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### Abstract

The paper considers the concept of 'conflict transformation' in relation to earlier ideas concerning the 'resolution' of conflict and seeks to differentiate between the two approaches. Writers and writings from the conflict transformation 'school' are surveyed and an effort is made to delineate the core characteristics of the approach, viewed either as a process or an end state. Questions are raised about transformation on a personal, group or conflict system level, all of which seem to be encompassed by various adherents of the transformation school, and the unifying concept that emerges is that of the relationship between adversaries being transformed by a variety of techniques. However, it is finally argued that the very idea of 'relationship' is itself ambiguous so that a real intellectual effort needs to be made to clarify its nature and characteristics, and the various ways in which relationships can be changed.

**Keywords:** *conflict resolution, conflict transformation, empowerment, ethnic conflicts, Johan Galtung, relationships*

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# BEYOND RESOLUTION: WHAT DOES CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION ACTUALLY TRANSFORM?

Christopher Mitchell

## Abstract

*The paper considers the concept of 'conflict transformation' in relation to earlier ideas concerning the 'resolution' of conflict and seeks to differentiate between the two approaches. Writers and writings from the conflict transformation 'school' are surveyed and an effort is made to delineate the core characteristics of the approach, viewed either as a process or an end state. Questions are raised about transformation on a personal, group or conflict system level, all of which seem to be encompassed by various adherents of the transformation school, and the unifying concept that emerges is that of the relationship between adversaries being transformed by a variety of techniques. However, it is finally argued that the very idea of 'relationship' is itself ambiguous so that a real intellectual effort needs to be made to clarify its nature and characteristics, and the various ways in which relationships can be changed.*

Over the last few years it has become increasingly popular in the field of conflict studies to contrast processes leading to *conflict transformation* and those that are said to result in *conflict resolution*, with the strong implication that there are major differences between both processes and their respective outcomes, and the slightly less strong hint that transformation is a process that will make up for the inadequacies of mere resolution. For example, talking of a 'sea change' in the way conflicts are perceived, Kumar Rupesinghe argues, "...the notion of being able to resolve them once and for all has been superseded by an understanding that such dynamic and deep-rooted processes call for dynamic and sustained responses..." A similar view is expressed by Johan Galtung who states categorically that "...conflicts are generally not solved...What survives after a conflict has disappeared from the agenda is conflict energy reproduced and produced by the conflict. Then energy does not die...it attaches itself to one or more conflicts, possibly also the old one..."(Galtung 1995, p. 53)<sup>1</sup>.

Now it may be, as my colleague Ilana Shapiro has pointed out in a personal communication<sup>2</sup>, that employment of this relatively new term of 'transformation' is a reaction to the growing misuse of the term 'resolution' to stand for almost anything short of outright victory, defeat and revenge as an *outcome*, as well as for many *processes* involving overt violence ('bombing for peace') or covert coercion (economic sanctions to obtain parties' acquiescence to a dictated settlement) as 'resolution' methods. In short, the concept of transformation has emerged because of the corruption of the conception of 'resolution' in the sense that the latter is

employed indiscriminately to stand for what previously would have been termed 'managed' outcomes and strategies; and would fall clearly into the category of what David Bloomfield recently characterized as 'settlement' approaches (Bloomfield 1997).

A second explanation for the emergence of the concept of 'transformation', at least in terms of conflicts that involve individuals and small groups as parties, is offered by Bush and Folger (1994). They draw attention to the way in which the field of mediation and dispute settlement has changed over the last twenty years from one which began at grassroots level, with a focus on bringing about major social change, to one which has become a professionalized and organized practice, with a major goal of solving problems for clients. Given the co-option of mediation and resolution by status quo institutions in society, and their current focus on distributive settlements that satisfy needs, Bush and Folger argue that 'conflict resolution' has become a term associated with the manipulative search for an agreement that is satisfactory not merely to the adversaries, but also to the third party and the latent interests they represent. They neatly term this a 'win-win-win solution'. Commitment to social change and reform – mediation as a social movement – has been abandoned in favor of the search for atomized processes seeking agreements that provide superficial solutions to individual problems confronted in isolation. "...At its start in the 1960s, the mediation movement was indeed considered capable of helping to change the conditions that fueled the disorder of that decade...Today, it seems that few think of the mediation movement as even relevant to the problems of disempowerment, division and alienation that lie at the heart of societal tragedies..." (Bush & Folger 1994, p. 51). Hence the need for 'transformation' rather than 'resolution' with the latter's current implications of superficial satisfaction and agreement-itis.

Whatever the reason for its emergence, this dichotomy between 'resolution' and 'transformation' is, in many ways, a pity. Firstly, because the addition of yet another term to those already obfuscating the study and understanding of conflict – conflict formation, conflict management, conflict reduction, conflict containment, conflict mitigation – seems unnecessary. Secondly, because original uses of the term 'conflict resolution' appear more than adequate to cover any additional implications generally involved in the idea of a 'transformative' process or solution. For example, John Burton and Frank Dukes in the early 1990's were writing about conflict resolution processes as being those that seek to examine needs and options, and reach agreements that not only satisfy those needs but which can also bring about changes in existing systems and patterns of relations giving rise to the conflicts in the first place (Burton & Dukes 1990). Even before that, in the early days of conflict resolution practice, there was a clear understanding that many 'resolutions' certainly implied the need to bring about major structural changes in social systems, countries and communities as well as changes in fundamental relationships, if the 'resolutions' were to be genuinely acceptable, self-supporting and durable.

Be that as it may, it is worth considering arguments to the effect that conflict transformation is a different and perhaps more comprehensive process than conflict resolution ever was, and to explore what these differences are. To do so, it is

obviously necessary to have a clear idea of what conflict transformation is, what assumptions underlie the process, what effects it seeks to have on protracted conflicts and how these effects can best be brought about. This is a tall order and the task is made no easier by the fact that those who write about and advocate the use of transformation procedures have themselves a wide variety of views about what 'transformation' involves and how, when and by whom it can be brought about. The one central thing most writers and practitioners agree about is that transformation takes the business of coping with destructive protracted conflicts beyond the cessation of violence, the achievement of a compromise settlement or even the joint creation of an acceptable solution to the issues currently in conflict between the adversaries – in other words, beyond resolution.

