ROOT OF √CONFLICT

Root of Conflict Podcast

Episode: Launch of Professor Monika Nalepa's new book, After Authoritarianism, & Building the Global Transitional Justice Dataset at the Transitional Justice and Democratic Stability Lab

featuring
Monika Nalepa, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago
interviewed by
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Full Transcript

Hannah Balikci: Hello, this is Hannah and you're listening to the University of Chicago Public Policy Podcast. You're listening to Root of Conflict, a Podcast about violent conflict around the world and the people, societies and policy issues it affects.

Hannah Balikci: In this series, you'll hear from experts and practitioners who conduct research, implement programs, and use data analysis to address some of the most pressing challenges facing our world. Root of Conflict is produced by UC3P in collaboration with the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflict. A research institute housed within the Harris School of Public Policy, at the University of Chicago. How are authoritarian elites and their collaborators handled in the aftermath of democratic transitions? The modern discipline documenting transitional justice, began with the Nuremberg Trials for Nazi perpetrators. The trials shifted the way the international community thinks about accountability for human rights violations committed by authoritarian regimes and are generally the most well-known example of transitional justice. Yet there exist different procedures of extrajudicial transitional justice, including lustration, truth commissions, and purges, that hold human rights violators accountable and remove them from positions of power without formally sentencing them.

Hannah Balikci: In this episode, we speak with Professor Monika Nalepa, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago, about her new book, After Authoritarianism, and her monumental work building the Global Transitional Justice Dataset, at the Transitional Justice and Democratic Stability Lab. We talk about the different implications of transitional justice for both leaders and rank-and-file members of authoritarian regimes and the more recent global phenomenon of Democratic backsliding.

Olga Bednarek: My name is Olga Bednarek. I'm a third-year dual-degree student at the Crown School of Social Work and the Harris School of Public Policy, and I'm a Pearson Fellow. I have the privilege of working at Professor Monika Nalepa.

Isabella Pestana de Andrade do Nascimento: I'm Isabella Pestana. I'm a first-year MPP student at the Harris School of Public Policy, at the University of Chicago, and I'm also a Pearson Fellow.

Monika Nalepa: Hi, I'm Monika Nalepa. I'm a Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, a former member of the Political Economy PhD program, as well as a Pearson's Institute for Global Conflict Affiliate.

Monika Nalepa: Thank you so much. I want to say that first I feel like I had the privilege of working with Olga. We met just before the summer, and I hired her instantly as a research assistant. And I work on, I think the broadest way of saying it is on regime change and factors leading to regime change and also concentrating on what happens after regime change. Probably the biggest area of my research is transitional justice, which is the way that new democracies deal with members, collaborators, and a vast array of legacies of the previous authoritarian regime or regime that was boggled by Civil war.

Monika Nalepa: I've been interested in this topic for over two decades now. I wrote my dissertation on it. I've written two books on it, given lots of lectures, written a number of articles. Most recently I wrote about, prospects even for transitional justice in Russia following the war Ukraine. I would say that's the greatest passion that I have substantively. But also as a social scientist, I pay a lot of attention to methods and I would describe myself as an institutionalist. Somebody who pays particular attention on the way that institutions structure human behavior and how humans interact in political situations and social situations.

Monika Nalepa: At the University of Chicago where I've worked for over nine years now, I teach classes on game theory, social choice theory, and analytical methods and comparative politics.

Isabella Pestana de Andrade do Nascimento: Super impressive.

Olga Bednarek: Could you please define transitional justice for those of us who are not familiar with the term?

Monika Nalepa: Sure. Paradoxically, it has often a little to do with normative concepts of justice. And it essentially refers to all kinds of mechanisms that are set up in the aftermath of transition to democracy, to handle former authoritarian elites that are collaborators, sometimes bystanders, sometimes victims. And very frequently, the concept actually extends to non-judicial institutions. Following transitions from authoritarian rule, new regimes are often resource deprived or depleted.

