THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Submitted by
Andrew James McDowell B.A. (Hons).

A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Psychology
Faculty of Health Sciences
The University of Adelaide
Adelaide, SA 5005
Australia

November, 1999
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Authorship</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1</strong> INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Aims and structure of the thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2</strong> CONFLICT: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Conflict theory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The multidisciplinary nature of conflict</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Psychological aspects of conflict</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Social aspects of conflict</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Political aspects of conflict</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Anthropological aspects of conflict</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Definitional issues</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Cognitive and affective aspects of conflict</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>A new area of academic inquiry</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 3</strong> LEGAL INFLUENCES ON THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION FIELD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>International influences</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>International relations and the “law and order” model</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2</td>
<td>Alternatives to law and order</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4  MEDIATION

4.0  Introduction................................................................. 66
4.1  Definition of mediation.................................................. 67
4.2  The development of mediation ......................................... 69
4.2.1  The history of mediation............................................. 69
4.2.2  Social and political influences on the modern era of mediation ........................................................................ 72
4.2.3  Community justice centres .......................................... 75
4.2.4  The breadth of mediation practice ................................ 77
4.3  The institutionalisation of mediation .................................. 80
4.3.1  Conferences ................................................................. 81
4.3.2  Professional associations.............................................. 82
4.3.3  Research grants ........................................................... 83
4.3.4  Academic training programs ......................................... 84
4.3.5  Journals .................................................................... 84
4.3.6  Books ........................................................................ 87
4.3.7  Summary of the institutionalisation of mediation ......... 87
4.4  The public face of the mediation enterprise........................ 88
4.4.1  Mediation is flexible ...................................................... 90
4.4.2  Mediation builds relationships ...................................... 92
CHAPTER 5  THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

5.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 131
5.1 Scientific knowledge production ................................................................. 133
5.1.1 Types of knowledge .................................................................................... 133
5.1.2 Origins of the scientific method ............................................................... 135
5.1.3 Challenges to the traditional view of scientific knowledge .................... 136
5.2 Scientific methodology in psychology ...................................................... 142
5.3 The scientist-practitioner model ............................................................... 146
5.3.1 Historical development of the scientist-practitioner model .................... 146
5.3.2 The institutionalisation of the scientist-practitioner model ...................... 147
5.3.3 Value differences in the cultures of research and practice ....................... 149
5.3.4 A shift towards practice in contemporary psychology ......................... 152
5.3.5 Current status of the scientist-practitioner model .................................. 154
5.4 Problems with the scientist-practitioner model ....................................... 156
5.4.1 A positivistic heritage ................................................................................ 156
5.4.2 The behaviour of practitioners ................................................................ 158
5.4.3 Training of scientists and practitioners in psychology ............................ 159
5.5 The future relationship between research and practice in psychology ...... 162
5.6 Summary .......................................................................................................... 164

CHAPTER 6  RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

6.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 165
6.1 Review of previous chapters ......................................................................... 166
6.2 The polarisation of research and practice ................................................... 166
6.3 Evidence for the polarisation of research and practice ............................... 171
6.3.1 The historical absence of research ......................................................... 172
6.3.2 Rejection of scientific methodology and philosophy .............................. 174
6.3.3 Rejection of measurement and evaluation ............................................. 176
6.3.4 Alternative models for conflict resolution practice .................................. 179
6.3.5 Competition between branches of practice ............................................. 184
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Proposal for research</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1</td>
<td>The need for research</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2</td>
<td>Methodological considerations</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.3</td>
<td>Other conflict resolution surveys</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Research aims of the current thesis</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 7  CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Focus group and interviews</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.2</td>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Results of focus group and interviews</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.1</td>
<td>The relationship between researchers and practitioners</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2</td>
<td>Sources of difficulty</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Suggestions for research</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.1</td>
<td>Methodological considerations</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.2</td>
<td>Target population</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Development of the survey instrument</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Pilot study</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.1</td>
<td>Participants and procedure</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.2</td>
<td>Results of piloting</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.3</td>
<td>Clarification of changes made to the survey instrument</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 8  SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Participants and procedure</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Instruments</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.1</td>
<td>Section 1: Background information</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 9  RESULTS OF THE RESEARCHER-PRACTITIONER ANALYSES

9.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 246
9.0.1 Technical notes on the analysis and presentation of results ......................... 247
9.1 General professional characteristics of the sample ...................................... 248
9.2 General characteristics of Practitioners and Researchers ......................... 249
9.3 Activities and attitudes relevant to the conflict resolution field ................. 258
9.3.1 Information sources and professional activities ....................................... 258
9.3.2 Beliefs About Mediation ........................................................................ 288
9.4 Issues relevant to the scientist-practitioner debate ................................... 292
9.4.1 Theoretical Orientation ....................................................................... 292
9.4.2 Epistemological Style .......................................................................... 292
9.4.3 Social Values ......................................................................................... 292
9.5 General values systems .............................................................................. 293
9.5.1 World Assumptions ................................................................................ 293
9.5.2 Social Interest ......................................................................................... 293
9.5.3 Personal Values ...................................................................................... 293
9.6 General personality issues .......................................................................... 294
9.6.1 Creative Personality Scale ...................................................................... 294
9.6.2 Big Five Personality Questionnaire ..................................................... 294
9.7 Summary ........................................................................................................... 301
CHAPTER 10 RESULTS OF SUBGROUP ANALYSES