### **Resolution and Re-emergence**

Before tackling the major task of delineating the essential nature of conflict transformation, however, I think it is necessary to clear up one misapprehension about what writers from what might now be termed 'the resolution school' mean when they talk about conflicts being finally resolved as opposed to settled. This claim is rather more modest than sometimes appears. It involves a contention that an acceptable and durable solution to the issues in a particular conflict between adversaries has been discovered – or mutually created – by the parties themselves, possibly with outside assistance from other 'third' parties or possibly through their own efforts and sometimes with local assistance from 'insider partials'. It does not mean that exactly the same parties may not come into conflict in the future over other issues, some of which may even arise from the working out of the agreed solution to the original incompatibilities. The final 'resolution' of one particular conflict does not imply a conflict-free future, especially if the parties involved have a long history of enmity, fear or mistrust, although it is to be hoped that the process through which a mutually satisfactory solution was devised might have done something to diminish some of the dislike and mistrust and, at least, serve as a model for what might also be achieved through similar resolution processes in future conflicts between the same parties. This is, of course, a most unlikely outcome if the 'solution' takes the form of a settlement of exhaustion or a temporary compromise, partly coerced from the adversaries by a third party *a la* Dayton.

In somewhat different terms, nobody advocating the utility of conflict resolution is likely to argue that resolving a particular conflict will remove all differences or potential differences between parties<sup>3</sup>, whether the differences take the form of possessing contrasting goals or aspirations or simply *being* different from one another, perhaps as regards language, appearance, religious beliefs, social organization or culture. Even if, through some miraculously effective processes, the political, social and economic issues currently dividing the Greek Cypriots from the Turkish Cypriots on the island of Cyprus could be 'resolved', there would still be two different (and to a degree socially separate) communities on the island of Cyprus – or perhaps three, given the influx of mainland Turks into the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus. Undoubtedly new conflicts would arise among them in

future, some of which would likely be conflicts that exist at present but are suppressed by the currently dominant, inter-community conflict.

This argument sometimes appears difficult to support in view of the long drawn out conflicts that involve countries, nations and ethno-linguistic communities, such as the protracted struggle in Ireland and then in Northern Ireland, or the Franco-German rivalry between 1870 and 1945, or the complex system of conflicts in the former-Yugoslavia. Such conflicts, because they involve 'the same' people appear to go far back into history and to die down only to re-emerge at a later date. Analytically, however, many of such apparently protracted 'ethnic' conflicts might well turn out to involve quite different issues, some of which probably lend themselves to resolution no matter how ostensibly intractable they appear. It may be more accurate – and certainly more hopeful – to regard them as series of potentially resolvable, interlinked conflicts involving 'the same' people<sup>4</sup>, rather than as the same phenomenon that has 're-emerged' because it was not – and could not be – resolved during 'its' last cycle.<sup>5</sup>

It is true, of course, that some writers in discussing the need for conflict transformation have argued the impossibility – or, at least, the unlikelihood – of ever being able to resolve certain conflicts, and that all that happens is that they are temporarily suppressed or their pursuit neglected in favor of other activities. Carolyn Nordstrom, quoting Galtung, talks about conflicts being "...momentarily quieted, only to resurface again at a later time and in a different guise..." and criticizes the conception of conflicts having a linear form and a final endpoint as essentially the result of a 'Western' epistemology (Nordstrom 1995, p. 105). Clearly, some conflicts do re-emerge fundamentally unaltered, which would indicate to me, at least, that the previous solution had taken the form of an unsatisfactory, temporary compromise rather than a durable resolution. Such cases thoroughly justify Nordstrom's point that such *mis-titled* 'resolutions' may, paradoxically, be aptly named because, unable to deal with them in any final sense, we are constantly 're-solving them' (Nordstrom 1995, p. 106).

However, other cases may involve the formation of very different conflicts involving very new issues, rather than being the same conflict 'in a different guise', even though they involve the same parties. One needs to ask how 'different' a different guise needs to be before it ceases to be 'the same' conflict that has re-emerged, rather than a new one. Some careful analysis of the nature of the issues involved and the structures underlying their development needs to be undertaken before claims of 're-emergence' are made. It is even possible to make a case, for example, that the issues in the Irish conflict changed radically enough between 1921 and 1966 from issues of establishing an independent, united Irish republic to those of civil rights for the minority in the North – and then by 1970 rapidly back to issues of Irish unity and the partition where the conflict has remained – to be regarded analytically as a different conflict. One also needs to recall, when talking about protracted ethnic conflicts, Rudolph Stavenhagen's point that many so-called 'ethnic' conflicts are, on closer examination, examples of social, political and economic conflicts between groups who identify themselves and their opponents in ethnic terms (Stavenhagen 1991, p. 119). Some apparently intractable ethnic conflicts may be over issues only remotely connected with ethnic identity and its

expression, while others which are more closely related to ethnicity and its manifestations may allow for mutually acceptable solutions once it is recognized that ethnic survival is not actually an issue.

However, it is also true that such analytical distinctions between what is classified as new conflict and what as old, unresolved conflicts newly re-emerged may be practically irrelevant. The distinction may only be important in the sense that in the latter case the temporary settlement might ideally have been treated as a breathing space to enable a durable solution to be sought; and in the former case successful resolution of one set of issues might have led on to the exploration of conflict prevention measures to minimize residual antagonisms that might lead to future conflicts, which will almost inevitably arise and might escalate rapidly into coercion and violence. With this in mind, it seems unarguable that conflict transformation advocates have a point in holding that it is simply not enough to resolve one set of issues between parties who then remain in a mental frame of mutual suspicion and antagonism, in a relationship of unloved interdependence and locked in a system from which major, salient contentions will inevitably arise. Conflict transformation implies that much more than simply finding a solution to one set of conflicting interests and values is required. But what?

### **Formation, Transformation and ‘Standard’ Conflict Dynamics**

Unfortunately, as I have already noted, a variety of somewhat contradictory answers are given to that question, depending partly upon which analysts are writing and the social level of the conflicts that they discuss. One might start by approaching the conundrum linguistically. If the term ‘resolution’ implies the process of finding a solution to some problem, then the term ‘transformation’ surely implies bringing about some major change in some aspect of the conflict or the socio-political system in which it is embedded – or in something else. But at least the conception of profound change is implied.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, using the same distinction as I have used elsewhere when discussing conflict resolution, it is reasonable to conclude that *conflict transformation* can stand both for an end state (or at least a set of identifiable conditions) when the conflict can be viewed as ‘transformed’ and for a set of processes through which the end state is achieved.

The core of the transformation concept, therefore, involves some kind of major change – a qualitative shift, as opposed to a quantitative alteration in degree, as that involved had medieval alchemists achieved their ambition of changing lead into gold.<sup>7</sup> The question that follows must be: What gets transformed? Two obvious starting answers are firstly the conflict itself and secondly some aspect of the socio-political system in which that conflict occurs.