Monika Nalepa: Coming up with judicial procedures for handling sometimes huge atrocities that were committed on behalf of the former authoritarian regime, is just not feasible. Hence the reliance on extrajudicial procedures, such as illustrations, urges, truth commissions, hearing commissions, et cetera. And even though these mechanisms often... What else? Opening archives, but with documentation of human rights violations that were committed. And although these extrajudicial procedures don't fulfill standards of rule of law perhaps, and due process, just because of the vast array of actors and actions that one has to deal with in the aftermath of transition, they're better than having judicial processes set up, only reach a few.

Monika Nalepa: I would say that in my most recent strand of research is arguing that, transitional justice procedures that may be skimp on due process and rule of law extrajudicial, but reach a vast array of former citizens of authoritarian regimes are better than concentrating, for instance, just on criminally prosecuting the leadership, the authoritarian regime. There was a normative implication there, if you want to catch me on that, but yes.

Isabella Pestana de Andrade do Nascimento: It's amazing. Please.

Monika Nalepa: The normative implication basically is that, following, I would say, World War II and Nuremberg trials, there has been a shift in the way that the international community thinks about

accountability for human rights violations committed by authoritarian regimes. There's been this shift towards believing that, if we hold accountable leaders of these authoritarian regimes and those who are issuing orders, then the incentives to fulfill these orders on behalf of the rank-and-file will disappear. Meanwhile, there are reasons to doubt this.

Monika Nalepa: In fact, we see that, I have a theoretical paper with Stephen Boyd, one of the students from my Transitional Justice and Democratic Stability Lab, where we show that there are actually limits to the strategy and perhaps prosecuting rank-and-file numbers of authoritarian regimes. Those who are fulfilling orders in the long-term can actually be better at disabling these principal agent relationships. Between authoritarian leaders who are issuing orders of repression and rank-and-file members who are fulfilling those orders. I'll qualify that though.

Monika Nalepa: It's better from the following point of view. If we're asking, what kind of transitional justice mechanisms are best suited for reducing the volume of repression that is committed by authoritarian regimes? I'm not saying that it's just to let leaders off the hook or not to concentrate on them so much, I'm just saying that in the long term it reduces or maybe punishing them harsher and harsher at the expense of punishing rank-and-file members, does not reduce the amount of repression that they exert against their own citizens.

Olga Bednarek: Speaking of your lab, could you explain to us how you are gathering this data? How you're studying it? Because it feels a bit ambiguous to us, I think. You're studying such a big topic and so, really understanding how you are would be helpful.

Monika Nalepa: Sure. The idea of the lab came out of, just looking at the geography of transitional justice and how this discipline has unraveled. And it's mostly happening through country studies, right? There's a regime change in confidence on country and country expert from that country, writes about the transitional justice procedures that were administered there. And often this would be very disjoint from similar research on transitional justice from sometimes even neighboring countries. At most the works in comparative politics that dealt with transitional justice would cover two or three countries. There were very few cross-national efforts.

Monika Nalepa: And while I was at Columbia University, my advisor, Jon Elster, was writing a book about transitional justice and historical perspective. And he was actually interested in a more qualitative way, but really surveying over time and across space, how various countries have dealt with elites of their former authoritarian regimes. And he asked me to collect data on six East European countries and their transitional justice processes. And he gave me very little input on how he wants that data organized. So, leaving it largely up to me.

Monika Nalepa: And the first thing that I thought to myself, that instead of just taking a snapshot of what are the transitional justice mechanisms that have been implemented in a different country, why not create a chronology for the entire Democratic period. Starting when the country transitioned away from authoritarianism and focusing on four mechanisms. In my case, it was, illustrations, purges, truth commissions, and victim compensation. Why not concentrating on those four mechanisms? Just prepare chronologies of transitional justice events that took place in that country.

