PEACE BY PEACEFUL MEANS

Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization

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SAGE Publications
London • Thousand Oaks • New Delhi
PART II
CONFLICT THEORY

1
Conflict Formations

1.1 Conflict as Creator and Conflict as Destroyer

A theory of conflict is as indispensable for development studies as it is for peace studies. To develop is to create. The same is true of peace, but peace also has that emphasis on violence-reduction and non-violent conflict transformation. Deep inside every conflict lies a contradiction, something standing in the way of something else. A problem, in other words. And what could serve better as a force motrice for any actor, individual or collective, than a problem demanding to be solved?

But somewhere a danger is also lurking, particularly if the problem is highly solution-resistant. 'Something standing in the way of something else.' I want something badly, but so does somebody else. I want something badly, but I also want something else. These classical situations will be referred to as the elementary conflict formations or conflict atoms:

Dispute: Two persons, or actors, pursuing the same scarce goal.
Dilemma: One person, or actor, pursuing two incompatible goals.

The dispute easily leads to efforts to harm or hurt that actor whose pursuit is standing in the way, in other words to Other-destruction. And the dilemma may lead to efforts to deny something in oneself, in other words to Self-destruction. There may also be Self-destruction in the dispute (denying one's own pursuit of that evasive goal, e.g. leadership of a group) and Other-destruction in the dilemma (taking 'it', the frustration, out on somebody else). Most of us experience both, every day. Conflict generates energy. The problem is how to channel that energy constructively.

This is reminiscent of the classical Chinese double-character definition of 'crisis', a concept in the neighborhood of 'conflict', as 'danger' + 'opportunity'. 'Danger' is close to 'violence', and 'opportunity' reasonably close to 'challenge', the root of creation. Here we see old Chinese wisdom, very different from single-minded fear in connection with conflicts, trying to do away with them by solution/resolution/dissolution; even to conceal them by sweeping them 'under the carpet', meaning away from personal and social awareness or consciousness.

A basic thesis underlying the approach to conflict taken here will be that there is no viable alternative to creative conflict transformation. The question then becomes how to do it.

1.2 The Manifest–Latent Dialectic and the Conflict Triangle

The statement 'this is a conflict' should always be taken as an hypothesis – not as something obvious, even trivial, about which consensus is easily obtained. True, when certain
types of destructive behavior, $B$, are observed at the manifest, overt level, and more particularly as violent physical or verbal acts, or as hostile body language, then the conclusion is often drawn: here there is a conflict unfolding.

But: we have just made the point that conflict, being problematic, could also lead to constructive behaviors, such as deep, meditative postures, also known as 'inner dialogues', and 'outer dialogues', with others, about the problems. Destructive behavior tears down, it hurts and harms; constructive behavior builds something. Both can be present at the same time and place, in the same person; they are not incompatible.

Thus, there is no simple relation between conflict and conflict behavior as long as the doublingness of conflict is taken into account. As an example, observe formerly hostile antagonists when they, together and/or with a conflict facilitator, begin moving creatively toward some basic conflict transformation: hectic hilarity, visible excitement, deep happiness, even love. And yet the conflict is still there. No doubt, many people experience their finest hour precisely when a conflict is unfolding. On the other hand, if tension becomes a necessary and not only sufficient condition for their happiness, we may be dealing with a neurotic personality. If the person creates conflicts to obtain that happiness, we may be moving into the psychopathic. And if in addition the person uses those conflicts to dictate the solutions, then the term 'psychopath' may indeed be apt.

Evidently there is something underneath in all cases, and in other cases where conflict behavior is observed. Let us refer to what is hidden as assumptions (cognitions), and as attitudes (emotions), wrapped together by the letter $A$. And then there is the content of the conflict, $des$ $Pudels$ $Kern$, as Goethe said, which we assume to be a contradiction, $C$. The contradiction has to involve something wanted. Let us call it a goal, and its attainment a goal-state. We get:

Contradiction: incompatible goal-states in a goal-seeking system.
Conflict: attitudes/assumptions + behavior + contradiction/content.

In other words, conflict = $A + B + C$. The conflict is a triadic construct. Focus on only one of the three, and the significance of that one will probably also be lost.

The only systems we shall accept as goal-seeking are live systems, capable of experiencing the realization of a goal as happiness ($sukha$) and the deprivation as suffering ($dukkha$). In other words, we shall never assume that a gender, a generation, a race, a class, a nation, any territorial unit (a municipality, a district, a country, a region or the whole world), a state, or a super-state, has 'goals'. These are all abstractions. The happiness derived from goal-fulfilment, and the suffering derived from goal-deprivation, both presuppose a subject, however primitive, capable of experiencing a $sukha$-$dukkha$ gradient. Somalia has no goals, nor does the USA; but certain elites in either of them (and not only they) may have goals, even very clearly formulated ones. Likewise, minerals, water, air are not abstractions, but we generally do not assume that they experience the gradient mentioned. We include all kinds of life, but exclude non-life from conflict.

So conflict is about life, pointing straight to contradictions as life-creative and life-destructive. A theory of conflict will have to be located at this level phenomenologically. How close to the essence of life can be discussed, but this aspect should be ever-present in the discourses now to be developed about conflict. If conflict is essential in life, then life may also be essential for conflict. A conflict does not experience happiness-suffering. But a conflict may have life-like properties, such as a life-cycle - to be explored in Chapter 2 here. And there is a manifest and a latent side to conflict, the manifest side being identified with behavior, and the latent aspect with attitude and contradiction.

