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**Modern day hostage (crisis) negotiation: the evolution of an art form within  
the policing arena**

**Amy Grubb**

**Lecturer in Forensic Psychology,  
Psychology Department,  
Coventry University, Coventry, CV1 5FB.  
Telephone: 024 7688 8795 Fax: 024 7688 8300  
Email: amy.grubb@coventry.ac.uk**

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**Abstract**

*This article explores the role of hostage (crisis) negotiation in the 21st century by reviewing literature on hostage negotiation historically, the dynamics of crisis situations typically encountered by hostage negotiators, the models existing to conceptualize crisis negotiation, and the strategies utilized by negotiators to successfully resolve crisis situations. The article then suggests possible advancements or directions for further research within the field of hostage negotiation, with particular reference to the requirement for cross-cultural comparison of techniques and strategies utilized by negotiators internationally to provide a better understanding of the cultural uniqueness/understanding of crisis negotiators operating within different countries. The article also suggests a shift in the focus of research looking at techniques and strategies which result in successful resolution of crisis situations onto the identification of negotiator characteristics and traits which govern effective negotiation and ability to cope with the pressures instilled by the role.*

**Keywords: Hostage Negotiation, Crisis Negotiation, Mental Health, Strategy, Model**

### **1.1 The Evolution of Modern Day Hostage (Crisis) Negotiation**

The concept of hostage negotiation is shrouded in a wealth of misperception. Hostage incidents are as old as recorded time and the evolution of hostage negotiation as both a criminal and socially acceptable act (e.g., in times of war) can be plotted throughout the ages. The earliest recorded incidents can be traced back to biblical times in the book of Genesis 14: 12-16 with the abduction, and subsequent rescue, of Abraham's nephew *Lot* by the armies of four kings. Abraham's use of 318 men to rescue his nephew is the first recorded account of the use of force to resolve a hostage incident (Soskis & Van Zandt, 1986). Similarly, there are multiple accounts of Israelites and their enemies taking each other captive as spoils of war, to deplete the resources of opposing enemies and to attempt to convert potential enemies to the cause (McMains & Mullins, 1996). Helen of Troy's abduction and the kidnapping of Julius Cesar for ransom in 51BC are also historically relevant events involving hostage scenarios.

In post-biblical times, pirates of many nationalities have used hostages to obtain money or goods from third parties who valued the lives of those being held captive. This form of hostage taking by pirates preceded the instrumental use of innocent captives by modern terrorists for social, political, or religious goals. During the middle ages, hostages were taken by European nations to enforce the compliance of enemy nationals during the war. This conceptualization of hostage taking links to the origin of the word "hostage" which is derived from the Latin *hostis* meaning "guest". This derivation demonstrates the highly frequent political and military use of hostages in the past, whereby political authorities or generals would legally agree to hand over one or usually several hostages in the custody of the other side, as guarantee of good faith in the observance of obligations. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, hostage taking for this purpose continued, with hostages being taken by one nation to coerce another. In 1942, for example, Germany took two million French hostages after the division of France in order to ensure compliance of the French people. From this conceptualization of the hostage taking

incident, responses to such events have developed and evolved into what is now known as hostage or crisis negotiation.

The impetus for the development of modern hostage negotiation is debatable; however, one particular incident is cited by many law enforcement professionals as providing the driving force for the development of techniques to de-escalate crisis situations often involving hostages. This incident is commonly referred to as the "Munich Massacre" that occurred at the 1972 Olympic Games. During this incident, a group of Palestinian terrorists invaded an Olympic dormitory and seized 11 Israeli athletes as hostages. The incident was dealt with via force; and once the terrorists political demands had been refused, the Munich police resorted to firepower, resulting in the death of 22 people: 1 policeman, 10 terrorists and all 11 of the hostages. This tragedy highlighted the distinct lack of protocol or procedure to deal with crisis situations in a controlled way and result in limited death/harm to hostages. In the wake of this tragedy, international law enforcement agencies began to criticize the lack of effective crisis management techniques for hostage situations and began to explore new techniques which could be employed within such situations (Soskis & Van Zandt, 1986). Since then, several models of negotiation have been developed for use in hostage situations, based primarily on problem-solving approaches to response, management, and resolution of these incidents (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991; Lanceley, 1999; McMains & Mullins, 2001; Webster, 1998a).

In response to these tragic incidents, police agencies in the United States began implementing a "negotiate first" policy in dealing with both hostage taking situations and perpetrators barricaded without hostages (Boltz, 1979). This policy led to the development of specialized hostage negotiation teams that include a designated negotiator, tactical assault team (TAC), command structure, and support personnel (Fuselier, 1981) with the primary aim of resolution and guiding principle being to minimise and eliminate the loss of life (McMains & Mullins, 2001).