Here one immediately runs into the problem that conflicts themselves are inherently dynamic phenomena, even when they are in their early stages when nobody either involved in the conflict or observing it is even contemplating trying to settle, resolve, terminate or transform it. In one – probably misleading – sense, conflicts are transforming all the time, from the moment the incompatible interests emerge into parties’ consciousness, through the mobilization of support for the

achievement of shared goals, the escalation of coercive and eventually violent behavior (and inevitably, of the costs of prosecuting the conflict) to the involvement of third parties as sponsors, allies or intermediaries.

It seems inherently less than useful to confuse the normal and familiar dynamics of conflict with its ‘transformation’, but some writers have used the term in this fashion. Edward Azar, for example, in his interesting discussion of *protracted social conflicts*, argues that a number of factors lead to the emergence of such intractable disputes, and that “...rapid growth orientated economic development strategies [that which is primarily practiced by the global community] in underdeveloped countries result in the deepening of a dual economy in which the modern sector becomes prosperous...while the traditional sector stagnates or even deteriorates as wealth is intentionally transferred to the modern sector...” (Azar 1986). This uneven development, plus the involvement of different ethno-linguistic or ethno-religious communities in the growing or the stagnating sector, leads in Azar’s analysis to the transforming of “...nonconflictual situations into conflictual ones...” a change which seems quite profound enough to be properly regarded as an example of transformation of the conflict (Azar 1990, p. 7). Hence, willy nilly, Azar himself might be taken to be an example of writers who treat the emergence of conflict into an overt stage of antagonistic competition as being a type of transformation, if not necessarily a desirable one.

But most other writers in the field do not appear to regard the emergence of a conflict as a type of transformation. Rupesinghe takes a most logical approach to the question by talking about *conflict formation* which – while warning that conflicts seldom develop in a linear fashion – he likens to birth and infancy of a dispute before it grows and develops to maturity and requires some form of ‘managing’ (Rupesinghe 1995, pp. 77-78). On the other hand, a number of writers do use the conception of transformation to stand for what I would regard as ‘standard’ dynamics of conflict and nothing so out of the ordinary as to require that label, even though, admittedly, some ‘normal’ conflict dynamics – crossing the threshold from coercion to violence, for example – do represent major qualitative changes. For example, Raimo Vayrynen argues that conflict transformation can take place in at least four different ways (1991, pp. 4-7):

[1] *Actor Transformation*, which involves either major internal changes within the original parties to the conflict or the addition [and, presumably, subtraction] of new parties to the conflict.

[2] *Issue Transformation*, which involves an alteration of the political agenda of the conflict through a transformation of what the conflict is “about”.

[3] *Rule Transformation*, which involves a change in the norms involved in the conflict and the limits within which the parties conduct their relations.

[4] *Structural Transformation*, which involves changes in the whole structure of inter-party relations.

The last type of change certainly seems to conform to what many other writers mean by ‘conflict transformation’ and I will return to this conception later in this article. The other three types seem much more akin to what most writers on conflict processes would regard as the normal dynamics of conflict, although there are some who highlight the process of issue change and use the label ‘transformation’ to apply to this kind of alteration.<sup>8</sup> For example, in their interesting paper on how conflicting parties can attempt to shape and define a conflict by ‘re-phrasing’ what the conflict is about, Lynn Mather and Barbara Yngvesson argue that this type of ‘transformation’ occurs at all stages of conflicts, starting as soon as one party “perceives a grievance against another” (Mather & Yngvesson 1981, p. 777). Further, they argue that while efforts to define what the conflict is about – and to have a major influence on how it will be handled and settled – may be part of the adversaries’ tactics in prosecuting the conflict, it is also a process employed by third parties who redefine the issues in the conflict (what Mather and Yngvesson refer to as ‘the content’) in order to make it amenable to particular modes of settlement. This is most clearly seen in the process by which disputes and the range of issues involved are shaped in a particular way so that they become amenable to legal settlement, but there is, the authors argue, a similar ‘transformative’ process involved in the use of intermediaries, part of whose function is to present “...a formulation which disputants and others might accept and at the same time satisfies the interests of a third party...” (Mather & Yngvesson 1981, p. 778). In many ways, this last argument echoes that of Dale and Bill Spencer regarding the manner in which issues can be altered to facilitate attaining a solution to a conflict so that, in their view, conflict transformation “...can be thought of as a redefinition of the dispute situation by the actors themselves, one that may lead to opening a space for cooperation and peace...” (Spencer & Spencer 1995, p. 162).

While there might be an argument for using the term ‘transformation’ to indicate a change in the conflict itself that involves a re-definition of what the main issues in contention are, there seems to be a clear consensus that the term does not apply to other familiar changes that occur during protracted conflicts. For example, while Vayrynen might be right in arguing that a conflict will be significantly changed by the direct involvement of a patron or by the defection of an ally, such a change does not seem to be what most writers mean when they use the term ‘transformation’. It might, therefore, be more appropriate to use the more limited term of conflict ‘enlargement’. Other labels, such as ‘escalation’ or ‘polarization’ seem more useful for describing the numerous changes that almost inevitably seem to accompany the involvement of adversaries in protracted conflicts, such as heightened ethnocentrism, alienation, scapegoating, dehumanization, stereotyping, tendencies to create enemy images and what Leo Kuper describes as a general ‘decline in moderation’ (Kuper 1977). At a socio-political level, common changes include a tendency of parties to over-commit and entrap themselves in increasingly costly and failing courses of action; in many cases an increase in physical separation and a more rigorous enforcement of both social and territorial boundaries; and what Pruitt and Rubin refer to as ‘residues’, one of which involves increased national or group cohesion and the emergence of militant leadership (Pruitt and Rubin 1986, p. 92).

No one would deny that these changes are important, nor that many of them involve important thresholds which, once crossed, make stopping and reversing the dynamic increasingly difficult. But they hardly seem to be the kind of changes, however major, that the 'conflict transformation' school refers to when it uses that term. Nor does it seem to be the case that the changes that accompany both the emergence and the escalation of conflicts in a related socio-political system offer more than a clue to what is the essential nature of this broader conception of 'conflict transformation'. Anyone who has been in a country that has become involved in a war, or in a nation or community in which protracted and violent conflict has broken out, will be under no illusions about the profound changes brought about as a result. Anatol Rapoport (1986) refers to changes involving the establishment of a 'self-perpetuating war machine' and many others have talked about the inevitable 'militarization' of society. Protracted conflicts, both internal and external, result in major changes in government powers (a national emergency or a 'state of siege' is declared); in economic organization and activity (mobilization of resources for defense or 'increased security'); and in all social and cultural life, including major population disruptions (evacuations, flight, so-called 'ethnic cleansing').