At the manifest, empirical, observed level, conflict participants can only experience,
observe behavior, called B. Both A and C are at the latent, theoretical, inferred level. The three together add up to the conflict triangle in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1  The Conflict Triangle

- Manifest level: Empirical, observed, conscious
- Latent level: Theoretical, inferred, subconscious

This triangle can be used to trace and identify flows in all six directions, starting anywhere. Thus, a contradiction may be experienced as a frustration, where a goal is being blocked by something, leading to aggressiveness as an attitude and to aggression as behavior according to a famous and fruitful hypothesis, useful as long as it is not taken as an iron-clad law. Aggressive behavior may be incompatible with the other party's concept of happiness (unless we are talking of a sado-masochist combination), leading to a new contradiction on top of the old one, possibly stimulating more aggressiveness and aggression in all parties concerned. Violence breeds violence, the triangle becomes the projection of a spiral that may run its course the same way as a fire: stopping when the house is burnt down. The parties may burn out in the A corner from emotional exhaustion or in the B corner from physical incapacitation. However, A and B may also be restrained, and/or the contradiction, C, may be superseded. Unlimited escalation to the bitter end is no absolute law. There are still humans around in our conflict-ridden world.

A basic problem is that such processes may also start in A or B. One party may have accumulated negative attitudes (aggressiveness) or negative behavioral inclination (a capacity, predisposition for aggression); and when 'something comes along' that looks like a problem, either A or B, or both, may be activated and hitched on to the new problem. If A takes the form of aggressiveness, both as hostile emotions and as negative cognitions of Other ('Feindbild') we may talk about negative conflict energy being hitched on to a contradiction, possibly the result of accumulated experiences in the past, for instance from approaching conflicts too negatively. But, in the spirit of what has been pointed out above, the conflict energy can also be positive - a generally loving, compassionate, accepting attitude and positive cognitions of Others ('Freundbilder') and of Self. Accumulated conflict experiences may lead to positive personality transformations; they can also lead to transformations in very negative directions, producing bitter personalities, filled with resentment.

We assume much of this to be subconscious, hidden to the persons or actors. In a dispute the two actors may observe each other's behavior, perhaps also their own. Through inner dialogues they may increase their own awareness of A and C, and check their own findings through outer dialogues with each other, becoming each other's guides in understanding themselves. In a dilemma the person/actor is more lonely. The inner and outer dialogues coincide, both becoming like playing a game of chess with oneself. Training helps; but an integrated, not a split personality is the goal of that inner dialogue exercise.
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We can now talk about A-, B-, and C-oriented approaches to conflict, and also of A, B, and C realities: a total of eight possibilities:

- A=0, B=0, C=0 total non-conflict, the state of death
- A=0, B=0, C=0 attitudes/assumptions prepared
- A=0, B, C=0 behavioral patterns prepared
- A, B, C=0 attitudes/assumptions behavior prepared
- A=0, B=0, C contradiction is there and nothing else
- A, B=0, C the subconscious level fully prepared
- A=0, B, C ritualistic conflict behavior
- A, B, C a fully articulated conflict

Each case has a story to tell, as indicated in keyword form. Reading vertically from the top, we may speculate about conflicts in search of articulation, or completion, starting in any corner, adding the others, which evidently can be done in six different ways. But we may also read upwards, and speculate about disarticulation of conflicts, with attitudes dying out, behavioral patterns receding into oblivion and contradictions dissolving. Sometimes by themselves, but very often conscious intervention is needed, by Self(Selves) or Other(s).

A (complete) conflict is a syndrome, a triadic concept. Great care should be exercised: the statement 'this is a conflict' may become a self-fulfilling or self-denying prophecy. People are told they have a conflict, so they start behaving, feeling, and acting accordingly, seeing contradictions where there are none. Or they may disarticulate, for instance fearing the consequences of accepting the conflict diagnosis. As a result, they may never face their own conflicts.

1.3 Actor Conflicts and Structure Conflicts

To understand better the manifest/latent dialectic, which is also in part a consciousness/subconsciousness dialectic, consider the following questions: could we have a conflict only at the manifest level? Or, only at the latent level? The answers given here will be no to the former and yes to the latter, for the following reasons.

Of course we can observe a person/actor or two at total ease or total dis-ease, or both, with themselves, at the B level. We may talk about 'tension' if the dis-ease takes the upper hand, and about 'dis-tension' in the opposite case, noting that the two do not exclude each other. However, neither tension nor distension (or its positive aspect, attraction) presupposes a conflict anywhere. People may behave the way they tend to behave—like devils or angels, both or neither—depending on personalities, which certainly may be shaped by conflicts in the past. Place two persons filled with resentment next to each other, and verbal and/or physical animosity starts flowing. But for a conflict diagnosis to be justified there has to be an identifiable contradiction between the two that can be used to formulate reasonable hypotheses about the total formation and its dynamic under various circumstances, its transformation.

Imagine then that we have identified a content/contradiction, maybe also assumptions/attitudes, and that the party or parties are unaware of what is taking place within and between them. What would be the prognosis following that diagnosis? That sooner or later there will be behavioral manifestations.

A crucial distinction can now be made between direct and indirect conflict, or actor conflict and structural conflict, depending on the extent to which the conflict has become not only articulated, but manifest—meaning overt, explicit, observed, conscious. Let us
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start with the dilemma (one party, two goals) and then move on to the dispute (two parties, one goal, 'bone of contention', Streitopfer).

