The State of the Art in Conflict Transformation

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1.
Introduction[1]

Conflict transformation as a reality has existed throughout human history, but as a field of study and practice it emerged only in the early 1990s. The field incorporates some of the core ideas of the contemporary conflict resolution approach, but it focuses attention on large-scale, protracted and destructive conflicts and how they change so that they are conducted constructively, in large measure. The term refers both to the processes of transition to relatively non-destructive conduct and to a relationship between adversaries that is regarded as largely non-contentious. In this analysis, I include the actions of adversaries as well as interveners in affecting conflict transformations. Two phases of transformation are of interest here. First is the transition from destructive to constructive contention, often focusing on ending widespread violence. The second phase refers to fashioning an enduring peaceful relationship, including recovering from the destructive conflict and reducing its underlying causes.

This concept of conflict transformation should be viewed in the context of the much broader approach to managing and resolving social conflicts, generally identified as conflict resolution (Crocker et al. 2005; Kriesberg 2007a; Lederach 1997; Rupesinghe 1995). Practitioners, analysts and proponents of this approach stress that conflicts are not only inevitable in human societies, but often desirable when they are well conducted. Thus, justice, freedom, and more equitable and integrated relations may be advanced by well-waged conflicts. Furthermore, conflicts are recognised to vary greatly in their destructiveness as they undergo transformation and differ in the level of contention that the adversaries regard as acceptable.

The conflict transformation approach focuses on the value of thinking and acting inclusively in order to initiate and sustain transformations. It also emphasises the value of long-term time perspectives in undertaking and continuing conflict transformation efforts. The approach stresses analysing the adversaries in a specific conflict and prioritising the focal conflict among the welter of linked conflicts.

Conflict transformation does not occur smoothly or at the same pace for all parties in a struggle. One side may move more readily than the other. Some groups within each side may be hesitant and mistrustful, holding out for a better arrangement, while other groups may be eager to move toward mutual accommodation. Furthermore, conflict transformation is always multi-dimensional and occurs in different degrees among all the engaged groups. For all these reasons, transformations often advance and then fall back before advancing again.

The shift away from destructive conflict toward constructive transformation may occur at different points in a conflict's course (Kriesberg 2008). It may appear at an early stage of escalation, before the conflict is waged with great destructive violence, and thus prevent further escalation. It may occur after a crisis or violent episode, from which partisans draw back. Conflict

transformation may arise after protracted extreme violence inflicting horrendous casualties. It may even begin after one side has been coercively defeated, but where the adversaries establish a new relationship that is acceptable enough to the opposing sides so that neither resorts again to severe violence in order to change the relationship.

In addition to elaborating on the phenomenon of conflict transformation, this chapter considers how people *relate* to the phenomenon. They do so in two major ways: as observer/analysts and as engaged persons, whether as partisans or as intermediaries. The field of conflict transformation is generally perceived to include studying how destructive conflicts change and become relatively constructive and also how people conduct themselves so as to foster such changes (Kriesberg 2009a). Accordingly, teachers and researchers of conflict transformation and also mediators and partisans who are consciously trying to help transform conflicts are all workers in the field.

The field may also be conceived even more broadly: as a set of ideas and practices that are discerned and sometimes implemented. Understood this way, some people may perform tasks that are part of this field without thinking of themselves as doing so. They may include far-seeing diplomats, researchers of basic social conflict processes, public intellectuals promoting particular policies, members of social movement organisations opposing government policies, and at times traditional mediators and partisans. Conversely, self-identified conflict resolvers may draw from the experience of these persons and groups to enrich and broaden the field of constructive conflict transformation.

There can be tensions between these two conceptions of the field, defined in terms of people who identify themselves as belonging to the field or defined in terms of the particular ideas and practices that are used. However, the two conceptions can complement each other, as discussed in this chapter. The first conception fosters reflection and integration of the ideas and practices of conflict transformation, placing them into a broader context. The second conception fosters the diffusion of the ideas and practices and their implementation in everyday practice. To limit the field to only one of these conceptions would unduly constrict it and constrain its potential growth and value. But to simply merge them can have unwanted consequences.

The rest of this chapter is divided into four sections: the field's basic concepts, its achievements, its major issues and challenges, and ways to advance it. These matters are discussed as they apply to both conceptualisations.

2.
Basic Concepts in the Conflict Transformation Field

The evolving field of conflict transformation's approach covers a continuum of constructive perspectives. At one end is a pragmatic perspective based on long-term self-interest and at the other end is a morally principled perspective based on inclusive, broadly shared interests. What

is not included in this approach is a short-term, narrowly-based self-interest perspective, with little regard to the adversaries' humanity, concerns or interests.

In the context of this broad conflict transformation approach, there are numerous analytic concepts and empirical findings regarding social conflicts and there are many tools and practices consistent with those thoughts. Many of these ideas and applications are examined in several recent books about conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Bercovitch et al. 2009; Kriesberg 2007a; Ramsbotham et al. 2005; Sandole et al. 2008). There is no grand theory in the field. Rather, there are many isolated propositions and empirical generalisations and also innumerable analyses of various social processes. In this section, I examine the ideas and practices particularly relevant to conflict transformation. It is worth noting that while social conflicts have both objective and subjective features, the perceptual processes and factors tend to be given more attention in the field than the structural ones, since they seem more malleable in the short run. Therefore they have greater attraction for the people engaged in a struggle who seek to quickly transform a conflict.