Faced with the kind of major changes that characterize conflict emergence and escalation, (what Rupesinghe calls 'formation', 'escalation' and 'endurance') it is difficult to argue that these do not 'transform' a society or a region in which the conflict takes place. However, given that most writers on the subject see the term 'transformation' as applied to changes in the opposite direction, then one way of dealing with questions about the basic nature of transformation would be to assume that it refers to *the reversal* of the *all* negative forms of change that occur *within* the conflict system itself and *to* the social system in which the conflict is embedded. Thus, transformation involves, for example, changes such as an increase in empathy on the part of adversaries, with stereotyping, dehumanization and demonization of the other side becoming less common; a decrease in the levels of social and geographical separation of the parties; and major changes in the nature and homogeneity of communications aimed at the others.

But do major changes in the conflict and the surrounding socio-political system in the direction of the status quo ante really represent an accepted and acceptable meaning of 'conflict transformation'? Clearly there is more to the conception than this, for many writers insist that a mere return to the situation before the emergence of overt conflict is simply to go back to the very conditions that gave rise to the original aspirations for change and goal incompatibilities in the first place. How can this be termed 'transformation', rather than being simply an unsatisfactory process of 'restoration'? Although there are different emphases in the writing on transformation, one of the factors that arises clearly in most is that, while transformation implies 'positive' change in many aspects of the conflict, the parties and the participants, it also implies the need for major changes in the socio-political and economic systems from which the conflict originated. This is put most clearly by Juha Auvinen and Timo Kivimäki when they argue that "...The philosophy of the conflict transformation approach is that in conflicts there are causes or reasons more fundamental than are expressed on the level of disputes. Often conflicts are

structurally caused by economic, political, identitive, discursive and other structures which then give rise to concrete disputes...” (1996, p. 3). The clear implication of this approach is that transformation involves at least the principle that some of the things that have to be changed radically are the structures giving rise to conflict in the first place. In turn, this suggests that Vayryenen’s fourth category of *structural transformation* might well be the dimension of his framework linking it to the core ideas of other writers on transformation processes.

Certainly this focus arises from a philosophy of handling protracted conflicts which is more far reaching than one which aims at finding an acceptable resolution to one current conflict and much further reaching than one which simply attempts to alter the behavior of adversaries and to patch together some compromise based upon division or compensation.

### **Core Factors to Be Transformed**

Delineating clearly what is involved in conflict transformation – in the sense of the nature, direction and range of changes involved – remains difficult, however. This is not always because writers on transformation tend inadvertently to conflate the process aspect of the phenomenon with the outcome elements. Partly it is because, for some members of the ‘transformation school’, establishing a particular process is an end in itself – a desired outcome. Partly it is because others argue that conflict transformation is a continuing process in itself, so there *can* be no end state in which a conflict – or something else – is said to be ‘transformed’. Galtung, for example, views conflicts as “...phenomena that have no clear beginning or end... they wax, wane and transform themselves through patterns of dependent co-arising...” (1995, p. 52). This view finds echoes in many writings about transformation and it is interesting to note the number of occasions on which those discussing the phenomenon use the present participle to describe what it involves – ‘restructuring’, ‘building’, ‘validating’, ‘empowering’, ‘understanding’, ‘training’, ‘promoting’, ‘participating’, ‘reconciling’ and so on.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Transformation Process**

This close intertwining of ideas about conflict transformation as process and as outcome necessitates some arbitrariness in trying to answer questions about what is changed through that process, and at least a brief description of what normally seems to be involved in a conflict transformation process. Again, different writers stress different aspects, but most seem to agree that a conflict transformation process, in order to be effective, must involve:

[1] Multi-level participation, involving elements from all social levels of all the involved parties, from top decision makers through middle range opinion leaders to grass roots constituents, including those who would normally be excluded from the process and whose interests would not be represented in ‘normal’ negotiations.

- [2] Efforts to empower the ‘underdogs’ in the struggle so that solutions and changes can be sought between parties that are more equal than they would otherwise be.
- [3] Efforts to ensure that those directly involved in the conflict can control the transformation processes to their own satisfaction and thus make sure that any outcomes have the approval and support of those affected.
- [4] A focus not merely on immediate issues but also on long standing traumas and hurts, and on any deep-rooted sense of past injustices.
- [5] Brokerage by appropriate intermediaries who understand the culture and social structures in which the adversaries are embedded.
- [6] Co-creation of a new understanding of the conflict, how it arose and what needs to be changed in order both to resolve it and to ensure that other, similar disputes do not arise in future.
- [7] An ability to create and put in place procedures that will maintain and continue the changes found necessary to resolve the current conflict and prevent others arising in future, or – when they arise – taking on a protracted and destructive form.
- [8] The mutual, inter-active education of adversaries about the nature of the socio-political and economic systems from which the conflict arose and of the dynamics of that conflict; and their training in skills that will enable them to deal with that conflict and others that may arise in future.

This is a rather general list which undoubtedly omits a number of key aspects of the transformation *process* in the eyes of some writers, but I would argue that it does contain most of the features generally accepted by ‘transformation school’ analysts and practitioners. It is, moreover, a list which does begin to offer some clues to the continuing question about what transformation transforms, and it emphasizes that it is possible to sort out the wide variety of answers to that question into three broad categories; those dealing with *personal* changes, those dealing with *structural* changes; and those dealing with *relationship* changes.

### ***Transforming Persons***

There will clearly be major differences in what gets transformed depending upon the social level at which the conflict takes place and the sociopolitical and economic environments for the conflict and those involved. At the interpersonal level, transforming persons by definition also involves changing ‘the parties’, and hence having a major effect on the conflict. Even with conflicts at the inter-group, inter-community and international level, however, conflict transformation is held to involve a variety of major changes in the individuals involved, both at the level of leaders and of followers, a point that has led some critics to argue that the aspirations of conflict transformation for affecting protracted *social* conflicts are wildly optimistic.

It is probably the case that, at least at the interpersonal level, Baruch Bush and Jay Folger have argued most strongly that in properly conducted initiatives it is the parties themselves who become transformed, so that the major change occurs in the individuals directly involved in the conflict as adversaries. Bush and Folger are quite specific about the form such personal transformation takes. Identifiable transformational effects are brought about by a process which "...can strengthen peoples' capacity to analyze situations and make effective decisions for themselves and...to see and consider the perspectives of others..." (Bush & Folger 1996, p. 264). In short, transformation involves a marked increase in the parties' sense of *empowerment* or self-determination, and in their capacities for *recognition* or responsiveness to others – and this is the objective of a transformative approach to a conflict, rather than either simply reaching an agreement about the issues that appear to divide the parties or – even less desirably – having intermediaries construct a settlement to which the parties are then expected to adhere. In slightly different terms, a transformational mediation process:

...contains within it a unique potential for transforming people – engendering moral growth – by helping them wrestle with difficult circumstances and bridge human differences in the very midst of conflict. The transformative potential stems from mediation's capacity to generate two important effects, empowerment and recognition. In simplest terms, *empowerment* means the restoration to individuals of a sense of their own value and strength and their own capacity to handle life's problems. *Recognition* means the evocation in individuals of acknowledgement and empathy for the situation and problems of others... (Bush & Folger 1996, p. 2).