## **1.2 Types of Hostage Situation**

Hostage negotiation as an entity evolved from the tragic result of the Munich Massacre in 1972 which has come to be known as an example of a 'traditional hostage-taking incident', however, research shows that hostage negotiation may be utilized within a variety of different scenarios and contexts. Literature which has examined the type of scenario which involves the deployment of negotiators has identified that while every situation has unique aspects, there are some general types of hostage situation that police typically encounter (Boltz, Dudonis, & Schultz, 1996; McMains & Mullins, 1996; Rogan, 1997; Russell & Biegel, 1990). These data have been used to create classification systems or typologies of crisis event situations. Various authors have created different typologies or classification systems; an early system devised by Hassell (1975), for example, established that hostage takers fell into one of four basic categories including a) *emotionally disturbed*, b) *criminal trapped in the commission of crime*, c) *prisoner in a revolt situation*, and d) *politically motivated*; with the ratios of each subtype varying internationally in accordance with more common types of crime.

More recently, Call (1996, 2003) has devised a more complex classification system based on hostage taker typology. He states that there are six major types of hostage taker: the *emotionally disturbed*, *political extremist*, *religious fanatics*, *criminals*, *prisoner inmates* and a combination of two or more of the above. Call goes further by identifying multiple subtypes under these typologies. For example, under the emotionally disturbed category there are seven subtypes: *brain damaged*, *elderly/senile*, *depressed*, *paranoid*, *schizophrenic*, *substance abuser* and *personal/family disputes* (Fuselier, 1988; Gist & Perry, 1985; Kennedy & Dyer, 1992; Pearce, 1977; Strentz, 1986). Similarly, the political extremist can be further sub-divided into subtypes. Knutson (1980), for example, makes reference to the *reluctant captor* and the *deliberate hostage taker* and suggests the former to be dreamers and philosophers whose violent act was part of an attempt to right a wrong and who indicated that they were unwilling to kill their hostages, whereas the latter, on the other hand is

described as more instrumental in the act and is perfectly willing to kill his or her captives to obtain their perceived goal. The religious fanatic can also be further subdivided, dependent on the particular cult/religion's internal mores and values (Cooper, 1981). Further subcategories also exist amongst the criminal and prison inmate typologies, with Call (2003) making particular reference to the subtype of criminal psychopath.

In addition to the development of typologies, research has identified a variety of common characteristics exhibited within crisis/hostage situations within the United States. This research has enabled a picture of the "common hostage situation" to be constructed, providing hostage negotiators with a model which conceptualizes the characteristics of the hostage situation, including details relating to the hostage taker's motivation, behavior, and the resolution of the incident. Head (1990), for example, analyzed 3330 incidents of domestic hostage taking that occurred between 1973 and 1982 and created a database entitled Hostage Event Analytic Database (HEAD). Head identified ten common characteristics associated with domestic hostage taking which included:

1. The majority of the perpetrators fit the criminal or prison inmate typology (52%).
2. The second largest typology of perpetrators were the political extremist/religious fanatic (21%) followed by the emotionally disturbed (18%).
3. The majority of perpetrators were young (25% below age 30), white (61%), male (80%) and acted alone.
4. The usual number of victims captured was one (47%) or two (15%).
5. The most common location for the crisis event was a form of transportation (35%) followed by a home (20%).
6. The most common motivation for the perpetrator's actions was political/publicity (33%) followed by money (23%).
7. The most common weapon used was a firearm (31%).
8. The most common event duration was one day or less (53%).

9. The majority of incidents were non-lethal (87%). However, hostages were more at risk for injury than the hostage taker.
10. The majority of incidents were negotiated (64%).

Similar research conducted at a later date by Feldman (2001) in Kentucky looked at 120 hostage/barricade incidents, and identified seven characteristic factors:

1. The majority of the perpetrators fit the personal/family dispute typology (31%).
2. The second largest typology of perpetrators was criminal (26%) followed by the emotionally disturbed (19%).
3. The majority of perpetrators were young (below age 30), male and acted alone.
4. The most common motivation for the perpetrator's actions was an interpersonal dispute complicated by an underlying psychiatric disorder as well as alcohol or drug use.
5. The most common weapon used was a firearm (75%).
6. The majority of incidents ended in injury or death to either some of the hostages or to the perpetrator (88%).
7. The majority of incidents were negotiated, but negotiations were successful in less than 40% of the time.

