

# **What is relevant to destructive conflicts?**

© Joshua Weiss  
Law School, Harvard University

Note prepared for the Workshop on Humiliation and Conflict, November 18-19, 2004,  
at Columbia University, New York, 2004

## **The Role of the Third Side**

The discussant will argue that much of the reason why large scale destructive conflict emerges and is sustained over a period of time is because of a weak surrounding community, also known as the Third Side as coined by William Ury. A weak Third Side fails to act as a container for constructive contention, thereby enabling destructive conflict to thrive and spread.

The discussant will focus on the systemic nature of the Third Side and the importance of involving society in the solutions in a much more coordinated fashion. Particular emphasis will be placed on the roles of the Third Side relevant to counteract humiliation and degradation, such as the Healer, Provider, and Equalizer.