2.1
Basic Characteristics of Social Conflicts

Three characteristics of conflicts are particularly pertinent to understanding how large-scale conflicts can become transformed. First, conflicts are generally fluid; they move through a series of stages as conflicts emerge, escalate, de-escalate and are settled. These stages in turn become the basis for more enhanced peace, or for new conflicts. This broad movement incorporates many smaller conflict cycles and the stages vary greatly in length, with frequent backward steps. Conflict transformation itself includes several stages moving from changes within adversaries themselves that open opportunities for mutual exploratory moves between them, followed by gestures and other actions indicating that mutual accommodation has begun; this is followed by building more ties and increased mutual understanding and trust. At a later stage, new shared institutions, intensified interdependence and integration may develop. Adversaries and intermediaries try to assess which stage they are in so they can determine whether the time is right for one or another policy to be undertaken (Kriesberg/Thorson 1991; Zartman 1989).

Second, every conflict is interlocked with many others. Smaller conflicts are nested in larger conflicts, each party in a conflict has its own set of other antagonists, each conflict is one in a series of earlier struggles, and each side has its own internal fights. In this welter of simultaneous and sequential fights, the adversaries and intermediaries must decide which is primary and which is secondary, who enemy number one is and who enemy number two is.

Third, contenders in a conflict generally rely on diverse strategies to achieve their goals. The methods may include a wide array of violent actions, but many may also incorporate nonviolent coercive actions. In addition, moreover, non-coercive inducements may be part of the strategies adopted. Non-coercive inducements take the form of promised benefits or of persuasive efforts to change the adversary's conduct in the desired direction. Strategies usually blend these inducements together in various changing combinations.

2.2
Core Conflict Transformation Ideas and Associated Practices

Several sets of ideas help account for conflict transformation and there are various applications associated with those ideas. They relate to conflict transformation (1) in its transition phase and (2) in its peacebuilding, post-violence phase. Although there is no comprehensive theory explaining all conflict phenomena, there are various middle-range approaches that interpret aspects of particular kinds of conflicts. There are also many limited theories about a narrow range of conflict-related behaviour, often focusing on a single process or factor. Such mini-theories tend to be articulated and elaborated by self-identified workers in the field of conflict transformation. When the ideas are diffused to people unwittingly doing conflict transformation work, the ideas are more likely to be isolated and be based or justified on a prior example of its application.

2.2.1 Transitions: Initiating Conflict Transformations

A traditional view explaining the transition from a destructive to a more constructive conflict is that one side is responsible for the conflict and its destructiveness; therefore *defeating that side* will transform the relationship between the adversaries and constructive relations will follow. Indeed, many people regard the Second World War as a demonstration that the total defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan produced changes in the defeated countries that resulted in cooperative relations between each of them and the victorious countries. Workers in the conflict transformation field generally do not regard that explanation as adequately comprehensive. Some in the field believe that in particular conflicts in which the leaders of one or more sides are not representative of a large constituency, seek gains only for themselves and commit gross violations of human rights, violence may be necessary to transform the conflict; but they are likely to emphasise limiting the violence and providing some positive benefits for significant numbers of the defeated side. Clearly, this matter raises many important and complex issues, which will be further discussed later in this chapter (*section 4.3*).

Intervention by actors who are not primary adversaries in a conflict often contributes greatly to a conflict's transformation. The intervention may be intended to assist one side in a conflict to impose an end or it may be to assist the adversaries in finding a mutually acceptable transformation. Much attention among workers in the field is paid to external mediation [see also Ron Fisher and Hans J. Giessmann/Oliver Wils in this volume], which can range from deal-making muscular mediation to gentle facilitation. Mediation can help forge new options that are attractive to weary and mistrustful antagonists and make those options seem attainable. Protracted destructive conflicts often generate extreme resentments, fear and other emotions that are not wholly realistic; mediators can help cut through extremely hostile beliefs and feelings. Consequently, a reality-grounded transformation becomes more feasible.

Given the multiplicity of inter-connected conflicts, a particular destructive conflict can be de-escalated by lessening its salience relative to another conflict. Such *reframing* may arise from structural changes, but the new circumstances need to be made salient to have such effects. The transformation of the bloody Franco-German enmity into cooperation after the Second

World War owes much to the emergence of the Cold War with the Soviet Union as a common enemy. Facing a common enemy creates common interests and a superordinate goal for groups that may once have been antagonistic (Sherif 1966).

The *interaction between adversaries* is the primary way in which adversarial relations become transformed. Several mini-theories posit specific patterns of action that contribute to conflict transformation. One such theory is graduated reciprocation in tension-reduction (GRIT): one adversary unilaterally initiates a series of cooperative moves; these are announced and reciprocity is invited, but the conciliatory moves continue for an extended period, whether or not there is immediate reciprocity (Osgood 1962). In time, this will be reciprocated as the other side recognises that prior fears were unrealistic. Another strategy is tit-for-tat, which has been elaborated and tested in part by game theory applications, particularly by work on the prisoner's dilemma game (Axelrod 1984). An analysis of de-escalating transformations in American-Soviet, Soviet-Chinese and American-Chinese relations compared tit-for-tat, GRIT and other explanations (Goldstein/Freeman 1990). The analysis found that in these cases the GRIT strategies were more effective than the tit-for-tat strategy in accounting for movement toward more cooperative relations. President Anwar al-Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in 1977 illustrates how making a dramatic gesture of good will can be a part of a GRIT strategy (Mitchell 2000).

A middle-range approach accounting for a turning away from destructive conflict is the *initiation of mutually beneficial policies*. Undertaking such policies may result from formal agreements negotiated by opponents or former opponents. This is illustrated by the cultural exchange, arms control and other agreements constituting détente in US-USSR relations in the early 1970s. Organisations incorporating opponents can generate vested interests to expand the organisation, further integrating the opponents. This idea of expanding functional integration was articulated during World War II (Mitrany 1944) and illustrated by the evolution of the European Union from the European Coal and Steel Community, established in 1952.