These findings illustrate the vast disparity in the characteristics of hostage/crisis incidents and suggest that although similarities exist, there is no one "typical hostage scenario". This concept is also echoed within the literature focusing on classification systems and typologies of hostage situations, whereby systems and typologies are vast and disparate, with little convergence in terms of an established and agreed upon classification system. It is clear that the classification system is dependent upon the type and source of data which are used to devise it, i.e. crisis situations will vary from state to state and country to country, so it is likely that situations will arise that cannot be neatly slotted in to one of the typologies. The nature of "crisis" situations dictates that no two scenarios will

be exactly the same; therefore, the database of encountered crisis situations is ever expanding. As such, typologies and classification systems should be interpreted with caution, and negotiators must be careful not to respond to the situation as a specific type of crisis incident, as opposed to a unique crisis scenario which may develop in any number of possible permutations.

Interestingly, despite the terminology used to describe the phenomenon, hostage negotiation does not always involve hostages. While early research focused on what is referred to as the "first generation of negotiations" whereby negotiators were typically responding to terrorist hostage situations with political or religious motivations, the "second generation of negotiations", marked by the early 1980s demonstrated a clear shift in the types of incidents of greatest concern to the law enforcement agencies which involved emotionally disturbed individuals and trapped criminals. Gist and Perry (1985), for example, found that the majority incidents which involved negotiators being called out were those including domestic, barricaded and suicidal incidents. Research conducted by McMains (1988) reflected this shift by revealing that less than 18% of the incidents dealt with by negotiation over a five year period in 15 of the largest U.S. cities actually involved hostages. In line with this, Hatcher, Mohandi, Turner, and Gelles (1998) noted a change in the type of typical scenario with negotiators working more with emotionally disturbed individuals, trapped criminals and domestic incidents and less with terrorists and prisoners. Contrary to public misconception, negotiators are often being faced by people in the midst of an escalated personal crisis, as this quote from Noesner and Webster (1997, p.13) demonstrates:

*"The majority of critical incidents to which law enforcement responds involve subjects who are motivated primarily by emotional needs...[and] these incidents may involve jilted lovers, disgruntled employees, or students, mood-disordered or psychotic subjects, suicidal individuals, or individuals, who, for whatever reason, believe that they or their beliefs have been threatened or demeaned by society."*

This demonstrates the varied and diverse nature of the role of the negotiator and provides an explanation for the change in terminology from "*hostage negotiation*" to "*crisis negotiation*" (McMains & Mullins, 1996) which is now commonly accepted amongst the negotiation literature.

### **1.3 The Role of Mental Health in Crisis Situations**

A key theme running throughout the literature highlights the increasingly common occurrence of crisis incidents involving individuals suffering from mental health problems. Individuals with mental health problems are disproportionately represented within those identified as hostage takers. For example, an early analysis of 245 hostage taking incidents reported to the FBI by US law enforcement agencies from 1976 to 1983 revealed that 145 of these incidents (59%) were attributed to individuals who were apparently suffering from a mental health disorder or who were experiencing emotional turmoil arising from personal problems or emotional disputes (Strentz, 1985). Similarly, Miron and Goldstein (1979) found that the majority of people who take hostages suffer from some form of psychopathology, with hostage takers typically falling into four diagnostic categories: *paranoid schizophrenia*, *bipolar disorder (depressed type)*, *antisocial personality* and "*inadequate personality*" (Borum & Strentz, 1992). The exact prevalence of mentally disturbed individuals committing hostage taking incidents still remains unclear with research reporting varied prevalence rates. Research focusing specifically on the prevalence of emotionally disturbed individuals as perpetrators varies from 52% (Fuselier, 1981; Strentz, 1987) to 88% (Butler, Leitenberg, & Fuselier, 1993) with variability perhaps attributable to the size of the agency and multiple definitions of "emotionally or mentally disturbed". It should be noted, that this correlation between hostage taking incidents and the prevalence of mental health problems cannot be directly translated into a causal link. Specifically, while a high proportion of those involved in hostage incidents may be more likely to suffer from mental health problems or emotional difficulties, this does not mean that a high proportion of those suffering from mental health problems are likely to take hostages.

Historically, both psychologists and psychiatrists have been used to contribute to the development of negotiation techniques. In the 1970s, Psychiatrist Mulder (1976) acted as a consultant to the Hague in the Netherlands and Scott (1976) adopted a similar role in the UK, advising Scotland Yard. A number of psychologists also contributed to this field throughout the 70s and 80s (Bell *et al.*, 1989; Miron & Goldstein, 1979; Stratton, 1978a). The role of mental health professionals as advisors within crisis incidents is, therefore, not a new one. However, the utilization of such mental health professionals has developed in line with the increasingly prevalent role of mental health within such incidents. The existence of psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers within an advisory capacity is well established within hostage negotiation protocol in many parts of the United States. Researchers estimate that between 30% and 58% of agencies with a crisis/hostage negotiation team utilize a mental health consultant in some fashion and 88% of these tend to be psychologists as opposed to other mental health professionals (Butler, Leitenberg, & Fuselier, 1993; Delprinho & Bahn, 1988; Fuselier, 1988). Utilization of such advisors is also in existence within the UK, although on a much smaller scale. This acceptance of the usefulness of psychological knowledge/input within hostage negotiation teams is a demonstration and public acknowledgement of the role of mental health within crisis situations. Although the efficacy of mental health consultation within crisis/hostage situations has not been researched extensively, research conducted by Butler *et al.*, (1993) found that the use of a mental health consultant to assess the perpetrator resulted in fewer hostage incidents leading to the serious injury or death of a hostage, more negotiated surrenders, and fewer incidents in which the SWAT team had to enter to arrest the suspect. Similar support for the use of mental health professionals is also exhibited anecdotally by many of the major city police departments in the United States, including the Los Angeles, New York City, San Antonio, San Francisco, and Houston Police Departments, who report highly effective outcomes from their crisis/hostage negotiation teams with deaths to hostages and hostage takers extremely rare (McMains, 1993).