**Actor conflict**: A and C both conscious.

**Structural conflict**: A and C both subconscious.

Of course, B, the behavior, is always manifest, observed and not only inferred; otherwise it is not behavior. As mentioned above, it can be fully autistic, not related to any adequately composed A, B, C triangle. The party simply behaves, something is moving, including the special case of standstill. Interest focuses on A and C, starting with A: the inner person, the attitudes and assumptions. The personality.

The subdivision of the personality into cognitions, volitions, and emotions is useful. Of course the intellectual maps, the wants, drives etc. and feelings are strongly related to each other. In an actor conflict, the actor is a subject, conscious of what is (cognition), what s/he wants (volition) and for that reason ought to be, and how s/he feels (emotion), e.g., about the relation between is and ought. If what ought to be also is, then s/he may report 'I feel just fine, thank you'; if not 'I feel terrible' might be the verbal formulation of the tormented internal state of affairs. We would generally assume that emotions are better guides to real goals than cognitions.

However, under A we have also included 'assumptions'; these we can now interpret as pre-cognitions, pre-volitions and pre-emotions in the deeper layers of the personality, between the conscious and the unconscious, not easily available for recall. Professional help may be needed. One approach, as Freud told us, is to use dreams, debris from the filing process of cognitions/volitions/emotions in personality files prepared in the pre-emotions/pre-volitions/pre-cognition, to understand how these deeper layers are organized.

Then, the C corner, the contradiction between goal-states. To lift C up in the daylight, making it manifest, means consciousness about where the incompatibility is located: what goal-states stand in the way of each other. The actor then has a map to the contradiction included in his or her cognitions. We are now dealing with a conscious person, aware not only of his/her own images, wants, and feelings, but also of what stands in the way. A subject, in other words, ready to preside over a sentence with predicate and object; ready to act, with a purpose, not merely behaving.

What can we call this process of lifting A and C up from the subconscious, partly even from the unconscious? Following Paulo Freire we refer to it as conscientization and to the opposite process as deconscientization. The process is basic, for how can a conflict be consciously transformed unless the parties to a conflict are conscious subjects, true actors? Otherwise, the conflict will transform the actors as objects, parties to the conflict, not the other way round. The party is only a passenger taken for a ride, not a driver presiding over the process.

Yet conscientization is only a necessary, not a sufficient condition, as will become clear in Chapter 3 below about conflict transformation. In addition, the actor will be transformed anyhow, but with consciousness added more able to steer that transformation, including of her/himself. At this point we may mention a very simple reason why conscientization is only a necessary condition: the image of the conflict may be false or inadequate. There is such a thing as false consciousness, as Marx told us. We, party to the conflict or not, construct an image of the conflict, complete with A, B, and C of ourselves and the other party. Whether this is done by the participants or by the observer, that image will always remain an hypothesis, to be tested again and again and to be revised. False consciousness means a disconfirmed hypothesis, an unrealistic image, and that can and does happen to all of us.
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If conscientization is such a good thing, why do we conceptually open for its negation, deconscientization? Because not only does that happen - conflicts are forgotten, even repressed - but this may also be necessary, even desirable. We cannot be conscious all the time of all the conflicts to which we are parties, one way or the other. We should be willing and also able to 'retrieve' them after having saved them, to use an adequate computer metaphor that today is a part of world culture. We cannot have them equally present at all times and all the time. Some selectiveness is a condition for human and social survival. But store them: 'save', do not 'delete'.

Next, a key question and very far from the realms of the metaphysical: Who does all this, who is the subject of the conscientization process? Who lifts cognitions/volitions/emotions up in the consciousness? Not the subconscious/unconscious itself, if we assume that the mind cannot possibly be both subject and object at the same time of this process. Or, is that more of a conceptual/linguistic than a psychological problem? The answer preferred by the present author is to use a third category as a constituent of homo sapiens in addition to body and mind (personality, the seat of pre-cognitions, volitions and emotions): the spirit. We can conceive of the spirit as the seat of reflection, on or over what goes on in body and mind, in soma and psyche. That reflective capacity starts working on A, B, and C, and the result is, in principle, a conflict image that is fully articulated, including in the consciousness of the actor.

Would this process differ depending on whether we are dealing with a dispute or a dilemma? Not much. The dilemma is made conscious in one party through inner dialogue. In the dispute we are dealing with more than one party where the conscientization takes place. They develop images, more or less realistic, of the conflict they are involved in. Should we demand that the images coincide? No, but comparing images through outer dialogue is obviously an important aspect of a conflict transformation process, only noting that coincidence does not necessarily mean that the shared image is realistic. The shared image may be unrealistic the same way because of shared pre-cognitions. The test lies in what happens later.

Let us now turn to what is here called structural or indirect conflict with neither A nor C present in the consciousness, but embedded in the subconscious. Prying it loose from that subconscious may be painful, even almost impossible. There is a contradiction, but no awareness of it. There is not even awareness of a goal, in other words no volition, and consequently no open feelings, because there is no awareness of any is/ought coincidence or not. There is not even false consciousness, since there is no consciousness at all. What do we have then, with what right do we talk about a conflict at all?

