TD, UK  
Tel. +44 (0) 1865 618081  
E-mail: [info@cric.hmc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:info@cric.hmc.ox.ac.uk)  
[www.cric.hmc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.cric.hmc.ox.ac.uk)





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