The role of mental health within crisis situations is echoed by the terminology of "crisis" itself. And research indicates that mental health is likely to play a role in at least a proportion of the hostage or crisis incidents that negotiators are involved with for some time to come. This concept is resonated in line with the rising prevalence of mental health problems within society today, with recent research demonstrating a 46.6% lifetime prevalence rate of DSM-IV classified disorders - a figure which is higher than in previous cohorts (Kessler *et al.*, 2005). These findings implicate and highlight the need for continued involvement of mental health professionals as advisors within the negotiation arena for the foreseeable future.

#### **1.4 Negotiation Strategy**

Crisis negotiation has come to be known as "one of law enforcement's most effective tools" and this statement is consistently supported by the successful resolution of tens of thousands of hostage, barricade, attempted suicide, and kidnapping cases throughout the world (Regini, 2002, p.1). Such a contention is also supported by data from the Hostage Barricade database System (HOBAS) established by the Crisis Negotiation Unit (CNU) of the FBI. HOBAS serves as a database on hostage/crisis incidents through the systematic collection of cases (post incident) from law enforcement agencies across the United States. An analysis of HOBAS data from 2002-2003 indicated that approximately 82% of reported incidents were resolved without death or injury to the subject or the victim (Flood, 2003). Similarly, a considerable number of case studies and anecdotal reports further attest to the efficacy of crisis negotiation (see McMains & Mullins, 2001; Rogan, Hammer, & Van Zandt, 1997). However, despite this excellent success rate, the rapidly increasing phenomenon of hostage taking continues to challenge law enforcement professionals worldwide (Call, 1996; McMains & Mullins, 2001; Romano, 1998). For this reason, it is essential to establish what makes a negotiator effective, and what strategies are effective within such situations, so as to improve the success rate of negotiations and minimize the loss of life for both hostages and hostage takers.

The art of crisis negotiation has been described by some as a “complex verbal dance between the negotiator and the subject” (Kellin & McMurty, 2007, p.30). Crisis negotiation exists on a spectrum of infinite situational variables, with scenarios and ‘key players’ shifting over time with each contextual change. Some situations involve hostages, while others do not. Some subjects are suicidal, some are homicidal, and in some cases the subject may display both types of behavior. Some incidents involve weapons or explosives, whereas other are deemed unmanageable by the barricade location or pragmatic logistics associated with the scenario. Given the infinite range of possible situations that may be encountered by hostage (crisis) negotiators internationally, it is unrealistic to think that specific strategies for each situation can be learned by the negotiator. Instead, what is required is a flexible working model of negotiation that can be adapted to each individual scenario, providing the best possible outcome for the crisis situation. In essence, a good working model of crisis negotiation must be flexible enough that it applies to virtually any situation regardless of the context, subject state-of-mind, or other constraints (Kellin & McMurty, 2007).

Although every hostage/crisis incident is different, and involves an infinite number of variables, research conducted by a number of researchers has managed to establish a basic consensual protocol for handling hostage crises at a macro level, as a result of training and experience (Call, 2003; Greenstone, 1995, 2005; Lanceley, 1999; McMains, 2002, 2003; McMains & Mullins, 1996, 2002; Miller, 2005, 2006; Noesner, 1999; Noesner & Dolan, 1992; Noesner & Webster, 1997; Slatkin, 1996, 2005; Wind, 1995). The basic elements of this protocol include:

- Isolate and contain the hostage taker and secure the perimeter to keep the hostage taker in and unauthorized persons out.
- Provide for scene control. This may involve mobilizing medical service, controlling the local traffic, dealing with the media, and keeping the surrounding community sufficiently informed to protect their safety.