Monika Nalepa: And when coding these events or when collecting data on these events, concentrate both on developments that were advancing the transitional justice process forward, as well as events that were setbacks. Well, if the president vetoes a transitional justice bill or they'll say, opening archives of the secret political police, that's a setback for transitional justice. But if the legislature passes a law, creating a truth

commission, that will uncover the passion of abuses committed by an authoritarian regime. That will advance the transitional justice process forward.

Monika Nalepa: And then out of this collection of events, some pushing the transitional justice process forward and others backwards, and we can actually code those literally as zeros and ones or negative ones and plus ones, and create measures of the severity of transitional justice. Using that approach, in many, many years later, after I graduated from Columbia, I applied for a grant to the National Science Foundation and laid out this idea that, we should be collecting systematic data on transitional justice. And I also proposed a theory that I would test with this data because otherwise the NSF does not give money for the data fishing expeditions. And after being funded, I hired roughly 10 research assistants, to help code these data from all democracies in the world that have transitioned from autocracy since 1918.

Monika Nalepa: In the first phase of data collection, we focused on extrajudicial transitional justice procedures. So frustrations, purges, truth commissions. Purges of entire agencies, purges of individual persons, illustrations on truth commissions. And that data set was released in 2021, and that basically concluded the funding from the National Science Foundation.

Monika Nalepa: But, following that, I was fortunate enough to get support from the University of Chicago, including the Pearson Institute. Thank you very much. And we expanded actually our data collection to criminal procedures. We decided to focus, in-line with this paper that I described a little earlier, we decided to focus on, collecting information about, transitional justice events of criminal trials against perpetrators of human rights violations. But focusing both on leaders, so those who are issuing orders, and the rank-and-file, so those who are fulfilling orders.

Monika Nalepa: And that data set is going to be released tomorrow, on the day of the global forum. The first sneak preview of the data set will actually happen during the global forum. And what it reveals, just as a descriptive statistic, is that, indeed, after 1946, there has been this shift towards prosecuting leaders. Those who have been issuing orders rather than those who will be fulfilling orders. But that's just the first snapshot out of the data set. There's lots more that can be done from it.

Olga Bednarek: Could you please tell us, since you're publishing this data set tomorrow, will it be available for the public to view? How will you be basically disseminating to support information?

Monika Nalepa: Both data sets will be available on the website of the Transitional Justice and Democratic Stability Lab. The address for that is tjdemstabilitylab.com, and there is a tab there that goes to the global transitional justice data set. And right now the data that is available is for these four transitional justice mechanisms that are non-judicial, illustrations, two types of purges and truth commissions. And that database is interactive so one can choose a subset of countries to compare the volume of transitional justice mechanisms in those countries. One can look at the severity, the urgency, and the volatility of transitional justice in those countries. And next week, we will make downloadable the data set on criminal trials. So the second part of the data set that breaks down criminal trials against leaders and rank-and-file members. And it will also be available in the interactive format. The tjdemstabilitylab.com website also has a page with the research products of our labs, so papers that have been published as well as papers that are in progress. And it also introduces the members of our lab, so you can see our faces.

Olga Bednarek: Thank you so much. I'll definitely have to look into that and play around with that data set. I do have two follow-up questions. The first one is, could you please define illustrations for us?

Monika Nalepa: Thank you. Thanks for that question. Illustrations, from Latin, it means shedding with light or purifying with light. And it's a transitional justice term that has been used very broadly, to refer to any way of dealing with members of the leadership of the former authoritarian regime, but, in not these non-judicial race. So not criminal trial. Firing them, preventing them from holding office. And in my new book, After Authoritarianism, I actually re-conceptualized the use of the words illustration and purges. Because illustration is also used popularly to refer to, exposing who among citizens of a former authoritarian regime, collaborated with the secret police and preventing those who collaborated with the secret police from fulfilling all kinds of functions.