For the case of the dilemma of a person, the answer is obvious: this is precisely what the whole psychoanalytical tradition is about. The contradiction, e.g. between id and superego, lies in the deeper recesses of the personality, or in the structure of the (inner) person system, a formulation with its homologue in the next paragraph. But the contradiction between these pre-volitions is not accessible to the spirit of the holder of the contradiction. That does not imply that she cannot feel 'terrible', and behave strangely, but there is no consciousness of the conflict triangle, or if there is any, it is far from realistic. On the surface, often observable to Others more than to Self, patterns of behavior show up that are classified as 'symptoms', meaning indicative of A and C very deep down. But conscientization would seem to be beyond the capacity of the person. Intervention may be called for, in the form of professional help. How professional that help is is another question, to be discussed to some extent in Chapter 4.

Let us then turn to the dispute. The parties are on a collision course, there is a contradiction. But they are aware neither of the contradiction, nor the goal-states that define it. Emotions may be unrelated to contradictions in their spirit, which may not even be working on the problem. The contradiction lies in the system tying them together; or to use the
homologous formulation: in the structure of the social system. Take the two genders in a patriarchy: obviously there is a contradiction, and it was there before Henrik Ibsen wrote A Doll's House and increased the collective awareness by a quantum jump. In the same vein the contradiction in the structure of the world system between the USA and Cuba did not start with Fidel Castro making 'trouble' (a highly B-oriented category), nor was the inter-nation conflict between certain Native American and Anglo-Saxon tribes in North America something that started with 'Indian troubles'. They were manifestations.

But in these latter cases were we not dealing with consciously held goals? To some extent, yes: but there was hardly any awareness of the entire scope of what was at stake.

We need a concept for subconsciously held goals, goals that are objectively there even if the subject is not aware of them. We shall refer to them as *interests*, and to consciously held goals as *values*. They can both be material or non-material. There is no assumption that those subconscious interests are material and the values are 'ideological' and hence non-material. Both can be both; it is conscientization that makes the difference.

We could now say that in an intra-personal conflict the person has an interest in giving id its due, and an interest in giving super-ego its due. The level of consciousness is very low or zero. But through conscientization, these interests may become values: the person as an actor, as a subject, may now value both of them consciously, decide there is an incompatibility, and opt for one or the other. A consistent preference for id will define a person who is highly sensual; a consistent preference for super-ego will define a person who is highly ethical. Other word-pairs are somatic/spiritual, materialist/idealist, epicurean/platonic, or Sorokin's 'sensate/ideational'. Then Sorokin goes on to define the integrated combination of the two, referring to it as 'idealist' and the non-integrated combination as eclectic/amalgam/congery. Freud refers to the integrated synthesis as the emergence of a strong ego, embedded in the personality as a patterned cognition/volition/emotion syndrome, capable of producing and reproducing behavior that gives both their due in a reasonable balance. A non-integrated mix of id and super-ego with a very weak ego is also conceivable, however; but all of this belongs to transformation theory.

What we have done here is only to test the conceptual apparatus.

Actor-conflicts are conscious, structural conflicts are not; they can both be of the dilemma or dispute types. And, as indicated above: there are some other in-between types or truncated conflicts that are not fully articulated at the conscious level, or not at all. But this distinction will do.

1.4 Complexity: Elementary and Complex Conflicts

We are now in a position to bring together much of what has been said above in an overriding scheme based on two simple variables: m, the number of actors in a conflict, and n, the number of themes or issues or simply goals that enter in their (intra-action) dilemmas and (inter-action) disputes.

Consider the scheme set out in Figure 1.2. The figure is simple: a conflict with m actors and n goals is found in position (m,n). To handle an (m,n) conflict intellectually one has to keep in mind at least the m actors and the n goals, meaning m + n items in the formation.

We could now define the complexity, c, of a conflict as m + n, but we shall prefer the formula c = m + n - 2 (or c = m x n - 1):

- c < 0: structural conflict, neither actors nor goals (0,0)
- c = 0: one actor, one unrealised goal: frustration (1,1)
- c = 1: elementary conflicts: dilemmas (1,2) or disputes (2,1)
- c > 1: complex conflicts (m,n)
CONFLICT FORMATIONS

Figure 1.2  The Number of Actors (m), and the number of goals (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m=n</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>(1,n)</th>
<th>(2,n)</th>
<th>(3,n)</th>
<th>(m,n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m=3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2,3)</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m=2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(1,2)</td>
<td>(2,2)</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>(m,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m=1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(1,1)</td>
<td>(2,1)</td>
<td>3,1</td>
<td>(m,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m=0</td>
<td>(0,0)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m=1</td>
<td>m=2</td>
<td>m=3</td>
<td>m=m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X: combinations that are omitted as empty or uninteresting.

With complexity as a key conflict dimension, we introduce a one-dimensional perspective with considerable explanatory and praxeological power. Structural conflict, frustration, and elementary and complex actor conflicts, whether of the dilemma or dispute types or both, are very different phenomena. But this perspective invites us to handle them together, and in a dynamically highly relevant manner.

The transformation from structural to actor conflict (and vice versa) has been explored above under the heading of conscientization/deconscientization. New here is the notion that this transformation passes through the case of frustration where one actor has one goal but the goal-state is blocked. There is a barrier. This is a zero conflict, but similar enough to be an important part of general conflict theory, among other reasons because of the frustration-aggression (or destruction) hypothesis, and the equally important frustration-creation hypothesis.

An actor, unconscious of what is happening to him/her in the structure of the person, social, or world system, may have a frustration image as a passing stage before an image of a fully fledged conflict emerges – like working-class frustration at never realizing middle-class goals, or the frustration of women at not being in control of their own life situation. Later on the actor may see clearly that something very concrete stands in the way – class society, patriarchy – with very concrete actors on the other side. The frustration phase becomes like a crust of ice on a frosty day as the consciousness passes from the cold waters underneath into the clear air above.