Finally, a highly influential mini-theory pertains to the *turning points* in protracted conflicts, occurring when opponents believe they are in a stalemate that each is convinced it cannot change to its advantage, that is painful, and where a better option is possible (Touval/Zartman 1985). A bearable, stable, self-serving stalemate, on the other hand, lacking pressure to come to a resolution or lacking an attractive alternative does not constitute a ripe moment for transitioning to a significant transformation (Zartman 2005).

Each of the approaches and mini-theories mentioned here has some merit; how well each helps account for initiating transformative transitions depends upon the characteristics of the conflict and its surrounding circumstances. Often, several limited theories can be combined and yield a more comprehensive explanation. In some ways they have complementary explanatory value; thus, some mini-theories deal with factors that drive the transition, others relate to the initiation and implementation of the transition, and still others with sustaining the de-escalation.

2.2.2 Post-Violence: Sustaining Conflict Transformations

Several important mini-theories help account for perpetuating and deepening conflict transformations. They draw on earlier analyses and are fundamental for the new and rapidly growing work in peacebuilding. Thus, an enduring issue relates to the differences between *negative peace and positive peace* (Galtung 1969; Stephenson 2008a). Negative peace refers to peaceful relations characterised only by the absence of direct violence, while positive peace refers to relatively harmonious relations as well. Negative peace may include oppressive relations in a society where some people suffer structural violence, where their poverty and death rates are greater than those of many others in that society. Societies and relationships exhibit positive peace insofar as they do not experience structural violence. A related theoretical idea is that all persons share particular basic human needs, and if those needs are not met people will struggle to get their needs satisfied (Burton 1990). Workers in the international relations field tend to focus on negative peace – avoiding and ending wars. The value of negative peace should not be denigrated and it is, reasonably, a prerequisite for developing and sustaining positive peace.

Many contemporaries in the field frame these matters in terms of the relationship between justice and peace (understood as limited to security or negative peace). In the long term, they do tend to reinforce each other, but during transitions in the transformation process, there may be times when one has greater priority than the other [see also Michelle Parlevliet in this volume]. The priority given to each depends on circumstances – the degree of each at a particular time and the value each has to various peoples.

An important middle-range approach dealing with the factors and processes that strengthen constructive conflict transformation pertains to the *creation of political structures and other shared institutions* that provide legitimate ways to manage conflicts (Paris 2004). This is especially important for the relations between former warring parties living in the same country. Election ballots have commonly been viewed as a straightforward alternative to bullets, but they often fail to stop recurring violence and suppression of members of the society, unless safeguards are established to protect everyone's minimal rights (Lyons 2005).

For adversaries who have concerns about their exclusion from political participation, discrimination or their physical safety, well-grounded reassurances that respond to those concerns are valuable for sustainable peace. Laws and constitutions can help, but they are insufficient alone. Sometimes negotiated arrangements and particular electoral procedures can help install and sustain power-sharing among the former hostile sides, which reduces the fears that increase the risk of future wars (Mattes/Savun 2009). Special problems arise from demilitarising armed groups after extensive violent conflict; this entails arrangements for integration with official police and military organisations and integration into the civil economy. Much analysis has been undertaken on these and related matters and on the policies to bring about the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. Particular attention has begun to be given to the problem of "spoiler behaviour" by persons or groups within one side of the conflict or outside of the conflict who act violently to undermine and stop the movement toward mutual accommodation (Muggah 2008; Stedman 1997), also recognising that the partisans frequently differ about the value of a particular transformation (Greenhill/

Major 2006/07; Zahar 2008). In addition, strong and protected civil society organisations are crucial for the implementation of many transformative agreements.

Another important mini-theory emphasises that conflict transformation occurs on many levels, from the elite to the grass roots. The movement may be initiated at one level, but to be sustained and deepened, *engagement of many levels* is needed. For example, the transformation of the Egyptian-Israeli conflict in the late 1970s was carried out on the Egyptian side by Sadat, without multi-level participation and support. The result has been not only the assassination of Sadat, but an essentially cold peace with Israel. Non-governmental organisations functioning across adversary lines are important actors in preparing and sustaining conflict transformation at all socio-political levels (Montville 1991).

In recent decades, many partial theories have been elaborated about attaining significant *reconciliation* between former enemies that fosters sustained peace between them (Gibson 2006; Long/Brecke 2003; Lederach 1997; Rigby 2001) [see also Martina Fischer in this volume]. Reconciliation is best regarded as multi-dimensional, with four continua often distinguished: truth, justice, regard and security (Bar-Siman-Tov 2004). A great deal of research has been done regarding various ways to foster reconciliation, for example the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (Gibson 2006). However, unearthing the truth, identifying perpetrators and performing other acts of formal reconciliation often happen many years after extreme acts of violence and oppression have occurred, sometimes generations. In the meantime, traumas are endured and painful coexistence suffered (Pouligny et al. 2007).

Research has shown that particular *arrangements incorporated within negotiated settlements* contribute to the survival of the settlements. The institutional arrangements include various forms of power-sharing and provisions for territorial autonomy (Hartzell/Hoddie 2003). The approach that contrasts forward-looking and backward-looking agreements and outcomes synthesises some of these mini-theories (Zartman/Kremenyuk 2005). This approach builds on the complex relationship between peace and justice concerns. Attaining peace minimally means an end to violent fighting, but it may also entail foregoing claims for justice: punishment for perpetrators of atrocities, compensation for past abuses, and the establishment of relations marked by equality and dignity. Peace agreements vary in the relative attention they give to the past injustices or to the future relationship that will enhance justice and avoid creating new injustice. Thus, the agreements between France and Germany after World War II and the agreements in South Africa (see *Box 1*) and Mozambique were relatively forward-looking; while the negotiations and agreements between Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding Nagorno-Karabakh and between Israelis and Palestinians have been highly focused on past grievances. Interestingly, forward-looking agreements are much more likely to result in relations of mutual respect and cooperation than backward-looking agreements, even if they have endured.