- Establish some form of communication with the hostage taker, such as line phone, cell phone, bullhorn - even digital pager or email - as soon as possible.
- Employ socialized communication strategies, such as rapport building and active listening.
- Respond appropriately to demands and deadlines, with the overriding goal being the safety of the hostages.
- Structure the surrender ritual and resolution of the crisis carefully and known when to employ a tactical response, if absolutely necessary.
- Utilize operational and stress debriefing techniques on hostages, hostage takers, and crisis team members as appropriate.

This protocol provides an overall blueprint for managing the situation from both a tactical and negotiator perspective. Similarly, research has addressed the negotiation procedure on a more micro level by exploring the strategies that have been used and have been found to be successful within the negotiation procedure. As a result of this, these strategies have been adopted by law enforcement professionals within their roles as negotiators with the aim of reducing/minimising the loss of life during such crisis situations. Many of these strategies have been born out of models of crisis negotiation. Some of the key models of negotiation are outlined below.

## ***1.5 Models of Negotiation***

### ***1.5.1 Principled Negotiation***

One of the earliest models of negotiation was proposed by Fisher and Ury (1981) and expanded upon by Fisher, Ury, and Patton in 1991. Principled negotiation focuses on what is referred to as an "interest-based" approach to conflict resolution. The model advocates four fundamental principles of negotiation: 1) separate the person from the problem, 2) focus on mutual interests instead of individual positions, 3) generate options for mutual gain, and 4) insist on using objective

criteria to judge the effectiveness of the agreement. The initial principle works on the basis that people tend to become personally involved with the problem and therefore will often interpret outsiders responses as personal attacks. The second principle works on the basis that good agreements focus on the parties' interests, rather than their positions. When individuals are focused on defining a problem in terms of positions, there will inevitably be one party who will "lose" the dispute. In contrast to this, when a problem is defined in terms of the parties' individual underlying interests it is often possible to find a solution which satisfies both parties' interests. The third principle focuses on the generation of options and is based on the concept that generation of options that will mutually benefit both parties will result in eventual successful resolution of the conflict.

The final principle relates to the importance of using objective criteria to judge the effectiveness of the agreement. This principle is particularly salient when parties' interests are directly opposed. In such situations, Fisher and Ury's (1981) model proposes that individuals should develop objective criteria which is appropriate for the situation and should use this criteria to govern agreements and resolution of the conflict. Examples of such criteria include scientific findings, professional standards, or legal precedent and adherence to such criteria helps to preserve the relationship between the parties, an aspect which is vital when negotiating crisis situations. This early model of negotiation was seen to be influential and provided negotiators with a framework for the utilization of problem-solving techniques to respond to, manage and resolve crisis incidents. Although this model provided a useful tool for early negotiators, it has been critiqued for its lack of applicability to many crisis situations due to the prerequisite for both parties involved to be functioning in a rational cognitive state. Many of the principles outlined by Fisher and Ury (1981) simply could not be implemented with an individual who was suffering from a severe mental illness or emotional conflict, as they would be unable to go through the processes outlined in a rational manner.

### **1.5.2 The "Getting Past No" Model of Negotiation**

Ury (1991) built upon previous work within the conflict resolution arena by developing a five-step model for people engaged in difficult negotiations and applied this to a variety of settings, including that of hostage negotiation. The first step is entitled "*Don't React - Go to the Balcony*" and Ury describes this stage as a shift from the negotiator as a participant in the process to an observer in the negotiation process. Ury utilizes the analogy of the negotiator acting as a third party standing on a balcony watching actors perform a play on a stage, rather than being part of the play themselves. The negotiator needs to avoid any form of anger, confrontation and emotion, and this can be achieved by shifting the dynamics of the negotiator from participant to observer. The second step is entitled "*Stepping to Their Side*" and refers to the requirement for the negotiator to paint the hostage taker in the light of an ally rather than an opponent. By making the subject a partner in the process and making them perceive that they are working together to form a resolution, this is more likely to result in successful peaceful resolution of the crisis situation. Echoing the recurring theme running throughout many of the crisis negotiation models, this step can be achieved by utilizing active listening skills, such as mirroring, paraphrasing, emotional labelling and summarising.

The third step is entitled "*Change the Game*" and refers to the concept of reframing subject demands so as to avoid rejecting the hostage takers demands which is likely to result in resistance. This step can be achieved by utilizing open-ended questions which force the subject to think about possible solutions and alternatives, deflecting attacks from the subject and reframing problems to reveal future solutions. The fourth stage of Ury's model is entitled "*Build a Golden Bridge*" and this essentially relates to the negotiator's attempt to make it easy for the subject to say "yes" instead of "no". The negotiator has to make the hostage taker a willing partner in the negotiating process by involving them in the decision-making process. If the negotiator attempts to force compliance, this is likely to result in resistance and continuation of unrealistic demands. Consequently, the aim is for the negotiator to help generate ideas from the subject to help them feel part of the process and

encourage collaboration. It has also been suggested that in getting the hostage taker to say yes, this has a mutually beneficial effect, as it benefits the negotiation process by encouraging successful resolution, but it also helps the subject to save face - an element which plays a role in the successful resolution of crisis incidents (Mullins, 2002).