Monika Nalepa: And one of the things that I point out is that, that's a very different mechanism than purges, right? When we think about purging, we think about, firing from office, from their positions, whether in the enforcement apparatus or in the bureaucracy, people whose status and collaboration with former authoritarian regime was known, right? Who was a minister in an authoritarian cabinet? Everybody knows. Who was the chief of military? Everybody knows. But what people don't know is who the secret collaborators that the secret police recruited to spy women's surveillance of the opposition was. But those are the people who are known.

Monika Nalepa: And illustrations to the extent that they focus on revealing these collaborators or preventing former collaborators from running for office, creates very different effect than purges. Purges essentially are punitive, right? They sanction people for what they did in the past. Sometimes they might correct systematic biases that keep in place pure council numbers of the authoritarian apparatus might create. But what illustrations do is actually remove opportunities for blackmailing former collaborators of the secret police with compromising information.

Monika Nalepa: I'll give you an example. If a former collaborator of the secret police becomes a politician and is in a position of executive power, some executive power, and only he knows that he was a collaborator, and arguably his leading officer or some people from the tight circle of the secret police, that person can now be blackmailed with the threat of revealing this information about collaboration. And can be steered towards implementing policies that they would otherwise not implement. This blackmail ability of former collaborators, makes illustrations or transparency regimes more broadly, actually a forward-looking mechanism rather than backward-looking mechanism like purges.

Monika Nalepa: Even though purges and illustrations have been used interchangeably, they're very different mechanisms. And in my most recent book, I argue that countries following transitions, such as Russia hopefully will be, should focus on transparency regimes like illustrations and eliminating the use of compromise from politics. Whereas with purges, they should use them sparingly and only apply them when actually the bureaucrats or the members of the enforcement apparatus who are being purged, don't have any expertise to offer that could be usable by the new Democratic regime.

Olga Bednarek: Thank you so much for that definition. One more follow-up question. You were talking about studying over space and time. My question is, does transitional justice ever end? How long is your timeframe for studying? 10 years, 20 years, or is it indefinite?

Monika Nalepa: It's indefinite, which basically means that, the Transitional Justice and Democratic Stability Lab is an ongoing process. Because even countries that transitioned decades ago, are still embarking on transitional justice. And I'll just point to a couple of instances here. Spain and Argentina are fantastic examples. In both of these countries, their initial efforts of holding former perpetrators accountable or even revealing the truth about what happened in Spain, both during the Franco regime and during the Civil War, were put on hold. There was this strong belief that transitional justice will distract Spain from setting on a

path towards democratization. But putting on hold issues of accountability, often comes to haunt new democracies. And sure enough, decades later, a memory law was passed in Spain, and these discussions basically resurfaced.

Monika Nalepa: And now we're in an era where street names are being changed, information is being circulated. Of course, many people are being held accountable because too much time has passed, but transitional justice doesn't really end for good. Of course, perpetrators might die and become ill, and there's not really a chance to hold them accountable, but there's always truth to be revealed. One of the things that I think come out of my research is that, transitional justice is not really a choice whether to do it or not is just how to do it.

Olga Bednarek: Thank you, professor. We have seen examples of authoritarian regimes transitioning to democracies, but there are also examples of places where democratic institutions seem to have faced some type of fragility. We can talk now about Turkey and some will argue about Brazil. What is your opinion on this topic? And now it's my curiosity, do we also have data being produced about this? It would be the opposite of transitioning to democracy, but places that were democratic.

Monika Nalepa: I'm really glad that you asked that question because that's basically a second strand of my research agenda, which largely started because I'm Polish. And in 2015, Poland that had democratized in 1989 started this process of backsliding into autocracy. And the only reason I can now speak about this process with complete relaxation is because, just this last weekend, the first election in any country actually in the world that has been backsliding for two electoral firms, the election actually reversed the support for the incumbent. And most likely we will, within a few months, have a non-backsliding regime. But liberal opposition will come back to power.