Finally, a widely adopted approach stresses the great *importance of external parties*, as interveners and intermediaries in transforming conflicts. They include major powers and small countries, regional and global international governmental organisations, and also local, national and transnational non-governmental organisations. Such parties often play vital roles in sustaining peace agreements: providing assistance in implementing them and in monitoring

compliance (Rubinstein 2008; Stedman et al. 2002). Even if not directly engaged in peacebuilding, they may stop the flow of military and other support to one or all sides in a fight, which makes continuation or renewal of fighting more difficult. They also often play intermediary roles, filling a wide array of mediating functions. Here too, non-governmental organisations – local and transnational – increasingly play important roles providing channels of communication, new ideas and options, and incentives for building cooperative relations among former enemies (Davies/Kaufman 2002; Kriesberg 1995; McDonald/Bendahmane 1987).

Box 1

The Example of South Africa

The relatively successful South African transformation is notable because of its limited violence, large scope and durability.

From the outset of the apartheid system – established by the ruling National Party in 1948 – there was resistance to it, notably by the African National Congress (ANC). The resistance took a nonviolent form, but after violent suppression of demonstrations by the government, an ANC decision was reached by some leaders to resort to armed struggle. The policy of the armed struggle was *not* to commit terrorist attacks or even to wage guerrilla war, but to be disruptive and keep open the possibilities of negotiating changes. The ANC upheld the vision of a South Africa in which whites and non-whites would be secure and have equal political and social rights. ANC leaders in exile and even in prison studied and prepared themselves for governance.

In the 1980s, important changes became evident within the Afrikaner and other white communities, including doubts about the morality of apartheid. Significant changes in the relations between whites and non-whites also became manifest then. There was growing economic interdependence between whites and non-whites as the economy developed. Nonviolent actions by blacks grew in the form of labour and rent strikes. Demographic growth patterns indicated that the relative size of the non-white population was growing. The apartheid system began to appear unsustainable. Informal meetings, first between ANC officials and leading white newspaper and business figures and later South African government officials, began to be held outside of South Africa.

The external context also aided in bringing about this transformation. The widespread repugnance about the apartheid system contributed to the sense of shame that many white South Africans began to feel. Economic and sports sanctions constituted direct pressures on South African policies. The end of the Cold War furthermore undermined the beliefs and fears of some South Africans and of some political leaders in the United States and elsewhere that the ANC posed a communist threat.

Finally, the processes of negotiating the transition and of building ways to sustain the new relationship were thoughtfully planned and well conducted. They had to overcome grave obstacles and violent efforts at disruption. To counter the violence, the South African Council of Churches and the Consultative Business Movement convened a meeting of major groups and in the summer of 1991 forged a National Peace Accord. It included a code of conduct for political parties and organisations and for the government security forces. It established a national peace committee, a national peace

secretariat, regional and local dispute resolution committees, a police board and also a commission of inquiry regarding public violence and intimidation, socioeconomic reconstruction and development.

In another measure to involve the public in the transition process and legitimate the negotiations, the government held and won a whites-only referendum in March 1992 to negotiate the end of white minority rule. To ease the transition to democracy, the first post-apartheid government would include all major political parties, with cabinet representation proportional to each party's electoral strength. In April 1994, South Africa held multiracial elections and Nelson Mandela was elected President of South Africa. A large and highly visible truth and reconciliation process was undertaken afterward to help sustain the transformation.

Remarkable as the political and social transformation in South Africa has been, the living conditions of all the people have not been transformed. Much structural violence continues, even as efforts to reduce it are underway.

Each of the approaches and theories discussed has some relevance for sustaining and expanding conflict transformations. None of them provides a fully adequate explanation; however, they complement each other and together offer reasonably comprehensive accounts. Furthermore, since conflict transformations often occur in many interlocking conflicts simultaneously, different approaches may be relevant for the various conflicts, at the local grass-roots level, at the elite level between opponents, or within one side in a conflict.

3.
Achievements of the Conflict Transformation Field

I turn now to discuss the extent to which the field of conflict transformation may have contributed to the actual ending of destructive conflicts and their transformation. It is difficult to infer the contribution of the field since it is part of the broader field of conflict resolution, and many other factors affect the incidence of wars, deaths and negotiated agreements. The assessment will be helped by examining two paths that may arguably have contributed to changes in mass violence and sustained peace. One path is the institutionalisation of the field (*section 3.2*) and another is its diffuse influence upon public discourse and practice (*section 3.3*).

3.1
Actual Conflict Transformations

To begin assessing possible contributions that the conflict transformation field has made to peace, note should be taken of the well-documented decline in international and intra-state wars that has occurred since 1989, measured by various indicators of war and violence (Gleditsch

2008; Hewitt et al. 2010). There has been a decline in the incidence of wars and of deaths in wars. The declines were marked in the 1990s and have settled at a relatively low level in the early years of the twenty-first century. This period has also seen an increase in negotiated endings of civil wars, rather than coercively imposed endings.

Obviously not all these changes can be attributed to the ideas and practices of the emerging conflict transformation field, but the field has made important contributions. Certainly the end of the Cold War contributed much to the decline in wars and violence. It helped end the local wars around the world, which had been sustained by assistance from the Cold War opponents who supported different sides in many conflicts. It enabled the United Nations (UN) to expand peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. It reduced ideological struggles and contributed to the emerging normative consensus regarding human rights, popular participation in governance, the rights of minorities and women, and non-reliance on violence. Significantly, however, the ideas and practices of the field both influenced and drew from the policies that transformed and ended the Cold War (Evangelista 1999).