...can allow parties to define problems and goals in their own terms, thus validating the importance of these goals and problems in the parties' lives. Further, mediation can support the parties' exercise in self-determination in deciding how, or even whether, to settle a dispute and it can help the parties mobilize their own resources to address problems and achieve their own goals...Parties in mediation have gained a greater sense of self-respect, self reliance and self confidence... (Bush & Folger 1996, p. 20).

These two quotations indicate clearly that, for Bush and Folger, transformation processes and outcomes have a central *moral* dimension, one which is aimed chiefly at the people involved in the conflict as parties. *The* goal of transformation, they argue, "...embodies the premise that it is not only being better off that matters but being better", at least in the sense of having increased capacity to understand and decide and to empathize with others. Hence, "...the goal of transformation is unique because it involves a supreme value that the other goals do not encompass..." (Bush & Folger 1996, p. 30). Conflicts and disputes can be viewed "...not as *problems* at all, but as opportunities for moral growth and transformation..." (Bush & Folger 1996, p. 81).

Leaving aside for the moment the issue of whether no other approach to coping with conflicts involves goals of changing participants or parties for the better – whoever is to decide what ‘better’ means – it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Bush and Folger also view transformation as having social as well as personal impacts, so that their view of transformation goes somewhat beyond that of changing individuals. The unique promise of mediation, they note, “...lies in its capacity to transform the character of both individual disputants and society as a whole...” (Bush & Folger 1996, p. 20). However, it is clear that the transformation of society is an indirect result of individual transformations, rather than through any direct agreements that are devised as solutions requiring social reform or change. For these writers, “...transformation does not mean institutional restructuring, but rather a change or refinement in the *consciousness and character of individual human beings...*” and they acknowledge that the effects of individual change in bringing about social change are likely to be a long time coming – perhaps most especially in societies prone to violent and intractable conflicts like Cyprus, Sri Lanka or the former Yugoslavia (Bush & Folger 1996, p. 24). They are also rather vague about the precise mechanisms for converting personal into social or structural transformation, and about whose and how many individual transformations will eventually add up to a sufficiently large change to enable anyone to talk convincingly about a social transformation.

While Bush and Folger concentrate on individual changes in empowerment and responsiveness, they are hardly alone in arguing for the need to change individuals in some fashion if conflicts are to be changed into something else. Many others have argued that the aims of conflict transformation processes should include the *general* promotion of mutual empathy and understanding between parties among leaders, opinion makers and grass roots individuals, as well as a sense of shared responsibility for the origins and dynamics of the conflict in the first place. Similarly, transformation processes should aim at removing the sense of helplessness about the conflict among participants, particularly those at the local and grass roots levels of the parties and at increasing the sense of empowerment, at least in terms of their being able to affect the conduct of the conflict, its resolution and the structures that originally gave rise to it. At this individual level, transformation is usually said to be characterized by major and widespread changes in peoples’:

- [1] Framing and understanding of the issues in conflict.
- [2] Acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the other party, its claims, concerns and hopes.
- [3] Sense of responsibility for the origins of the conflict and the interactive manner in which it has inevitably been prosecuted.
- [4] Consciousness of the other party’s perspectives and objectives, and reasons for their being held.
- [5] Recognition of the need for short-term mutual re-assurance and the building up of longer-term trust between the parties.

[6] Sense of competence and capability in confronting the search for solutions to the conflict and undertaking actions to prevent repetition.

[7] Willingness to include the interests of those not normally represented in the search for solutions, including future generations.

[8] Acknowledgement of the existence of past grievances, injuries and traumas plus a willingness to examine these thoroughly and to search for means of healing the damage caused through a variety of means, including reconciliation and a mutually acceptable process of restorative and – if necessary – redistributive justice.

[9] Acceptance of the need for a durable, inclusive and acceptable solution to a mutual problem, which may involve major structural change.

Many writers have also suggested that one essential element in a conflict transformation process is that those involved should recognize that the activity also concerns a search for social justice and that part of this, in itself, involves them in a mutual effort to define the nature of this elusive idea and what, exactly, a just solution to their conflict would look like. In this sense, then, individuals will need to become willing to change their usually monocular view of ‘justice’ and ‘a just solution’ to one which admits the possibility of more than one conception of what might be seen as ‘just’, together with a concomitant need to engage in some form of wide ranging discussion about what criteria of justice or ‘fairness’ should be applied to some range of possible outcomes. In this way, it is argued, a peaceful solution to a conflict has a greater chance of also being a just one, and thus being durable.

### ***Transforming Structures***

If there is one area in which some conflict transformationists argue that transformation differs from resolution, it is in the former’s explicit commitment to bringing about major ‘structural’ change, and the need for this if a conflict is to be permanently transformed into something else. In opposition to this view, it could justifiably be argued that both theorists and practitioners of conflict resolution are tolerably familiar with situations in which it becomes clear at some stage in the process of resolution that a durable and mutually acceptable solution is only possible with some level of structural change, either political or socio-economic. Often this is clearly revealed by the resolution process itself, together with the likely long- and short-term costs of *not* changing.

For example, the protracted and very violent internal war in Liberia during the early to mid-1990s was, to a large degree, over who and which faction would control a highly centralized presidential political system, together with the power and access to wealth that accompanied that outcome. In the initial stages of a process hopefully intended to be resolutionary, it became increasingly obvious that such a structure could only result in the conflicting parties achieving a win-lose outcome, so that the Liberian political system, at least, had to undergo a major structural change – decentralization, local autonomy, shared local/central control of

national wealth – if a durable solution was to be achieved. In the event, a compromise settlement involving a cease fire and supervised elections within the existing political system was achieved. The winning faction took power and now tries to maintain its position by persecuting any serious opposition while awaiting the next, probably violent attempt to transfer centralized power to another faction.

This is a not too untypical example of a process of conflict resolution at least identifying the parameters of a solution clearly involving structural change, but failing then to influence official processes that resulted eventually in a temporary, win-lose settlement. It certainly illustrates Rupesinghe's critique of one aspect of the 'resolutionary' approach, especially its reliance on small group, problem solving workshops from which "...successes are unlikely to be transferred in any meaningful way to the conflict ..." (Rupesinghe 1995, pp. 75-6).