Monika Nalepa: As always, Poland, it's a little bit complicated. It was research interests sparked my developments in Poland but of course, as you noticed, it's a phenomenon that has occurred around the world. And it's a very puzzling phenomenon because especially I think for citizens living in established democracies who've come to believe that who've come to take in their institutions, the democratic institutions and institutions of representation for granted, the fact that the role of restrainers of executives is being diminished. And by restrainers, I mean, courts, other chambers, opposition parties, is very troubling. Researching the causes and consequences of that is another one of my interests.

Monika Nalepa: And I would say that the biggest focus of this research has been on diminishing the role of vertical restrainers. Vertical restrainers are essentially voters. What do incumbents do to prevent voters from voting them out of office, when they start undermining democratic institution? It's puzzling because presumably voters want to live in a democracy, the elect into office an executive who is undermining democracy, such as, firing judges of the Supreme Court, trying to take over control of the media. Why do voters keep voting for that incumbent?

Monika Nalepa: In one of the papers that I've written with a couple of co-authors, Catherine Chiopris and George Vanberg, we posed that, voters are uncertain about the true intentions of these executive incumbents and may be led to think that these incumbents are actually pursuing policy goals. And that making some changes in these constitutional institutions, such as courts, such as electoral systems, are merely an instrument to achieve those policy goals. And because voters want to see those policy goals implemented, they give these incumbents the benefit of the doubt. And then the incumbents after being re-elected, turn around and use the fact these institutions of control have been weakened, to stay in power forever. This is of course, a shortcut from Adam Szybowski, but, basically main difference between autocrats and democrats is that, democrats are

willing to step down when they lose popular support, autocrats want to stay in power even when they lose popular support.

Monika Nalepa: In this paper, which I just described, we actually were fortunate enough to carry out an experiment in Poland a couple of years ago. So writing a little of the electoral cycle, and we were able to find supporting evidence for this mechanism. That once voters become less uncertain about the true intentions of the incumbent, they can actually reverse their decision and vote against an incumbent that they formerly supported.

Isabella Pestana de Andrade do Nascimento: So it would be more about the short-term outcomes of some policies then.

Monika Nalepa: Let's talk about Poland for a second. We actually just talked about this yesterday. What happened in Poland that could have made those former supporters of the populist backsliding government, revert to voting for the opposition or just from staying at home? We know that PiS, the law justice party that was ruling for the last eight years, lost half a million voters, which is not a huge amount. Actually, the opposition gained way more voters than the incumbent lost. But one of the things that we were talking about was what made that half million change their mind?

Monika Nalepa: It could be simply displacement. It could be that the old voters for PiS and young people switch their vote over to the liberal opposition. It could be corruption scandals that exposed that really, the PiS government was just about filling its coffers. It could have been also something deeper. It could have been reactions to the refugee crisis in Ukraine, it could have been in a variety of things. We're now in the process of trying to get survey data from, what was it? Two weeks before the elections? Everything I shared with you, Olga? Yeah. And see what's going on there.

Olga Bednarek: And in your opinion, there is spillover effects that you were talking about researching just in one nation and having also these cross-national studies. Do you think there are spillover effect, and we are facing some of them or not?

Monika Nalepa: Yeah. That's right. Methodologically, my approach to studying global transitional justice, is very different from studying backsliding. And I think the reason is because, for these incumbents to stay in power, they have to be re-elected by voters who have to make these individual decisions based on their beliefs. There was a huge advantage of doing sub-national studies to test these phenomena, even though the mechanism that I explained, I think works in a broader set of countries on spillover effects.

Monika Nalepa: For the longest time, I think people believed that, Hungary and Poland are sort of working in tandem, right? At first, both democratized very rapidly. In Hungary the opposite Fidesz, backslider Fidesz, at first was in the opposition for a very long time, then it came to power, started gradually dismantling democratic institutions, starting with courts, got into trouble with the EU. And in Poland, basically the same thing seemed to be happening. Many people are saying that, "Oh, Kaczynski is just following Orban's playbook up till now," right? Because basically, while Orban managed to secure victory in the third consecutive elections, in Poland it seems that that fund was reversed.