Several other global developments bear on the increased likelihood of transforming destructive conflicts and sustaining peaceful relations. The growing economic integration and the intensification of communication globally make local wars more visible and more harmful to other peoples, which are incentives to intervene and limit destructive wars. Global mass media and transnational internet communications contribute to increasing world-wide consensus about norms regulating conflict. In addition, the widespread change in the status of women, related to their increased political engagement, also appears to reduce the readiness of governmental and non-governmental actors to resort to violence in waging conflicts (Caprioli/ Boyer 2001; Marshall/Marshall 1999; Melander 2005; Stephenson 2008b). These developments have reinforced the theory and practice of the conflict transformation field.

Finally, non-governmental organisations have increased greatly in number and scope, operating more and more trans-nationally (Smith et al. 1997). They often act in congruence with conflict transformation ideas, contributing to negotiations to avert and to end wars in a variety of ways, including training and consulting with partisans, facilitating Track II diplomacy and conducting workshops for grass-roots and sub-elite level partisans from the opposing sides (Agha et al. 2003; Davies/Kaufman 2002). Their efforts also contributed to the transformation and ending of the Cold War (Evangelista 1999).

Despite these changes, terribly destructive warfare persists, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and south Asia. Negotiated peace agreements frequently break down and civil wars recur (Hewitt et al. 2010; Licklider 1995). People in a great many countries in the world suffer structural violence, living in poverty and denied significant engagement in the social, political and economic control of their lives. A case can be made that these circumstances are in part attributable to the severely limited application of the ideas and practices of the conflict transformation field, and indeed their rejection by powerful international actors (Kriesberg 2007b). But it also may be that traditional conflict methods have been badly implemented or that the conflict transformation approach, as well the traditional approach, is inadequate for the new global conditions (see below, *section 4*).

Section I. Challenges and Concepts

3.2
Institutionalisation of the Conflict Transformation Field

The field of conflict transformation, conceived as the actions of self-identified workers in the field, is becoming increasingly institutionalised in academic settings and in the work of governmental and non-governmental organisations. Such institutionalisation gives the field increased legitimacy and opportunities to be effective and it also helps increase the number of persons committed to working in the field and strengthening it.

Within the academy, the position of the conflict transformation field is difficult to isolate because it is co-mingled with many other fields and programmes related to conflict resolution, peace, development and democratisation. It appears in courses in many professional schools, including law, public administration and international relations. Many certificate, MA and PhD programmes provide training and foster research in various aspects of conflict transformation and related fields (Polkinghorn et al. 2008). However, conflict transformation as a narrow field is not as independently institutionalised as conflict resolution or peace studies.

In many governmental and non-governmental organisations the ideas and practices of conflict transformation and conflict resolution are employed in their internal functions and in their external operations. The NGOs working directly and indirectly to help avert, limit or recover from large-scale violence have been rapidly expanding in number and size. Members of many of them are familiar with conflict transformation ideas and practices and often apply them.

Institutionalisation can give grounds for concerns as well as for celebration. It can generate vested interests in continuing work as it has been done rather than innovating to meet new problems. Furthermore, in seeking to preserve the field, workers in the field may be overly cautious in challenging established structures that sustain domination and destructive conflict.

3.3
Mainstreaming and Civilising

As the ideas and practices of the conflict transformation approach are increasingly absorbed into the social, cultural and political systems of societies around the world, the greater their effects and effectiveness are likely to be. If antagonists share the approach, each side will tend to respond constructively to each other and also add new ideas and practices to the field.

Many of the concepts, findings and practices of the conflict transformation and conflict resolution fields have become commonplace in many social spheres. The recent attention to the concept of "soft power" is one example (Nye 2004). Drawing from the research and theorising about positive sanctions, nonviolent action and non-coercive inducements generally, this work emphasises the great importance of various kinds of power that are employed in many social conflict settings. When soft power is combined with hard power (typically military), it can be regarded as "smart power" (Armitage/Nye 2007) – a term often used by Hillary Clinton during her 2009 confirmation hearings before taking office as US Secretary of State. The diffusion of

conflict transformation ideas and practices to people who apply some of them, but do not think of themselves as workers in the field, illustrates that they are becoming more mainstream.

The increased engagement of governmental and non-governmental organisations in providing mediation services and sustaining negotiated agreements is another important development. This is evident in the work of the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and numerous governmental and non-governmental organisations. As previously noted, the end of the Cold War enabled the UN to become more engaged in mediation and in peacekeeping operations, and it has done so. Some of the important findings and core propositions in the field of conflict resolution and conflict transformation explicate, and also are validated by, the socio-political developments of recent decades. These include the recognition of the importance of civil society organisations and grass-roots movements in fostering and sustaining democratic processes and institutions. Social movement organisations relying on nonviolent action have buttressed the protection of human rights, including the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and of women. These accomplishments have helped avoid oppressive impositions and escalating violent resistance to them. Indeed there is considerable evidence that democratic societies are much less likely than non-democratic societies to suffer internal violent strife and civil wars and less likely to make wars against each other (Gleditsch/Hegre 1997; Hewitt et al. 2010; Russett/Oneal 2001). The transitions to more democratic forms of governance, however, can often be accompanied by violence, take a long time and not be fully realised.

4.
Major Issues and Challenges

Admittedly, however, these witting and unwitting applications of the ideas and practices of conflict transformation have had only limited success. This may be due to the inappropriate ways the ideas are employed, to the underutilisation of the ideas and practices or, most gravely, to errors in the approach.

4.1
Inappropriate Employment of Ideas

Undoubtedly, many times in the last two decades, particular ideas and methods in the field have been applied poorly. At times they have been treated as techniques and taken out of the context of the conflict transformation approach and employed within the context of other approaches. This can be seen sometimes in the US government's promotion of civil society, nonviolent action, electoral processes and public engagement during the administrations of George W. Bush. The presumption seemed to be that promoting such activities would serve immediate US interests, rather than viewing them as ways through which more equitable relations might be

developed, satisfying the interests, needs and values of other peoples (Kriesberg 2007b). Peace and conflict research findings and ideas were selected, but interpreted or used for traditional self-serving purposes. For example, as noted earlier, the research finding that democratic countries do not wage overt wars against each other seemed to justify imposing democracy in other countries, even by force. This strategy ignored evidence about the great difficulties in transitioning to democracy and the great variety of forms of legitimate governance based on different cultural and social factors (Diamond 2005).