The final stage in the model is entitled "*Make it Hard to Say No*" which expands upon the fourth stage by not only increasing the subject's desire to say "yes", but also making it harder for the subject to say "no", thereby increasing the chances of successful resolution of the incident. This model provides a toolbox of techniques to utilize within crisis situations, but again, relies on some element of cognitive rational processing on behalf of both parties, an aspect which is often lacking within the hostage taker mentality. In line with the recurring theme of emotionally disturbed or mentally disordered individuals involved in crisis incidents, it is likely that these individuals will require a different negotiation approach, which is less systematic or hierarchical and more crisis-intervention based. Once cognitions and rationalization have been restored somewhat, more cognitively based problem solving techniques, such as those discussed above can be employed.

### **1.5.3 The Crisis Bargaining Model**

Donohue, Kaufmann, Smith and Ramesh (1991) utilize a different model to describe strategies used by hostage negotiators. Their model focuses on the type of bargaining that parties involved in the negotiation utilize and identifies and distinguishes between *crisis* (distributive) and *normative* (integrative) bargaining. The model incorporates the notion of both *relationship* (expressive) and *substantive* (material) issues being addressed with differing levels of preference at different stages throughout the negotiation process. The model works on the basis that the initial stages of negotiation tend to focus on relational issues, such as power, role, trust and status between police and hostage takers. Once these issues become resolved, more attention or weight gets placed on substantive issues to resolve the problem. In essence, crisis bargaining is about relationships and

normative bargaining is more focused on resolving material issues. Donohue *et al.* (1991) apply this model to hostage negotiation strategies by trying to move hostage takers away from crisis bargaining and towards normative bargaining in order to resolve the crisis situation. Ideally, negotiation should progress in a step-wise manner from crisis to normative bargaining; however, Donohue and Roberto (1996) note that this is not always the case. Hammer and Rogan (1997) make a similar distinction in their communication-based negotiation model whereby they identify instrumental, relational, and identity issues within a negotiation, and specify the need for negotiators to steer hostage takers away from crisis (i.e., relational and identity) bargaining modes (where relational and identity issues are prevalent) to normative bargaining modes (where instrumental needs are paramount), which is more likely to result in successful resolution of the crisis situation. Donohue *et al.*'s (1991) model focuses less on specific techniques and more on adapting the style of negotiation to the appropriate needs of the perpetrator (i.e., by focusing on crisis or normative bargaining, respectively).

#### **1.5.4 The S.A.F.E. model of crisis negotiation**

The S.A.F.E. model was developed by Hammer and Rogan (1997) and forms a key part of many negotiator toolboxes today. The model was devised on the basis of a combination of behavioral science research and insights of numerous operationally active crisis negotiators. The model creates a specific framework for de-escalating and resolving crisis situations by incorporating a variety of effective strategies within a communication plan to influence the behavior of the subject (e.g., hostage taker, suicidal individual) in a positive manner. The S.A.F.E. framework assesses and tracks what the authors refer to as four key "triggers" for de-escalating crisis situations. The authors propose that by assessing and monitoring these triggers, negotiators can adopt the appropriate strategy to respond to the situation which is more likely to result in a positive resolution. The four triggers are described as: "*Substantive Demands*", "*Attunement*", "*Face*" & "*Emotion*" with each functioning as a predominant 'frame' within which the subject and negotiator communicatively interact as a crisis incident unfolds.

The initial frame makes reference to *Substantive Demands* whereby the instrumental interests and needs expressed by the parties are identified. The S.A.F.E. model indicates that when the subject is in a substantive demands frame, the negotiators goal is to bargain or problem-solve with the subject to achieve a peaceful surrender. The second frame - *Attunement*, refers to the relational trust which has been established between the subject and the negotiator. The S.A.F.E. model states that the negotiators goal in this frame is to engage in cooperative behavior to build trust and liking (without compromising safety or security concerns). This frame is akin to rapport building within the therapeutic relationship. The third frame - *Face*, refers to the projected self-image of the subject and the model proposes that the negotiator's goal in this frame is to validate the face needs of the subject in order to promote face honouring and de-escalation of the situation. The final frame - *Emotional Distress* refers to intense, negative emotions that compromise an individual's ability to cope with the stress of a crisis situation. The goal of the negotiator in this frame is to help subjects cope with their emotional distress in a way that permits them to re-assess the situation and then influence the subject towards a cooperative resolution.