Once there, the consciousness (meaning the human spirit) is faced with an equally crucial problem: simplification versus complexification. Here are three basic conflict hypotheses:

*Thesis 1*: Real-life conflicts are usually very complex; elementary conflicts, (1,2) or (2,1), are for textbooks.

*Thesis 2*: The more complex the conflict, the more openings for nonviolent, creative transformation of the conflict.

*Thesis 3*: In the heat of conflict tension, one of the first victims is conflict complexity.

Complexity is then reduced through the process of polarization, leading to the nakedness of elementary conflicts, the cruel choice between this or that, we or they. Obviously Thesis 2 is the good news and Thesis 3 the bad news.

The more complex the conflict image, the more openings for transformation – as will
be explored later. This should argue in favor of complexification, splitting up actors and goals into sub-actors and sub-goals and bringing in other actors and goals, transforming here and there, hoping for some roll-up effect.

The problem, the Scylla, is that the complexity may become too great for the human mind to handle. If we go by the magic number 7 as the maximum of elements most humans can handle creatively, the upper limit would be 3 or 4 actors and 3 or 4 goals, in other words \( c = 4, 5 \) or 6. Thus, simplification may also be called for, with the danger - the Charybdis - that simplification becomes polarization, down to elementary conflicts. The crucial problem is how to steer a course between Scylla and Charybdis, i.e. around \( c = 5 \).

## 1.5 Typology: Conflict Spaces

Conflict presupposes goal-seeking systems, goal-seeking systems presuppose life; and life can be found many places. The typology that will be developed here is based on the six spaces found throughout the pages of this book, Nature, Person, Society, World, Culture, and Time, combined with the dilemma-dispute distinction that will be referred to as intra/inter. This gives us the typology shown in Figure 1.3.

![Figure 1.3 A Typology of Conflict Spaces](image)

For Person, Society, and World, dilemmas and disputes have already been introduced, only noting that the inter-World dispute at present is an empirically empty category. The inter-Society category is certainly empirically very rich; this particular combination is dealt with under the heading of 'international relations' ('world studies' would have been better), with inter-country and inter-nation relations as special cases.

But for Nature, Culture, and Time something more has to be said. An example of inter-Nature would be inter-species conflict, overemphasized by Darwin in the 'survival of the fittest' metaphor, tempered by Kropotkin's 'mutual aid'.

The intra-species combination might direct our attention to deeper contradictions, e.g. in the genetic codes of a species. The same applies to intra-Culture. However, for the conflict paradigm, or even conflict concept to apply, we shall assume the sides of the cultural dilemma (e.g., freedom versus equality in Western political culture) to have human representatives, as we would assume for inter-cultural disputes. Here the reader might try placing a copy of the Bible and of the Qur'an next to each other on a table, watching for tensions to emerge, inside one or the other, or between the two of them. Do the same with a Christian and Islamic theologian (at rather than on the table) and the results will be considerably more dynamic. Live carriers of goals are indispensable for conflict to emerge.
How about Time? One important interpretation would be as synchronic and
diachronic conflict, e.g., intra- and inter-generational conflict, the latter being highly
meaningful in connection with environmental deterioration. One generation lives not
only at the expense of nature, but also at the expense of posterity: après nous le déluge. 8

Figure 1.3 can be used to illustrate many processes in conflict and in conflict images.
The ultimate outcome of an intra-personal dilemma can be withdrawal, possibly gener-
atizing to apathy or schizophrenia, resulting in Self-destruction to the point of suicide.
Similarly, the ultimate outcome of an inter-personal dispute can be withdrawal, or peren-
tial tension, resulting in Other-destruction to the point of homicide. The processes do not
exclude each other; they may coincide. And then both conflicts may be used in a creative
and life-enhancing way.

The intra-Societal dilemma is then seen as a collectively shared intra-personal
dilemma, such as the French bourgeoisie dilemma between French-socialist-Jewish and
German-Nazi-anti-Semitic. One possibility is apathy, like the French reaction to the
German invasion of May 1940. After some time, however, the contradiction within will
become a contradiction without, here between résistance and collaborateurs.

And correspondingly for the intra-World dilemmas found all over the planet at present:
as growth versus distribution or growth versus environment, sometimes leading to apa-
thy, but mostly to sharp polarization during the Cold War between a capitalist bloc
emphasizing growth (often without any distribution) and a socialist bloc emphasizing dis-
tribution (often without any growth). The growth camp won, probably also winning
over the environment camp despite, or because of, verbal compromises like 'sustainable
development'.

Many efforts have been made to trace causal processes in Figure 1.3 (or some similar
figure); particularly the intellectually heroic Freudian effort to root such processes in
intra-personal contradictions (between id and super-ego) and the Marxian attempt to
root them in intra-social contradictions (between capital and labor, or, more subtly,
between means and modes of production). Not denying causal flows, reductionist efforts
to root them in the same type are doomed to fail. What can be argued, however, is a high
level of isomorphism between different types of conflict processes. Using one as the pro-
totype, a causal chain may be traced through the human observer, imposing the same
metaphor process on all of them.

1.6 Conflict Formations and Conflict Transformations

Much has been said above about actors and goals, about their numbers and how they
relate to each other in the structure of the person, social and world systems (and, we may
add, in nature, in culture, and over time). The time has now come to emphasize that goals
are certainly not necessarily incompatible and actors are not necessarily in dilemmas or
disputes or more or less complex combinations of them.