10.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 305
10.1 Group formation ............................................................................................... 306
10.1.1 Research subgroups .................................................................................... 307
10.1.2 Practice subgroups ..................................................................................... 308
10.1.3 Summary of subgroups ................................................................................ 309
10.2 General characteristics of the five subgroups .................................................. 309
10.3 Activities and attitudes relevant to the conflict resolution field ...................... 316
10.3.1 Information sources and professional activities ......................................... 316
10.3.2 Beliefs About Mediation .............................................................................. 344
10.4 Issues relevant to the scientist-practitioner debate .......................................... 344
10.4.1 Theoretical Orientation .............................................................................. 344
10.4.2 Epistemological Style ................................................................................. 345
10.4.3 Social Values ............................................................................................... 346
10.5 General values systems .................................................................................... 351
10.5.1 World Assumptions .................................................................................... 351
10.5.2 Social Interest .............................................................................................. 351
10.5.3 Personal Values ........................................................................................... 353
10.6 General personality issues ............................................................................... 355
10.6.1 Creative Personality Scale .......................................................................... 355
10.6.2 Big Five Personality Questionnaire ............................................................ 355
10.7 Summary .......................................................................................................... 358

CHAPTER 11 QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

11.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 363
11.1 Qualitative methods .......................................................................................... 364
11.2 Application of qualitative methods to investigate research and practice ........ 367
11.3 Qualitative approaches in the study of conflict resolution ................................ 369
11.4 Objectives of the qualitative investigation ....................................................... 370
11.5 Methodology .................................................................................................... 372
11.5.1 Study design ............................................................................................... 372
11.5.2 Participants ................................................................................................. 374
11.5.3 Procedure ................................................................................................... 374
CHAPTER 12 RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

12.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 379
12.1 Technical points regarding the presentation of results ........................................ 380
12.1.1 Scoring of themes .......................................................................................... 380
12.1.2 Reporting style .............................................................................................. 380
12.1.3 Potential methodological concerns ................................................................. 381
12.2 Presentation and structure of results .................................................................... 381
12.3 Experience and application .................................................................................. 384
12.3.1 Researchers and Practitioners ....................................................................... 384
12.3.2 Interest groups .............................................................................................. 385
12.4 Training ............................................................................................................... 393
12.4.1 Researchers and Practitioners ....................................................................... 393
12.4.2 Interest groups .............................................................................................. 395
12.5 Conflict resolution practice ................................................................................ 401
12.5.1 Practitioners ................................................................................................. 401
12.5.2 Practitioner interest groups .......................................................................... 402
12.6 Conflict resolution research .............................................................................. 413
12.6.1 Researchers and Practitioners ....................................................................... 413
12.6.2 Research interest groups .............................................................................. 414
12.7 Theoretical issues .............................................................................................. 419
12.7.1 Researchers and Practitioners ....................................................................... 419
12.7.2 Interest groups .............................................................................................. 422
12.8 Relationship between research and practice ...................................................... 433
12.8.1 Researchers and Practitioners ....................................................................... 433
12.8.2 Interest groups .............................................................................................. 436
12.9 Professionalisation of the conflict resolution field ............................................. 450
12.10 Summary ........................................................................................................... 455
# CHAPTER 13 DISCUSSION

13.0 Introduction ................................................................. 456

13.1 Consideration of thesis aims ........................................... 457

13.1.1 Thesis aim 1 ............................................................ 457

13.1.2 Thesis aim 2 ............................................................ 458

13.1.3 Thesis aim 3 ............................................................ 458

13.1.4 Thesis aim 4 ............................................................ 459

13.1.5 Thesis aim 5 ............................................................ 461

13.1.6 Thesis aim 6 ............................................................ 462

13.1.7 Thesis aim 7 ............................................................ 463

13.1.8 Thesis aim 8 ............................................................ 464

13.2 Consideration of research aims ........................................ 464

13.2.1 Research aim 1 ........................................................ 464

13.2.2 Research aim 2 ........................................................ 465

13.2.3 Research aim 3 ........................................................ 466

13.2.4 Research aim 4 ........................................................ 466

13.2.5 Research aim 5 ........................................................ 467

13.3 Differences between researchers and practitioners .............. 467

13.3.1 Activities and attitudes relevant to the conflict resolution field .... 468

13.3.2 Issues relevant to the scientist–practitioner debate ............. 472

13.3.3 General values systems .............................................. 474

13.3.4 General personality issues ........................................... 478

13.3.5 Summary of quantitative findings about researchers and practitioners ........................................... 479