4.2
Underutilisation of Ideas

Undoubtedly as well, the conflict transformation approach is known and used by small proportions of people and usually only for its effectiveness in very few arenas. Traditional approaches based on narrow self-interest still predominate in the US and elsewhere. The officials in major institutions believe they have vested interests in the perpetuation of those approaches. Furthermore, the traditional approach is widely seen as natural and based on unchanging human nature.

Fundamental changes in social structure are needed for the transformation approach to be more widely used and for it to be more effective [see also Diana Francis in this volume]. Governments take seriously the premise that states have a monopoly for the legitimate use of military force and typically maintain military establishments that are major elements of the government. This prominence influences the decisions that are made; and governments (sometimes even as members of international organisations) rely on military capabilities when intervening in foreign conflict transformations. Understandably, governments are relatively ill-prepared and reluctant to devote resources to help people in other countries cope with protracted domestic conflicts and recover from them. This is one reason that such tasks have increasingly been undertaken by non-governmental organisations, often under contracts with governments. In a small innovation to improve government performance in external conflict transformation, the US Department of State has established a Civilian Response Corps, which consists of active, standby and reserve components. Active and standby components are full-time federal personnel prepared to deploy rapidly to countries in crises or recovering from violent conflict; the reserve component members are civilians in governmental or non-governmental organisations with skills that are needed in societies emerging from extreme violence.

Overall, domestic conditions greatly affect the course of domestic conflicts. Societies relying on military force and rule by unrepresentative or autocratic governments also tend to be inhospitable to the constructive management of conflicts. Indeed, such conditions are likely to evoke resistance and fights for change, which then result in violence.

Along with diminishing the relative size and influence of authoritarian institutions exercising military and other coercive power, many societal developments can generate greater use of the constructive conflict management approach (Senghaas 2004). These developments include the growth of norms supportive of coexistence and mutual respect, despite intense politicisation of

differences (Kriesberg 1998; Senghaas 2001). The continuing expansion in the number and functions of non-governmental organisations constituting a civil society is an important development to secure democratic institutions, popular engagement and mitigation of destructive conflicts. There is evidence that this is especially the case when the NGOs themselves are internally democratic (Hemmer 2008; Pace/Kew 2008).

Other important developments in the practice of governance promise to support the creation of a culture of constructive conflict management, which would be conducive to conflict transformation applications. One such development is the growing use of information technology that can increase the transparency of government operations, as legislation, budgets and speeches can be made readily available on the web. A movement to increase public participation in government has been growing in many countries; it involves innovative ways of generating public discussion of major issues and linking the ideas developed to the political process. In addition, there is increasing engagement in processes of collaborative governance within government agencies, among them, and in relations with clients and other stakeholders (O'Leary/Bingham 2003). These developments draw from the conflict transformation and resolution fields and greatly contribute to their core ideas' diffusion and application.

4.3
Errors and Grey Areas in the Approach?

Despite progress, a major issue that confronts workers in the field of conflict transformation is that we know too little about the massively difficult problems that we face in studying and fostering the transformation of large-scale protracted conflicts. The field has a wide range of sources for ideas and practices, but large-scale conflicts, often entailing considerable levels of violence, have not been a primary source. Simply transferring insights from conflicts within countries with well-functioning dispute management systems opens the field to charges of naïveté.

In the last few years, research and experience directly pertaining to transforming large-scale, highly violent conflicts have burgeoned (Borer et al. 2006). Much of this important work has focused on the post-violence, recovery phases of transformation, while work on negotiations and reaching agreements has continued to grow. Much of the work relating to post-violence peacebuilding has been from the perspective of outside interveners, rather than from a perspective of the people on the contending sides. The goals that people in the conflict transformation field hold regarding the trajectory of the conflict in which they are intervening receive too little attention and reflection. They often stress the process that intermediaries and partisans seek to follow, more than the outcome. Yet the goals chosen influence the selection of methods, and methods affect the ends that are reached. Some goals are conducive to adopting constructive means while other goals, such as seeking domination or aggrandisement, justify and seem to require destructive means of conflict. Therefore, workers in the conflict transformation field should give attention to the formulation of ends that support the use of constructive methods of struggle. These tendencies affect several important issues, which are discussed next.

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The Role of Violence. A major issue in the field is the role of violence and the threat of violence in conflict transformation. Some workers in the field oppose all forms of violence, making little distinction among perpetrators, victims, scale or extent. Many are uncomfortable with various forms of violence and minimise their engagement or attention to its many forms. Others regretfully accept its inevitability and justify some kinds of physical violence to counter or mitigate other kinds. There are still others who believe in the virtue of applying violence against persons committing extremely terrible actions against particular other humans.

Paying attention to the doctrines of "just war" is one way of trying to chart a way of judging 'good' and 'bad' violence. But references to ideas of just war can be simplified and construed to justify military actions that fail to meet all the criteria for a just war, as was the case in President Obama's speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize. If some measure of greater consensus in the field is to be achieved about policies relating to the use of various kinds of violence, much more empirical analysis is needed about the effects of various kinds of violence. It would be useful to examine the effects of specific forms of violence in particular circumstances, compared to specific forms of nonviolent actions. In every violent conflict, a great variety of violent and nonviolent actions are combined in shifting blends by many different actors. Disentangling all this is not entirely possible, but more attempts should be undertaken to advance our knowledge about the effects of particular violent actions executed in different strategic contexts.