Monika Nalepa: And I think that one of the reasons behind this difference is, the legacies of opposition resistance in Poland, which, I don't think are as prevalent in Hungary. Let me turn to Olga here, who basically, when she was hired as my research assistant, she was tasked with this gargantuan task of coding the city where oppositionists who were interned in Poland in 1989 were. Poland during its most threatening to the autocrats authoritarian crisis, had martial law enforced. And during this martial law regime, about 15,000

of members of solidarity, the Independent Trade Union, were arrested and basically placed in isolation, which is known as internment.

Monika Nalepa: Thanks to the Institute of National Remembrance, we have now a database of the orders requiring that specific persons be arrested and interned. What this allows us to do is actually to trace the density of opposition networks in communist Poland. What Olga is helping us do, me and Hanna Bosz, a co-author of mine from Stanford, is we're trying to see if these patterns, these opposition activity from the communist authoritarian regime, were by any chance recreated in resistance to the populist backsliding regime in Poland. We have a hunch that these legacies of opposition activity don't die out. And because in Poland they were just so prevalent, but we think that we'll still be able to find a link there. But it's basically just a hunch hypothesis that we hope to test.

Olga Bednarek: Thank you so much for explaining your research to us. Could you explain if there's any way to relate your findings over the past 20 years to what's happening in the U.S. at all?

Monika Nalepa: Thanks. U.S. is a very tricky example because it's an established democracy, at least at the national level. And because of that, I feel that the sensitivity to issues of transitional justice is somewhat depressed, because you need to have regime change to realize how important transitional justice is. And the U.S. democracy has just lasted for quite some time, and it was just interrupted with the Civil War interval. However, an often-neglected fact is that, actually it was transitional justice, both after the War of Independence and after the Civil War.

Monika Nalepa: After the War of Independence, there was a push for lawyers from the colonies to disbar loyalists, so people who had collaborated with the British. And the goal of that was actually very common to the goal of a lot of new democracies, which was to give a chance for the lawyers who were affiliated with the Independence Movement to have jobs. And following Civil War, there was a similar push to remove from positions of power and control, elites who had collaborated with the Confederacy. Now, those attempts were actually unsuccessful. Confederate elites, as we know from Jim Crow, were able to return and even entrench themselves. But because of lack of transitional justice at the elite level, there were a lot of acts of spontaneous justice, which I won't refer to as transitional justice because they were not really procedurally sanctioned towards the rank-and-file.

Monika Nalepa: What this meant is when confederate spies were found, they were instantly hanged, and they were court-martialed and summarily trialed. Actually, the U.S. does have a history of transitional justice, it's just not acknowledged or research history with one exception. There are several political scientists who are experts in truth commissions and have researched truth commissions around the world. And what they have been documenting is the creation of local truth commissions in the U.S. for dealing acts of racial violence. The problem, however, is that, all of these truth commissions are tasked with researching only very specific and very narrowly defined events. There has not been basically a nationwide truth commission or a nationwide transitional justice institution, such as the one that would make it, for instance, into the global transitional justice data set. So the U.S. is not even a dataset that we released.

Monika Nalepa: But of course, as the events of 2020 suggest following the murder of George Floyd, there is an enormous need for accountability of racial injustices in the U.S. Not just racial violence, not just racial physical violence, but also, unfair housing policies and a history of discrimination. There's definitely room for people interested in doing research on the U.S. to work on transitional justice. There are tons of questions that are still unanswered. And I think we have now developed by working around the world on transitional justice, the tools for doing that. I would encourage students who are listening to this podcast, to turn their interests there.

Olga Bednarek: Amazing. And do you also see the reflections of your work in today's global policy?