The focus of the S.A.F.E. model refers to appropriate identification of the subject's current dominant S.A.F.E. frame, appropriate matching of communication style to the S.A.F.E. frame of the subject, and then utilization of strategies in order to effectively facilitate resolution of the needs expressed by each frame or shift to another S.A.F.E. frame in order to de-escalate the situation. Rogan and Hammer (1997) propose that the S.A.F.E. model offers a comprehensive approach for assessing, evaluating and developing effective response strategies to subject's behavior in crisis incidents. They propose that the model should be incorporated into the toolbox utilized by crisis negotiation teams (Hammer, 1997).

### **1.5.5 The Behavioral Influence Stairway Model**

One of the most recent models of crisis negotiation is that of the Behavioral Influence Stairway Model (BISM) developed by Vecchi (2007a). The BISM is a model of behavior change grounded in the principles of active listening that was adapted from a model developed by the FBI/CNU (Vecchi, Van Hasselt, & Romano, 2005). The BISM highlights the importance of the relationship –building process involving the negotiator and the subject in order to achieve a peaceful resolution to the crisis situation (Noesner & Webster, 1997). This relationship has been found to be a key element for the successful resolution of both barricaded and crisis situations (Vecchi, *et al.*, 2005). The BISM shares parallel concepts with models of Motivational Interviewing, with emphasis being placed on the utilization of skills such as *empathy*, *rapport* and *active listening* in order to facilitate behavior change. In line with this, the BISM consists of four elements: 1) *active listening skills*, 2) *empathy*, 3) *rapport*, and 4) *behavioral influence*. Progression from stage 1 to stage 4 occurs by utilizing these skills (underpinned by active listening throughout) with the aim of building a relationship with the subject in order to facilitate behavior change. The key element of active listening has been shown to facilitate behavior change and crisis resolution (Lanceley, 1999; Noesner & Webster, 1997) and hence justifies this underpinning. Research indicates that as this process is utilized effectively, the probability of positive behavior change increases, thus becoming a building block towards the successful resolution of the crisis situation (Vecchi, *et al.*, 2005). This statement is supported via anecdotal evidence whereby the heuristic value of the BISM has been documented in the resolution of a wide range of highly volatile crisis situations (Flood, 2003); as such it demonstrates the applicability and efficacy of the BISM within the negotiation arena.

### **1.5.6 The Cylindrical Model of Crisis Communications**

The Cylindrical Model of Crisis Negotiation was devised by Taylor (2002a), who highlighted the complex nature of negotiation focusing on levels of interaction, motivational emphases, and behavior

intensity within negotiations. The model was compiled by utilizing qualitative data from nine resolved cases of hostage negotiation with results of analysis via nonmetric multidimensional scaling solution revealing clear empirical support for the cylindrical nature of communication behavior (Taylor, 2002). The model proposes there to be three general levels of interaction behavior during negotiations ranging from *avoidance*, to *distributive*, to *integrative*, a concept which is analogous to the *crisis* vs. *normative* bargaining conceptualization proposed by Donohue, Kaufman, Smith, and Ramesh (1991) and Donohue and Roberto (1993). Taylor's model proposes that negotiators aim to move subjects through these levels progressively in order to move subjects away from non-active participation (*avoidant*) interaction through to a degree of cooperation which may be based on self-interest (*distributive*) through to eventual normative and cooperative communication (*integrative*) that will result in reconciliation of the parties' respective divergent interests. Second, the model proposes the existence of three different motivational emphases within negotiation behavior, and classifies these as *Instrumental*, *Relational*, and *Identity* themes. The first theme refers to behavior which is linked to the subject's instrumental needs which can be described as tangible commodities or wants. The second theme refers to behavior which is linked to the relationship or affiliation between the negotiator and the subject; and the third theme refers to the negotiating parties' concern for self-preservation or "face" (Goffman, 1967).

Finally, the model proposes the existence of a third variable within negotiations, which Taylor refers to the intensity of negotiation behavior. This concept relates to the degree to which intense behaviors are utilized within negotiations, with research indicating that a speaker's attitude towards a concept deviates more from neutrality with more frequent use of obscure metaphors, profanity, and dramatic changes in intonation (Bowers, 1963; Donohue, 1981; Lewicki, Saunders & Minton, 1999). Similar research has shown that the use of such intense behaviors has a detrimental effect on negotiation, increasing the tendency for conflict and for negotiation break-down (Lewicki, Saunders, & Minton, 1999). The strength of Taylor's model lies in its conceptualization of negotiation behavior as inter-related communication components, rather than discrete, mutually exclusive categories. As

such, the cylindrical model avoids the criticism of early, static style-based frameworks for negotiation as it enables both researchers and negotiators to consider the changing pattern of communication behavior across the whole negotiation process (Taylor, 2002). Taylor's model provides a detailed micro-level analysis of crisis behavior and provides a detailed and unique insight into the multi-dimensional existence of negotiation behavior.