Conflict Asymmetry. Although great power and other disparities between adversaries are widely acknowledged to be present in most conflicts, the implications of such asymmetries for conflict transformation are not well understood. It is useful to recognise the complexity of asymmetry and the possibilities of changing the perception of asymmetry as a conflict is framed differently over time (Kriesberg 2009b). Changes in asymmetry occur as allies enter or leave a conflict, as new enemies emerge and as capabilities within one or more sides in a conflict decline or rise. Moreover, some of these changes may be modified by efforts of the protagonists in a conflict.

The degree and nature of asymmetry has implications for the way a conflict is settled, affecting whether the settlement is largely imposed by one side or is the result of a negotiated agreement (Rouhana 2004). Generally, less asymmetric conflicts will tend to have settlement outcomes that are more balanced and appear more equitable to the adversaries; but they may nevertheless be more unstable because each side may believe it can improve its relative position (see also *Box 2*).

Fanaticism. At the height of the Cold War, ideological beliefs were often intensely held, driving and justifying extreme conduct. Indeed, this contributed to involvement in proxy wars, huge military expenditures, and varyingly harsh suppression of dissenting views. As ideological antagonism diminished with the end of the Cold War, intense ethnic and religious convictions became salient, and sometimes were used to justify and explain committing atrocities against members of communities with different identities.

Box 2

The Example of the Israeli/Arab-Palestinian Conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict has often moved toward peace and then fallen back into bloody wars since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In the course of such changes, the conflict has undergone numerous major transformations, such as the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979, and the mutual recognition of the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, which initiated the Oslo peace process. What made conflict transformation possible in these instances and what factors have made it difficult to sustain?

Let us take the example of the Oslo peace process. It began as a semi-Track II undertaking, facilitated by the Norwegian government. Two non-official Israelis met with two high officials of the PLO, bypassing the official negotiations that had become stalemated. After some progress, officials from both sides took over the negotiations and continued them in secrecy until they concluded the Declaration of Principles in September 1993. Further negotiations continued, and agreements to transfer power in the West Bank and Gaza from the Israeli military forces to the Palestinian Authority (PA), headed by Yasser Arafat, progressed step by step. However, the agreements fell behind the original schedule. Even more significantly, both sides acted in ways that undermined the trust that each side would need from the other. Israelis continued to expand Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and the PA expanded its police and security forces. Some members of each side opposed the peace process and took spoiling actions to disrupt it, which too often were not effectively overcome.

In 2000, an ill-timed and poorly executed attempt was made to reach a final agreement. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak proposed a summit meeting for final status negotiations, including issues that had not been subjected to considerable official negotiations: the status of Jerusalem, the final borders and Palestinian refugees. The US government was to serve as mediator. Arafat reluctantly agreed to participate. The Israelis made what they regarded as huge concessions but these did not yield an agreement, the summit conference ended, the second intifada erupted in intense violence and the Israeli military struck with great violence.

These events were an enormous setback to the movement toward constructive conflict transformation. Within Israel the popular peace camp was devastated and the new Israeli government militarily re-occupied the territories that had begun to be administered by the PA. Arafat and the Palestinian leadership had no viable strategy of response. Faced by the overwhelming military and economic power of the Israelis, they tried to counter that asymmetry by making moral and legal appeals. Those claims, however, were undermined by resorting to violent attacks on civilians. The Israeli government acted unilaterally to separate Israel from the Palestinians, withdrawing from Gaza and building a separation wall, roughly along the 1967 armistice lines and incorporating major Jewish settlements.

Currently, the new leaders of Israel, the PA and the US are attempting to renew substantive negotiations. There are many obstacles to reaching a negotiated end-of-conflict agreement. Restructuring the conflict with greater engagement of other international actors may be necessary in order to transform it.

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Such conduct is a challenge to the conflict transformation approach. Yet attempts to devise and implement constructive policies are being undertaken, as for example in discussions of countering attacks on civilian targets. These efforts give attention to matters such as humiliation, theological reasoning, judicial proceedings and nonviolent actions, and involve broad-based institution building and reconciliation (Fontan 2008; Gopin 2002; Hastings 2004; Kriesberg 2006). It is worth noting that zealots on all sides often overreach themselves, which provokes resistance and backlashes; therefore, patient containment and restrained responses sometimes are part of the best strategies.

Banditry. Recently, attention has been given to groups who have struggled to obtain control of resources for their personal gain. Conflicts about extracting diamonds, for example, appear to be attributable to greedy thugs fighting with each other with little regard for the population at large. The Kimberley Process was instituted to regulate the diamond trade so that only legally acquired diamonds could be traded, which has reduced the direct violence related to diamonds. A comprehensive analysis of such wars would locate them in the broader context of resource-dependent countries and vulnerability to civil wars (Billon 2008). Using a problem-solving, constructive conflict transformation approach might help produce examinations of such larger contexts and help the contending parties find more equitable and sustainable arrangements.

Co-optation. Finally, and on a different note, I raise an issue pertaining particularly to the practice of conflict transformation. As previously noted, NGOs have greatly expanded their engagement in many aspects of peacebuilding following large-scale violence. Much of this work is supported by contracts and grants from governments as well as foundations and individual contributors. This expansion has made many NGOs dependent on government contracts, which can be a problem for NGOs doing conflict transformation work in some circumstances (Rubenstein 2008). They may be constrained from cooperating with possible partners or they may modify their practices in keeping with the government's policies. Consequently, some workers in the field choose not to take any money from governments in order to avoid the appearance of co-optation or of serving as the agent of a government [see also Nenad Vukosavljevic in this volume].