While conflict resolution approaches clearly allow for necessary structural change, it is certainly the case that there is, at least, a difference in emphasis between approaching a conflict with this possibility in mind and the transformationist approach that assumes that only through such change might the conflict, the people involved and the future be altered permanently so that this conflict is wholly changed and other conflicts do not recur.<sup>10</sup> This may seem to be an over-generalization about conflict transformation, and to be clearly connected with the kinds of protracted and intractable conflicts on which transformational writings concentrate, but it is the case that the need for *structural* change forms a major theme in much of this analysis.

For example, in Rupesinghe's survey of the transformational literature there appear two clear strands in thinking about structural reform. The first involves the need for "...sustainable structural and attitudinal changes...within society and new institutions...to address outstanding issues..." The second advocates "... the building and/or revival of indigenous political, social and economic mechanisms and attitudes which militate against the use of violence to resolve conflicts..." (Rupesinghe 1995, pp. 76-7). These themes of the need for long term structural change and the need to revive neglected traditional means for dealing with conflicts are echoed by many other writers.

### *Transforming Relationships*

The third major theme in writings on conflict transformation involves the need for changes in the 'relationship' between the adversaries, and that a lasting transformation of the conflict must involve such a restructuring if it is to be successful. Some advocates do talk about the need to create or restore a relationship but this expression seems to me to miss the point that adversaries are already involved in a relationship, however unsatisfactory as this might be, so that the *adversary* relationship has to be fundamentally changed before one can speak of the conflict being transformed.

This point is echoed in some of the earlier work of Adam Curle, one of the scholar-practitioners most influential in incorporating this idea of the necessity for relational change into the conflict transformation approach (Curle 1971). One of Curle's central themes is the need for parties to move from 'unpeaceful' to

'peaceful' relationships, defining the former as those which impede all round human development and which are characterized by unbalanced power relationships and inequality in the level of awareness about the actual degree of incompatibility in their interests and objectives. Peaceful relationships on the other hand are those which involve "...active association, planned cooperation and intelligent efforts to forestall or resolve potential conflicts..." and in these relationships "...there is neither domination nor imposition. Instead, there is mutual assistance, mutual understanding, mutual concern and collaboration founded on this mutuality..." (Curle 1971, pp. 15-16). Thus, for Curle, the defining characteristics of peaceful relationships are *equality* or balance of capability, *mutuality* and the sense of an equal degree of concern between people, and *reciprocity* in the sense of a balanced exchange of material and non-material goods. A similar view of the kind of relationships that need to be achieved for conflict transformation to occur can be found in the work of Hiskias Assefa, who argues that a necessary process involved in such a change moves a society or community from a social order based upon hierarchy and coercion to one based upon equality, respect, participation, voluntarism and mutual enrichment (Assefa 1993, pp. 5-7).

The precise transformation process employed to reach such an outcome depends to a large degree on the type of conflict existing in the society or community to be transformed, according to Curle. In cases where the adversaries are equally aware of the existence and nature of the goal incompatibility, and are roughly equal in their capacity to harm each other in pursuit of their interests, negotiation, mediation or conciliation could well be relevant processes for achieving a new and stable relationship. In circumstances where the adversaries are aware of their conflict but capability is one sided, then processes aimed at equalization are appropriate. In a third situation, where capability is imbalanced, awareness low – at least on one side – and the conflict latent rather than overt, Curle advocates processes aimed at increasing awareness to the point of confrontation over newly recognized key issues. All these are strategies which provide clear guidelines for transformational activities in a variety of structural situations, and at least provide some answers to an issue on which conflict resolution literature tends to be silent – the role of resolution processes in conflicts which are highly unbalanced and especially in those which are so unbalanced that no overt signs of conflict even exist to signal a need for resolutionary efforts.

Both Curle's and Assefa's work provide some clues as to what kinds of relationships need to be transformed through a transformation process, and what they need to be transformed into, and this line of thought has also been enriched by some of the writings of Harold Saunders, who argues strongly that changing relationships between adversaries is the core to long term success in bringing peace in even the most intractable conflicts. Saunders make the important preliminary point that relationships between parties have to be considered in their totality, and that they both have multiple qualities and are dynamic, two points to which I will return below (Saunders 1993, p. 8).

Further ideas can be sought in the work of John Paul Lederach, who focuses his own approach to transforming a conflict on processes of reconciliation between adversaries in protracted conflicts and draws upon long experience of efforts to

transform conflicts and relationships among combatants in Nicaragua, Spain and Somalia. Lederach makes the interesting if neglected point that, in many protracted conflicts in the contemporary world, it is simply not possible for the adversaries to disengage and have little or nothing to do with one another once a particular set of contested issues has been ‘solved’. As Lederach puts it, a solution cannot be “...pursued by seeking innovative ways to disengage or minimize the conflicting groups’ affiliations...” because “...*relationship* is both the basis of the conflict and of its long term solution...” (Lederach 1997, p. 26). Willy nilly, the groups or communities or societies in conflict have a relationship now – they are *adversaries* – and they will have one in future, at least as *neighbors*. The question has to be: What sort of neighbors can they be or do they want to be? Lederach reminds adversaries that in all contemporary internal conflicts, “...the futures of those who are fighting are ultimately linked and interdependent. Opportunity must therefore be given for people to look forward and envision their shared future...” (Lederach 1997, p. 26). His recommended approach involves a complex process of reconciliation so that more complex but above all more accurate images of “the enemy” can be developed, preparatory to changing the manner in which those involved inter-act and the basic nature of the relationship that will link them in the future, once the underlying issues currently in contention have been mutually delineated and solutions successfully sought.

Among a number of practical example of relationship building, Lederach gives the example of the Norwegian sponsored talks between Israeli and Palestinian representatives near Oslo, and notes how – over a long period of time – those involved began to build new and deeper relationships, no longer viewing one another uni-dimensionally, simply as enemies but more complexly as humans-in-the-round (Lederach 1997, pp. 32-4). Together with capacity building, relationship building forms one of the major parts of Lederach’s transformational approach to conflict and peace building and is, he argues, that aspect of the process that “...responds to the longer term and coordination requirements needed to sustain peacebuilding...” (Lederach 1997, p.109).

### **Relationships: Types and Characteristics**

Unfortunately, amid all the writings of the transformational school on the core role of ‘relationship’ and the essential part played by relationship building in conflict transformation, the central concept itself remains somewhat vague. At one level, it is clearly the case that there are many different relationships possible between any two (or more) individuals, groups or communities. Changing two groups from adversaries to something else would undoubtedly indicate that a situation of conflict has been transformed – also to something else. As the Arab proverb has it: “The best way to destroy your enemy is to make him your friend”.