### ***1.5.7 Structured Tactical Engagement Process (STEPS) Model***

Kellin and McMurty (2007) have recently devised the Structured Tactical Engagement Process model. The model provides a framework for both understanding and influencing a barricaded subject's behavior in order to reach a peaceful resolution by utilizing principles from the Transtheoretical Stages of Change Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986). Kellin & McMurty propose that in line with any form of behavior, a crisis situation has to go through four stages in order to reach successful resolution. The stages consist of *Precontemplation* (Step 0), *Contemplation* (Step 1), *Preparation* (Step 2) and *Action* (Step 3), with the final stage resulting in behavioral change that results in successful and peaceful resolution. The authors propose that a variety of skills/techniques can be utilized in order to help guide subjects through these four stages. The initial stage of any negotiation is characterized by the *Precontemplation* stage, whereby the subject is unwilling to acknowledge that the situation or their behavior needs to change. The subject tends to be uncooperative and unrealistic at this point in the negotiation and it is the role of the negotiator to steer the subject away from this stage and into a *Contemplative* stage whereby they can begin to contemplate a change in behavior or situation.

Research has implicated the role of *rapport* in facilitating behavior change (Miller & Rollnick, 2002) and application of this finding to the negotiation procedure indicates the benefit of the formation of a connection between the subject and the negotiator. As this connection grows, the individual is less likely to be defensive and more open to suggestion (Kellin & McMurty, 2007) and

behavior change becomes more likely. Once rapport has been established and the subject has moved from Step 0 to Step 1, the subject is likely to be realizing that their behavior and the current situation needs to change, but they are not quite sure how to go about implementing this. It is, therefore, the negotiator's job at this stage to gently affirm the need for a peaceful resolution while increasing the subject's confidence to move into Step 2. Once the subject is committed to working with the negotiator and his/her confidence has increased, the subject moves to the penultimate phase of Step 2 - *Preparation*. At step 2, the subject has identified that there is a problem and that their behavior needs to change, and they are beginning to consider and possibly commit to a resolution. During Step 2, the negotiator's role becomes more proactive and directive with the key role being problem-solving in order to develop an appropriate exit strategy. The negotiator must then try to maintain a degree of motivation and confidence in the subject in order for them to progress to the final Step - *Action*. During the final stage, the subject should be carrying out the agreed-upon plan for peaceful resolution of the situation. It is vital that the negotiator remains supportive and directive throughout the final step, until resolution has been achieved.

The STEPS model incorporates many of the concepts of the transtheoretical model of change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986) and motivational interviewing in order to facilitate and encourage behavior change in an individual. There are parallels between the use of such techniques in counseling, whereby active listening skills will be utilized in order to establish rapport and positive therapeutic relationships with clients (Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, & Ivey, 1989; Hersen & Van Hasselt, 1998) which, in turn, increases the likelihood of behavior change.

### **1.6 Conclusion & Future Directions**

It is clear from the variety of models which have been devised to account for effective negotiation strategies that there is no singular theoretical blueprint which can be adhered to in order to achieve successful resolution of crisis situations. This toolbox or library of negotiation strategies

and techniques has been built up via a combination of operationally successful negotiations and academic research and provide a set of resources which negotiators can refer to and adopt within their roles. It seems prudent to suggest that a combination of strategies or techniques may be useful depending on the circumstances of the crisis situation.

It is also important to note that the models discussed above relate specifically to the culture/society in which they were devised and as such may not be directly applicable cross-culturally. The majority of the research on crisis negotiation has been conducted in the United States and has particular relevance to countries which adhere to the right to bear arms. As a result, research within cultures and countries which do not bear arms may reveal interesting comparisons in terms of strategies and techniques which tend to be effective. Of particular interest is police hostage negotiation in the UK, an aspect which has not been investigated to date. An analysis of hostage negotiation within the UK would enable a model of negotiation to be devised providing a forum for cross-cultural comparison with US-based models of crisis negotiation.

Finally, analysis of the literature focusing on crisis negotiation has identified a common theme linked to effectiveness/success of negotiations. This theme has tended to focus on the techniques and strategies employed by the negotiators during the crisis. An aspect which has not been explored in such detail is that of the characteristics, traits and skills which may enhance a negotiators ability to perform effectively within their role. In line with this, it is proposed that certain fixed and malleable traits, such as *personality, coping style, decision-making style, emotion regulation* and *emotional intelligence*, may play a role in the ability of individuals to successfully perform and cope with their role. Future research in this direction would have implications for both the selection and training of operationally active negotiators and may yield a tool to help select appropriate individuals for the role, identify specific training needs, and enhance operational skills in order to increase the successful resolution of hostage (crisis) incidents internationally.

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