A related issue arises for people in various disciplines, such as psychology and anthropology. For example, some of them are employed by the US government to assist in military operations or in gathering intelligence. Many professional colleagues object to such service for various reasons. One objection is that such work violates professional ethics not to do harm; another reason is that such activities interfere with the work of their colleagues who become suspect in the eyes of the people about whom they would do their own research. On the other hand, engagement by such professionals might result in more humane and constructive conduct by the US government. These concerns warrant more attention and discussion within the field, as such engagements are likely to continue to expand for many governments.

5.
Possible Avenues to Advance Conflict Transformations

In confronting the issues discussed above, I suggest five kinds of responses that workers in the field might advantageously pursue. They all promise to help meet the challenges that the issues represent and advance constructive conflict transformation.

Improve what is known. At many points in this chapter, I have indicated that more knowledge is needed about the processes of conflict transformation and about the specific ways in which conflict may be transformed. To significantly improve the state of knowledge, basic research as well as policy-directed research is needed. Individual scholars as well as teams of scholars have created valuable data sets about mediation, the content of peace agreements and the number of deaths in various conflicts. These data sets are used by an ever-growing number of researchers and are beginning to yield useful empirical propositions, which are related to particular mini-theories and to the conflict transformation approach in general [see also Tara Cooper et al. in this volume].

More resources, however, are needed to support extended research and theory-building projects. In the past, large-scale research projects focused on the causes of war, but only recently have quantitative data collection and analysis about ending wars begun. Systematic analyses are needed of richly described cases at various stages of conflict transformation. It is also time to undertake greater theory building, synthesising related mini-theories.

Focus on specific questions systematically. Coordination, through special networks or meetings, of workers in various research areas could help discover how different approaches and mini-theories complement each other and provide more comprehensive explanations of wider ranges of conflict phenomena in different circumstances. Focused analyses could be undertaken about the effects of different kinds of violence, asymmetry and fervour, giving attention to the ways in which destructiveness is averted, stopped and overcome. The research already done and past experience in trying to bring about conflict transformation should enable analysts to fashion and answer crucial questions arising from linking various partial theories. The result will not be an overarching grand theory, but it could synthesise some of the mini-theories to construct broader middle-range theories. In trying to answer major questions, the reasoning and evidence from a wide range of disciplines are relevant.

Improve popular thought. Pressed to explain the outbreak of large, destructive conflicts and their persistence, probably most people in the world would regard them as inevitable, due to human nature, God's will or other causes beyond human agency. It is the premise of the conflict transformation field that such conflicts are not inevitable. Conflicts are omnipresent in human

societies, but they can be and are conducted in many different ways. They often are waged constructively to some degree at particular stages of their course. There are good reasons to believe that particular policies pursued by various persons and groups engaged in a specific conflict have helped move it along a more constructive path and transform it.

Popular recognition of the diverse ways in which conflicts are waged, and how different people can affect the paths that conflicts take, improves the likelihood that those policies that transform undesired conflict behaviour will be the ones that are considered and chosen. Therefore, people in the field, broadly understood, should help inform the public at large all over the world of the possibilities of conflict transformation. This could be advanced by working with relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations that could assist in spreading the conflict transformation perspective into mainstream discussions. This might be done in cooperation with voluntary service organisations and religious organisations.

Diffusion of conflict transformation thinking should also be furthered by way of the popular mass media, the internet, news channels and schools. Several NGOs, for example, develop television programmes and other materials aimed at the general public in areas where conflict transformation efforts are underway. Peace education groups work on developing curricular materials. It may be possible to develop a news service that produces videos and other materials about episodes of conflict transformation, and makes them widely available.

Enhance awareness of constructive options among sub-elites. For effective widespread adoption of the conflict transformation approach, the benefits of the approach must be evident. The possible benefits and risks need to be well-grounded in research and demonstrable experience. In conveying such information, particular efforts should be made to reach emerging leaders of a wide range of organisations and communities around the world.

Programmes to expand awareness of conflict transformation options might well be undertaken by international academies, such as the UN University, which might provide training for educators, police personnel, legislators, military personnel, and other governmental and non-governmental leaders. National programmes based in institutions of higher education could provide more such training for their own nationals and for participants from other countries.

Improve relations between theory and practice. The conflict transformation field has always encompassed academic studies and practitioner experience, but the relations between the two need to be closer. Too often, analysts provide explanations for destructive conflicts arising and persisting, with less attention to how they are transformed and the role of particular persons and groups in those transformations. Too often, practitioners focus on a particular conflict, giving little attention to academic analyses of the way other conflicts have become transformed. Increasing the opportunities for analysts and practitioners to meet and exchange information and insights would be helpful. Autonomous think tanks doing research, devising policy alternatives and reflecting on practitioner experience can be productive resources for conflict transformation efforts.

Comprehensive analytical work can provide a broad context for peacemaking efforts by persons engaged in conflicts as partisans or intermediaries. Such a context could help practitioners avoid relying on narrow techniques and help them handle the methods in the context of the broader conflict transformation approach (Schmelzle/Fischer 2009). Attention paid by practitioners, on the other hand, can help analysts report their findings in more accessible and attractive forms.

Assessment of the effects, intended and unintended, of attempts to advance conflict transformation are crucial in relating theory and practice. Much evaluation research has begun to be done, but it faces numerous difficulties. The effects of any single conflict transformation operation are not likely to be great, and will be very difficult to disentangle from many other operations and many extraneous changes. Too often, evaluation research is limited to the responses to an intervention by those who directly experienced it, such as workshop participants. This can have value in modifying particular projects, but not in assessing such projects relative to other kinds of interventions. Much broader kinds of assessments are needed, examining multiple conflict transformation policies, their changing contexts, and their direct and indirect effects – whether unintended or intended.

Looking ahead, I anticipate that the intensifying global integration of economic, social and cultural matters will contribute to growing normative consensus and mutual dependency, which will generate interests, justifications and capabilities for actors to intervene in foreign conflicts. Consequently, effective conflict transformation ideas will be needed more than ever before.

6.
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