Let us refer to any goal-seeking system simply as a formation. It is not merely a set or
listing of actors and goals; there is a structure (e.g., an interaction structure) in the sys-
tems referred to above. There is interdependence. A formation can then be harmonious or
symbiotic (meaning co-life-enhancing) to the extent that attaining one goal-state is cor-
related with attaining another. A harmonious marriage has this characteristic, the sukha
of one going together with the sukha of the other. But if the sukha of one goes together
with the dukkha (suffering) of the other, we are obviously dealing with a disharmonious or
anti-biotic formation, life-enhancing for one at the expense of being life-destuctive for the
other. The formation has become a conflict formation.

The obvious has to be stated again and again: any real-life formation has both
PART II: CONFLICT THEORY

harmonious and disharmonious aspects. We will find conflict and cooperation, Darwin and Kropotkin, side by side. In a conflict formation, the disharmonious aspect of the formation is dominant. But in no way should that make us blind to the cooperative, harmonious aspects that may very well be the basis on which conflict transformation can build.

Notes


3. In his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, not worrying too much about whether the felicitous term introduced by Freire is used exactly the same way here. We could also have used a word based on 'consciousness', such as 'consciousness-formation' (in German: Bewusstmachung). This term, however, is not easily negated in English (in German Unbewusstmachung would be possible). However, Freire's use of conscience rather than consciousness points to volition and emotion, not only to cognition.

4. A convenient assumption for us humans would be that the spirit is the differentia specifica that distinguishes us from plants and animals. Maybe. Never having been a dolphin myself, I would prefer an agnostic position.

5. The whole theory of cosmology, the deep culture of a civilization, is designed to deal with shared pre-cognitions, in the collective subconscious (Part IV of this book).

6. Thus, one thing is what actors say they want (this is the level where political science tends to stop); another, what they believe they want (this is where historians may come in and point out that this may differ from what they said); yet another, what they subconsciously want, they want it but do not know that themselves (this is where psycho-analysts and functionalist sociologists/anthropologists enter); again, yet another, what they will eventually want, with more information, better analysis, higher levels of consciousness (here Marxists, realist school JR people and others are willing to offer advice). My own position would be in favor of all, there is something to be gleaned analytically and practically from all perspectives. A peace research would not, indeed should not, be totally free from the moralism of the last perspective.

7. Person is sometimes called Self, sometimes Human, but here we shall use 'person' as intra-personal versus inter-personal conflicts is frequently found. And Society-World can be made much more refined, starting with Micro-Meso-Macro, specifying to Family/Household-Local-District-Country-Region-World.

8. According to The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 492) wrongly attributed to Louis XV (ruling 1714–1774). But whoever said it at the time, after me, the flood was not a bad prediction. The French Revolution struck 15 years after his death as one of those big intra-time (kairos) contradictions that had enormous inter-time (kronos) implications.
2
Conflict Life-Cycles

2.1 Deep Culture, Time Cosmology, and Social Cosmology

We have a conflict formation, we are looking for a conflict transformation: in between lies conflict dynamics, the life-cycle of a conflict. The term itself directs attention to such figures of thought as birth/genesis, maturation/dynamics, death/(re-, dis-)solution. But, as will be shown below, these terms may also be highly misleading, or at least culturally biased.

The deep culture or cosmology of a civilization obviously conditions not only the perception of conflict life-cycles, but also the actual behavior in conflict, with a major bearing on conflict transformation. The level of knowledge of this factor, by participants or outsiders, will also affect the outcome. That level is not necessarily higher among insiders than outsiders to the civilization, since cosmology by definition is rooted in the collective subconscious, not in the individual consciousness. For any student of human conflict, this type of knowledge is essential.1

In the following, two civilizations, referred to as the hard Occident and the Buddhist civilizations, will be explored for their image of conflict life-cycles. Christianity (with Judaism and Islam), and Buddhism, are actually mega-civilizations defining Occident and Orient respectively. Ideas about how these basic religions view conflict should be a useful guide.8

Using the conceptualization of time as point of departure some insights come readily. If Christian time is bounded, with a beginning, a genesis, and an end with apocalyptic—catharsis, then we would also expect the view of a conflict life-cycle to be encased within finite time. A conflict would be seen as having a clear beginning, birth or genesis, and a clear ending, after a crisis, as apocalypsis or catharsis. The cosmology will impose itself, demanding corresponding behavior and attitudes.

By contrast, Buddhist time is infinite. For all practical purposes there is no beginning and no end, although there is the transcendence of nirvana, a transformation to other unknown and unknowable types of existence. Conflict would be seen as interminable, no beginning and no end, flowing from eternity to eternity like an infinite river, possibly with a delta somewhere infinitely far out where the energies accumulated in that river pour into the ocean and take on other forms. The conflict is transformed, preferably to a higher (meaning less violent) level, but not extinguished.4 Time cosmology will be imposed on the conceptualization of conflict, demanding this image of the process, expecting actors and commentators to feel, behave, talk, and write accordingly, imposing neither beginning nor end.

Then, add to time cosmology an element of social cosmology: individual vs. collective/social. Using the knot-net metaphor,4 which is more real, the knots or the net? The Christian soul being individual, social reality will have to be conceived of as individual knots and not as social nets. For Mahayana Buddhism individual connectedness is what is reality; separable and eternal, individual souls, an illusion. Nets are real, knots not.
Again, this will affect the way conflict is viewed. Whereas Christianity would individualize conflicts, even to the point of seeing conflict as originating in one individual who through the conflict may affect the lives of Others, Buddhism would see conflict as arising within a collectivity of significant Others. That collectivity does not necessarily have to be synchronic. The net is what matters, sideward and diachronically backwards and forwards, relating to sentient life in present, past, and future. Reality is unbounded in social space as well as in time.