13.3.6 Experience and application ....................................... 479

13.3.7 Training ................................................................. 480

13.3.8 Conflict resolution practice ....................................... 482

13.3.9 Conflict resolution research ...................................... 483

13.3.10 Theoretical Issues .................................................... 484

13.3.11 Relationship between research and practice .................. 486

13.3.12 Professionalisation of the conflict resolution field ............ 489

13.3.13 Summary of qualitative findings about researchers and practitioners ........................................... 491
APPENDIX A  SURVEY INSTRUMENT ........................................ 516

APPENDIX B  ETHICS PROPOSAL FOR QUALITATIVE STUDY ...... 547

APPENDIX C  INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS .................................. 549
  1  Legal interest group: Interviewee 1 (L1) ............................ 550
  2  Community interest group: Interviewee 1 (C1) ...................... 555
  3  Community interest group: Interviewee 2 (C2) ...................... 560
  4  Legal interest group: Interviewee 2 (L2) ............................ 564
  5  Therapeutic interest group: Interviewee 1 (T1) ...................... 569
  6  Therapeutic interest group: Interviewee 2 (T2) ...................... 576
  7  Therapeutic interest group: Interviewee 3 (T3) ...................... 582
  8  Legal interest group: Interviewee 3 (L3) ............................ 587
  9  Community interest group: Interviewee 3 (C3) ..................... 592
 10  Applied Research interest group: Interviewee 1 (AR1) .......... 599
 11  Theoretical Research interest group: Interviewee 1 (TR1) .... 604
 12  Applied Research interest group: Interviewee 2 (AR2) .......... 609
 13  Applied Research interest group: Interviewee 3 (AR3) .......... 615
 14  Theoretical Research interest group: Interviewee 2 (TR2) .... 621
 15  Theoretical Research interest group: Interviewee 3 (TR3) .... 626

REFERENCES ........................................................................... 631
ABSTRACT

This thesis explores relations between research and practice in the field of conflict resolution. In the first phase of the thesis, the development of the conflict resolution movement was reviewed. This included a discussion of its origins as a multidisciplinary field of inquiry, the sociohistorical influences on its development, and critical accounts of the two major forces in conflict resolution: alternative dispute resolution and mediation. The public face of mediation and its institutionalisation were discussed in relation to empirical accounts of its efficacy.

This conceptual analysis indicated that research and practice in conflict resolution exist as separate entities, and that there has been a rejection of traditional models of science by many practitioners. This stimulated the second phase of the thesis that comprised empirical investigations into the relationship between research and practice in conflict resolution. Consultation with conflict resolution experts identified four domains of potential difference between researchers and practitioners. These were incorporated into a survey instrument that measured activities and attitudes relevant to the conflict resolution field; issues relevant to the scientist-practitioner debate in the conflict resolution field; general value systems; and, general personality characteristics.

Survey data were gathered from British conflict resolution researchers and practitioners. Data analyses included comparisons between researchers and practitioners, and also between groups that were identified to have different professional interests in the field. These groups were therapeutic, community, legal, applied researcher and theoretical researcher interest groups. A series of semi-structured qualitative interviews were also conducted, to further explore differences between researchers and practitioners, and interest groups.
The results of analyses suggested that the differences between researchers and practitioners, and between interest groups, were principally related to epistemic values, the struggle for epistemic authority, and opinions about the professionalisation of the field. It was concluded that the traditional scientist-practitioner model of relations between research and practice is inadequate in conflict resolution. Therefore it was suggested that the future of conflict resolution requires that epistemological differences be more fully understood and the implicit skills of conflict resolution practitioners be more highly valued.
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Andrew James McDowell

November, 1999
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I began this program of research it was with the aim of understanding more about conflict resolution. While undertaking the thesis I have learned about this, and much more, through a learning experience that has been both academically and personally challenging. I believe that this experience has provided lessons that will be uniquely beneficial to my future research activities and professional life, and I am grateful for having had this opportunity.

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Ian John who offered his continuous support for this endeavour. I am particularly appreciative of his supervisory style in allowing me to find my own way through the work, and of his patience in tolerating the often lengthy periods between our meetings. I am most grateful for his criticism and advice which continued even past the date of his own official retirement.

Thanks are also extended to my colleague and friend Dr Malcolm Bond for his invaluable help while I was preparing the thesis. His assistance with statistical issues and stylistic considerations were very helpful and I am grateful for his advice. I would also like to express my gratitude to the anonymous conflict resolution workers who cooperated with and participated in this research, in particular those researchers and practitioners who gave interviews.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their acceptance of my commitment to this project, and their support throughout its duration. Finally, I would also like to acknowledge The University of Adelaide Postgraduate Research Award that I used to support my research in the first two years of my candidature.