But what kind of new relationship might replace that of being *adversaries*? Clearly, it might be possible to change erstwhile adversaries into *partners* or *colleagues*. However, if one is interested in analyzing when such a relationship changes – and by implication, conflict transformation – has occurred what might be the most reliable indicators of the new relationship? Behavior towards one another?

Nature, extent and balance of inter-actions between the groups? Views, attitudes, images, beliefs and other psychological states? Degrees of trust? And how widespread do these changes have to be within a society or community before the transformation has occurred, given the fact that, for many people, negative views of a long time adversary are difficult to alter and can be passed on from generation to generation?

A third puzzle is less concerned with the type of new relationship to be built as a replacement for the old one, or with the indicators that the relationships has, indeed, changed, but more with the characteristics of this new relationship. The argument here is that, while it is possible for individuals, groups and communities to be categorized into a variety of relationships and roles – adversaries, colleagues, neighbors, superiors, fathers, communicators – within each of these kinds of relationship it remains possible for those involved – and the relationship itself – to display very different qualities. For example, it is possible to be a *good* or a *bad neighbor* – or a thoughtful or indifferent father. As President Kennedy once indicated, it is even possible to be in an *adversary partnership*. The whole issue of the kind of relationship, or the qualities within that relationship, needs much more careful consideration before it becomes possible to use it as an analytical tool for understanding the nature of conflict transformation.

Sociologists and others who have discussed the nature of inter-personal relationships take as their starting point the idea that relationships involve at least two related dimensions, one behavioral and one cognitive or affective. A generally agreed basis is that a relationship involves sequences of interactions between entities (e.g. individuals that are known to one another) that continue over some substantial period of time. To quote Robert Hinde, “...A relationship implies first some sort of intermittent interaction between two people, involving exchanges over a period of time...” (1979, p. 14). This initial definition echoes that used by Hal Saunders, who describes international relationships as “...a continuous political process of complex interaction among significant parts of whole bodies politic across permeable borders...” (Saunders 1993, p. 6).

Systems theorists have emphasized that inter-personal and social exchanges can involve three types of flows – material, energy or information – but Hinde makes the important point that relationships not only involve *content* (i.e. what is being exchanged or what behaviors are taking place) but also *qualities*, the latter providing a context within which the nature of an interaction can be categorized and distinctions made. For example, the physical action of a blow on another’s back may be an assault or a boisterous greeting or a warning of approaching peril. Quoting Saunders, there are “...relationships of different levels, kinds and qualities...” (Saunders 1993, p. 8).

Clearly, the nature of particular relationships is determined to some degree by content, by what is exchanged, and how it is exchanged. Equally clearly, their nature or quality is affected by the cognitive/affective dimension – that is, by what those involved in the exchange think of the interaction and of each other’s role in it. Relationships are not simply patterns of interaction but also involve memories, expectations and evaluations on the part of those who are part of the exchange – what Hinde describes as “...the social meaning to the actor...” (Hinde 1979, p. 22).

These factors help to explain both why relationships can persist overtime in the absence of any interaction at all (as good friends or as historical rivals) and why they can change radically, even without change in their basic content.

This discussion does begin to offer some clues as to how one might begin to analyze the nature of, and – eventually – the reasons for the changes in relationships held to be the essential feature of conflict transformation. If relationships consist of some continuous patterns of exchange plus the evaluations of those involved in the patterns, both of which enable inferences about the nature or quality of the relationship to be made, then any efforts to change the relationship as a part of transforming a conflict can involve altering the content of the exchange, parties' evaluation of the exchange – and thus of the relationship – or both. In one case, this process can involve altering the exchange from one imposing costs through coercion or violence to one conferring benefits (or at least doing no harm). In another it can involve a complete change in the content of an exchange – from tribute to trade – and in the evaluation of that exchange – from resentment to approval.

Even such a preliminary discussion of relationship change as the one above reveals the complexity of the process if an adversarial relationship in a conflict [whether manifest or latent] is to be 'transformed'. As I noted earlier, Adam Curle makes the change from 'unpeaceful' to 'peaceful' relationships the central pillar of his approach to the task of transforming conflicts into non-conflicts, but what precise changes in the nature of that being exchanged and in parties' evaluations of the relationship are needed to bring about such an alteration? The difficulty is that there are many possible evaluations of a pattern of exchange and thus many possible qualities of a relationship that could be altered in any process of relationship 'transformation'. At one level, transformation could involve a change in parties' evaluation of the relationship so that it moves from fearful to confident, hostile to friendly, concealing to open or mistrustful to trusting. At another, the relationship could move from being central to being peripheral. It could become static as opposed to dynamic, or stable as opposed to unstable or responsive as opposed to indifferent.

It seems that there is a major need to those advocating major changes in relationships as a means of transforming conflicts to specify which qualities of existing, *adversarial* relationships need to be changed for a genuine 'transformation' to occur, and how such changes might be indicated. As a tentative starting point, I would suggest that four key qualities, dimensions or aspects of existing relationships that might well be changed – somehow – to form the basis of a transformative change are:

[1] From *imbalanced* to *balanced* exchanges, at least to the point where all parties are more or less disposed to agree that they get roughly the same value from the exchange as the others.

[2] From *dependent* to *interdependent* exchanges, so all parties' fortunes and futures are more or less equivalently tied to the continuation of the exchange.

[3] From *dissonant* to *consonant* evaluations of the exchange, in that all the parties share similar views about its utility and each others' acceptance of the exchange. (No more 'happy slave' misperceptions on the part of masters.)

[4] From *non-legitimized* to *legitimized* evaluations of the exchange, so that all parties more or less accept its essential 'rightness' – and even 'justice' – and are content with its continuation in, roughly, its present form.

### Conclusion

I started this article with a query regarding the differences between the ideas of *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* and – to be honest – some skepticism about the existence of any major differences, given the original meaning of the first idea and its acceptance of the possible need for major changes if some conflicts were ever to be fully resolved. I am now less sure that the two are simply different words for basically the same phenomena. Clearly the two approaches are closely related and have many things in common which, in turn set them aside from the 'management' approaches currently being mislabeled as conflict 'resolution'. As processes both resolution and transformation tend to avoid or minimize the use of 'leverage' in attempting both to get adversaries (or their representatives) into face-to-face interaction or to get them to accept agreements or arrangements about which they have serious doubts.<sup>11</sup> Both emphasize the importance of participants being in control of meetings, as well as the parties being in control of the overall process, at least in the sense that they can withdraw at any time without loss. Both acknowledge the importance of intangible issues in the causation and the resolution of conflict. Both are viewed by their practitioners as adjuncts – if important adjuncts – to formal, official efforts to bring protracted conflicts to some kind of satisfactory conclusion.