Christianity will not deny individual connectedness in the sense that the acts of one person can affect the life of Others. But the ethical unit of account is the individual endowed with the capacity to will—hence not merely behaving, but acting. An individual is an actor. For Buddhism the ethical unit of account is collective, denying neither individual existence nor capacity to will. But responsibility does not lie with individuals alone.

To return to the river metaphor: the Buddhist conflict river flows from eternity to eternity, now quick, now slow, with eddies curling back on themselves, sometimes in cycles, sometimes in giant waterfalls, sometimes uphill, sometimes not, with tributaries and forcing paths. Like the samsara, the birth-rebirth cycle. What could be a corresponding Christian water metaphor? A geyser, arising out of troubled waters underneath, rising to a climax, possibly released as evaporation, dwindling, disappearing, or spreading, moving others to a cataclysm?

"Individualized conflict in finite time" vs. "collectivized conflict in infinite time" are very different points of departure for conflict theory and conflict praxis. The first image lends itself epistemologically to Occidental atomism, nomothetic (generalizing) conflictology, with deductive theory-formation, possibly based on a typology of actors. The second image lends itself to the dialectics of Oriental holism with ideographic conflictology, there being one connected humankind, or life-kind.

2.2 Christian and Buddhist Time and Conflict Cosmology

With this general conceptualization we can now turn to more concrete images of conflict transformation. Both civilizations have strong views on disharmony, with precepts. Both of them see harmony as coming to the person who follows the precepts, be they the Ten Commandments of Judeo-Christianity or the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism. Conflicts or disharmony come to the one who strays away from the Law, the Law of God in Christianity and the Law of karma in Buddhism. God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, caused by nothing but Himself, holding individuals accountable. Likewise, the karma is an omnipresent dialectic between an ethical determinism making human beings accountable to themselves ("whatever you say and whatever you do, sooner or later comes back to you"), and the possibility of improving one’s karma through acts of volition, the individual will.

The Law comes to human beings by being received, not only in the sense of being heard and understood, but in the sense of being internalized as binding. What Moses and Jesus Christ did for Judeo-Christianity, the Buddha did for Buddhism; the Law being above all of them, applying also to them. What they both did was to spell out the Law, as articles of faith and commandments, 3 and 10 of them in Christianity (5 in the pillars of Islam), 4 and 8 in Buddhism. With these the moral base or benchmark has been laid. Infraction leads to disharmony. Thereby conflicts arise, possibly with others, for sure with the Law, and thus with themselves. In Christianity in addition with God, with the Christ; in Buddhism in the sense of creating bad karma, both the individual karma and the karm shared with others.
Any infraction will be detected. The moral value of an act is registered by an omniscient God; its merit/demerit deposited in the omnipresent karma. God adjudicates, as salvation or damnation. The karma improves or deteriorates. What then?

From this point on, similarities between the two traditions in this double reading break down, and two different flow-charts will have to be established, one Christian, one Buddhist. There are similarities, but also conspicuous dissimilarities. Thus, there is similarity between the Christian wish to improve one's standing with God if a sin has been committed, and the Buddhist wish to improve the karma after demeritorious acts. There is similarity in the view that the individual alone may be incapable and needs help from God (Christianity) or from Others (Buddhism). This in itself is already a dissimilarity in approaches, with profound bearing on how conflict life-cycles are conceptualized.

The Christian process is a complex chain of sin, submission to God, confession of the sin committed, repentance, penitence, atonement, and possible forgiveness (by God). The final decision rests with God, and Him alone; His will is the Law. He alone decides by an act of grace over salvation and damnation.

Basic to this approach is its pervasive verticality. The sin committed is against God's Law and His Son: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me' (Matthew 25:40, also see Matthew 25:45). One's relation to God has to be repaired, whereas the victim is secondary. The moral content of an act lies in its relation to God, because His is the Law. With that relation restored, the sin is canceled and the person starts with a clean slate. Born again.

Christianity distinguishes between peccatum and peccator, the sin and the sinner, condemning the former, with a way out for the latter. This assures finiteness in time and individualization in space. The conflict process starts with an act of sin by a fallible human actor, and ends with an act of grace by the infallible God. The focus is all the time on the sinner, the one who infraction the Law - the rest is a context. The stage is then set for a possible repetition of the sequence, or no more sin, or for the final, the mortal sin, the point of no return.

The Buddhist process introduces a very different sequence. If there is no God, no heaven, no hell, no eternal salvation or damnation, no eternal and separable individual soul - then any demerit is relative to God nor to oneself, but to the net of significant Others. Only in that community can the demerit be canceled. One way would be through action dialogue, undoing the evil, restoring relationships through merit. Another would start with a verbal dialogue, identifying why and how that bad collective karma developed and how it can be improved toward ever higher levels; then going ahead and doing so.

Basic to this paradigm is its pervasive horizontality. The demerit of an act lies in what it does to other forms of sentient life. The act cannot be undone, but that relation can be changed. The significant Others do not have to be alive as identifiable individuals today; the relation of demerit may also be to life already dead or not yet (re)born. In other words, there is no way of individualizing the relation. The relation, bad or good, is in the collectivity, and there it will remain, from eternity and to eternity.