Monika Nalepa: Yeah. It is a very tricky question to ask for somebody who's not affiliated directly with a policy school. I work in the political science department, and I've always been focused on researching these basic institutions. How to reconstruct institutions of transitional justice. When do they work? When do they not work? And I think largely, shying away from consulting, but of course, there's no way of hiding policy implications of my research. Like I said, forced policy implications, I will offer them. And in this most recent article that I published in for Soviet Affairs on Transitional Justice Options for Russia, we actually do make some suggestions.

Monika Nalepa: And of course it varies from place to place, but the overall normative implications is, if the goal is to ensure democratic stability, then transparency institutions work better than punitive institutions, such as purges. And to the extent that, criminal responsibility should be administered, which of course this is contingent on having the judicial resources, et cetera, et cetera. And actually having peace in the first place, it's really not worth neglecting the prosecutions of rank-and-file. Because they're just as important, if not more important than prosecuting leaders.

Monika Nalepa: And on that note, there is the, if one looks at the way that international criminal tribunals have been set up, this overarching goal of reaching order givers or those who are leading regimes that give orders of repression, has led some of these tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, to actually pre-bargain with rank-and-file members, as well as middlemen, so mid-level officers, in order to get them to reveal information about leaders issuing orders. And I would say that that is a terrible strategy. Because it essentially lets off the hook people who have committed crimes with their own hands sometimes, or have committed the most brutal acts of violence, and sacrificing a justice done to them in order to punish the leaders. And we don't even know that punishing the leaders is in the long-term effective.

Monika Nalepa: Meantime, victims are observing this and just feeling that, the testimony that they gave to go after these rank-and-file, has been completely wasted. I would say, I've shied away from making policy implications, pretty long time just focusing on these basic institutions. But I feel pretty confident in giving those two pieces of advice. Transparency institutions on the one hand, and then not neglecting prosecutions of rank-and-file.

Olga Bednarek: Perfect. And now turning to our audience. If there was one paper or book that you would recommend, which would it be?

Monika Nalepa: Wait. It's not going to be a book, it's not going to be an article, but it's actually going to be something a bit better. It's going to be a blog. A few years ago there was this part of the Washington Post, which is called the Monkey Cage. Maybe some of the listeners will recognize it. And it was a space for political scientists and social scientists to describe their research, especially if it was relevant for the interpretation of current events, in a way that's accessible to a broader audience. And unfortunately, because of the way the news market works, the Monkey Cage was closed down. And for about a year, they basically were homeless, but now they have recreated themselves as Good Authority.

Monika Nalepa: It's essentially the same model, political social scientists commenting on current events based on their own research. And interestingly, they're not opinion pieces, so they're not op-eds. In fact, authors are given very explicit instructions to shy away from opinions, they're rather analysis pieces. And I think there are two advantages of reading that. But one is that it's gives you an opportunity to very quickly learn what the current research tells us about this event. But also it allows readers to familiarize themselves with who is an

expert on this topic. And you can go to their academic webpage and read their most recent article. I would definitely put a plug in for Good Authority.

Isabella Pestana de Andrade do Nascimento: Amazing. Thank you very much, Monika.

Hannah Balikci: Thank you so much for all of your insight today. It really does seem like your research is incredibly important and can have some long-lasting implications, especially when thinking about today's current conflicts and all of the atrocities happening all over the world. We really appreciate you taking your time to be here with us and your decades worth of work on the issue.

Monika Nalepa: Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure to speak to you and to speak to the product audience that is listening.

Hannah Balikci: Thank you for listening to this episode of Root of Conflict, featuring Professor Monika Nalepa. This episode was produced and edited by Hannah Balikci and Nishita Karun. Thank you to our interviewers, Olga Bednarek and Isabella Pestana. Special thanks to UC3P and the Pearson Institute, for their continued support of this series. For more information on the Pearson Institute's research and events, visit their website Thepearsoninstitute.org and follow them on Twitter @pearsoninst. Inst is spelled I-N-S-T. Thank you.