On the other hand, there are differences, if only in approach and emphasis. Resolution has tended to deal with conflicts by operating close to official efforts and to deal with decision making elites or, at least, with opinion makers and influentials. Transformation both advocates and practices the conception that processes have to take place at all levels, including the very grass roots. Resolution has a tendency to concentrate upon the immediate and the shorter term, its advocates arguing that dealing with the issues and the deeper interests producing a current situation of intractable conflict is enough of a problem in itself. Transformation has deliberately included 'the aftermath' in its focus, purposefully building in approaches and processes that deal with conflict 'residues' – traumas, fears, hurts and hatreds – which, even if one major conflict has been resolved, will remain to poison futures and ensure that later conflicts will be prosecuted in a spirit of intransigence, if not revenge.

If there is one significant difference, which is not merely one of emphasis, it seems to me that it reveals itself in the attitude of the two approaches to the matter of structural and relational change and their role in coping with protracted conflicts. As I remarked earlier, the possibility – even the likelihood – of the need for

structural change is fully accepted within the conflict resolution approach and it is acknowledged that in many cases, resolution without major change is simply not possible. The process of conflict resolution is partly aimed at getting parties to understand the likely long-term costs of not changing, and of finding alternative ways of changing that avoid both the costs of continuing 'defensive' coercion and of apparent surrender. However, within a conflict resolution framework, it is also quite conceivable for a resolution to be achieved without necessarily involving major structural changes. Furthermore, changes in relationship are not afforded a central place in resolutionary approaches; it being usually assumed that these will 'naturally' follow once the conflict at issue has been successfully resolved. The lack of attention to this relational aftermath aspect of resolution almost seems to become a philosophy of: No conflict = new relationship!

In contrast to these two elements in the overall resolutionary approach, conflict transformation clearly assumes that major structural changes will always and inevitably be necessary conditions for any successful effort to deal with the conflict, and that only by seeking such structural change will future conflicts not arise from similar sources. For transformationists, the central objective of the process is structural change, for all else flows from that. Moreover, new – and improved – relationships between erstwhile adversaries do not simply and 'naturally' arise from the fact that they are no longer in contention over a limited number of – admittedly – salient issues. Relationships have to be replaced and rebuilt through deliberate and directed efforts, and reconciliation can only take place as a result of these efforts. Without this aspect of change, even major structural alterations may prove fruitless in heading off future disputes, clashes, crises and conflicts. Hence, while structural change is axiomatic, relational change is also a fundamental part of transformation.

This being so, there may be something to be learned from my colleague Ilana Shapiro's argument that, if one is comparing conflict transformation with more traditional management or settlement approaches, the basic philosophical differences revolve around a conservation/change axis. The settlement approach – mediation, conciliation, negotiation – starts from an acceptance of a given political and socio-economic status quo, which may need some adjustment but is fundamentally sound and within which solutions to conflicts could and should be found. Fair elections will be the solution to the conflict in Liberia over which faction controls the political system and the economy. Eritrea is an integral part of an existing, recognized state, so solutions will have to be sought within that framework. Solutions to protracted conflicts in Central American countries must be sought without major land redistribution or undermining the concept of private property.

The transformational approach, however, begins by assuming that there is nothing sacred about the status quo – indeed, it is probably the source of the conflict – so that the process starts with an analysis and critique of the existing system and an assumption that it will be necessary to create new systems, structures and relationships. It then proceeds with the objective of helping to bring about such change, on the argument that only this type of alteration will deal with the conflict long term. The contemporary structure and number of 'independent, sovereign states' in international society not being sacred, there may be a case for some kind

of independence for Eritrea. Land reform may be necessary for stability and peace in Central America. The political system in Liberia may need to be wholly reformed rather than relying upon monitored elections, however 'fair', conducted within the present system.

This is an interesting line of thought to be pursued, but my final question is where this distinction between settlement and transformation leaves conflict resolution. I would hope that it would occupy its old position on the side of major political and socio-economic changes when these are clearly necessary, but it may be that it is or has become an inherently conservative activity. I intend to explore this possibility in a future article.

### Endnotes

1. Leaving aside what is meant by conflicts disappearing from an agenda, there seems to be no inherent reason why conflict-generated 'energy' cannot be redirected into other channels different from seeking further conflicts. On the other hand, if 'energy' is interpreted as organizational capacity for violence, together with a conflict ready mind set and no immediately available alternatives, so that there exists a 'conflict habituated' system in Louise Diamond's words, Galtung undoubtedly has a point as the survival of NATO and the US search for new enemies and new wars indicates. However, these are 'new' conflicts, not old ones.
2. This idea was initially mentioned in an unpublished paper by Ilana Shapiro, for which I am much indebted to her.
3. Except in the relatively rare cases in which the conflict is the sole *raison d'être* for the existence of the parties involved in the dispute, or for one of them.
4. Louis Kriesberg, in his excellent text book on social conflict, makes the point that certain entities are potentially ready to be parties on conflicts through their existence and their ability to take up issues in conflict – states, ethnic communities, religious organizations, etc.
5. Strictly speaking, many protracted conflicts that take place episodically, may involve the same 'nations' or 'communities' but they can hardly involve the same people. Unless the Irish add incredible longevity to their other qualities, the Irish nationalists who rose against the British in 1916 were a different generation from the civil rights protesters of the late 1960s, and they in turn, a different generation from the current members of the IRA, Sinn Fein and the INLA.
6. Some who write about conflict transformation and who wish not to be identified with 'linear, western' thinking, imply that transformation has to be regarded as an on-going, continual process, with no final end state. However, such a view seems to imply that transformation is simply synonymous with 'change' but even in this argument use of the term seems to involve major as opposed to minor change in certain things, so that as different degrees of change are involved it would seem

possible – and useful – to be able to indicate when the major changes have been completed.

7. Conflict transformers may, indeed, turn out to be the social alchemists of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

8. As I emphasize in a previous working paper (Mitchell 1999a) changing the agreed definition of ‘what the conflict is about’ and uncovering the nature of underlying issues in the conflict lie at the heart of conflict resolution processes, so this feature is clearly one shared by both approaches.

9. In line with this trend is the title of John Paul Lederach’s latest book, *Building Peace*.

10. In line with this argument, Frank Dukes remains convinced that, at least at the level of ‘public policy’ disputes involving conflicts between local communities and government and other agencies, conflict resolution approaches should be a “...vehicle for changing governing practices and institutional culture of agencies, public officials, citizenry and communities...” and that conflict resolution remains “...a vehicle for social justice and transformation...” (1993, p. 47, 46).

11. While certainly avoiding ‘mediation with muscle’ it is really impossible for conflict resolvers or transformers to have no influence at all on the course or outcome of discussions – unless they remain totally silent, which is unlikely.

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