A non-finite time perspective is guaranteed through responsibility not only for acts committed in the past, but for all acts of merit and demerit affecting that karma, regardless of when and where. Only by assuming full responsibility for the merits and demerits of that collectivity can the illusion of individual separateness and permanence be eliminated.

Karma is a very holistic concept transcending individual life-spans in time and space. At the same time it is also very dialectic, the demerit introducing a contradiction in karma to be superseded through dialogues with words and action; through meritorious acts, deeds. If this is the general way of viewing the human condition, then it makes little sense to separate conflicts from each other, sticking individual name-tags on them and
bracketing them in time and space. To label one part of this holon guilty and the other non-guilty makes no more sense than to label the right hand guilty and the left hand non-guilty in a crime of two-handed strangulation. As merit and demerit is shared, its distribution on individuals becomes a metaphysical question. Any merit is (partly) due to inspiration from my brothers and sisters (significant Others) anyhow; so is any demerit, because they should have prevented me from straying.

What is not metaphysical is the willingness to do something about it, each part of the holon making contributions to navigate the collective Self, with parts dying and reborn, through the complex topology of that Buddhist River of Life. Christianity offers eternal life, in salvation or damnation, but in practice is concerned with finite life between biological birth and death. Buddhism offers no resurrection carnis; this biological life stops with the death of the body. In practice, however, it conceives of life as an eternal flow of energy from eternity to eternity, lived with less suffering and more bliss to Self and Other the better the interconnectedness sideways, backwards, and forwards. For the Christian there is no appeal because there is no second life; the split second here on earth determines eternity. For the Buddhist eternity itself is the time perspective for improving the karma, life being an interconnected chain of opportunities to do so. Nothing is final, there are always opportunities to improve the karma.

Comparing the two views which have been presented here in somewhat overdrawn fashion, one cannot help feeling that whereas Christianity makes guilt too dichotomous, Buddhism draws no line, preferring the joint search for causes of bad karma. Where Christianity is too asymmetric, Buddhism is too symmetric. And whereas Christianity is cruel in its insistence that this highly finite life determines eternal afterlife, Buddhism is too gentle in giving us unlimited time to improve our karma. Along both dimensions in-between positions could be designed, and an eclectic compromise might be preferable.

But we are not free to design our civilizations; they are given. The fact is that these two perspectives on conflict life-cycles exist: one as an infinite number of finite conflict life-cycles between being born in a state of original sin and redemption through a divine act of grace, and the other as a finite number of infinite life-cycles, starting nowhere and anywhere, with ups and downs, ultimately ending in the ever-flowing ocean of eternity.

2.3 Secular Versions of Christian and Buddhist Perspectives

So much for Christian and Buddhist perspectives, both religious in the sense of relinking with that out there, with God or with karma. One of them demands that we bend to the will of God, the other that we bend karma to our desire for satori, enlightenment. But how many, and who, believe in the reality of the Law of God and the Law of karma today? There are processes of secularization in the Christian and Buddhist civilizations, and the processes sap both perspectives of much of their content. Nevertheless, in line with general cosmology theory, we would expect the form of these perspectives, such as finite-atmistic versus infinite-holistic, to survive content variation. 8

The Occidental secular perspective is known as the Western legal tradition, meaning that which the Roman, German, and English legal traditions have in common. Transcendental references are found, but they are ritualistic. Basically, the ultimate sources of Law are in the successors to God as the Prime Mover, meaning the constituent legal act by King or Assembly, self-constituted as their own causes and sources for domestic law; and the United Nations for international law. Recipients are successor Kings—Assemblies—General Assemblies; producers of lesser laws, defining more or less explicitly the prescribed, the permitted, and the proscribed. An act detected and registered as proscribed is a transgression: the actor is then adjudicated in accordance with the
laws of due process. The verdict remains equally dichotomous: guilty or not guilty. Then comes a sentence, today in terms of money (fines) or time (prison), which may be adjusted to make the guilty—not guilty dichotomy less sharp. Heavy punishment may be alleviated through an act of grace. Afterwards the slate is clean again, in theory, at least after a period of probation.

In short, we find similarity in all essentials. The verticality is still there. The sin, now called a ‘crime’, is seen as committed upwards, against King-State-People. The victim recedes into oblivion. Penitence, now called ‘punishment’, is only external, inflicted from the outside, and on the outside of the evil-doer – the pursuer or the body. For a time, the complex spiritual process induced by Christian teachings was kept alive inside prisons; now it is for all practical purposes defunct. Pay, do time, quits. Only recently has there been a trend to sentence law-breakers to work for the community, and to compensate the victim.

We would expect something similar in the secularized versions of Buddhism, only with less emphasis on the written law and the ‘whodunit’ than in the West, and with more emphasis on some type of reconciliation. But rather than the search for causes by going into oneself, meditating on the wrong done, and then a patient dialogue with the offended Other, this process is perhaps also increasingly left to a third party – in Japan often to the proverbial police in the police ‘box’. The task of verbalization, and the search for diagnosis, prognosis and therapy, is left to others who then become conflict processors. Lay or professional, there is less self-reliance and as a consequence less maturation in the conflict parties themselves, nor improvement of the karma that is theirs, only a smoothening of the relations between them. The goal is outer (B), not inner (A) change. The metaphysical, spiritual underpinning of Buddhist conflict processes is waning.

The basic conceptual structure may still remain at the deeper level, as less of a tendency to see conflict as starting with one act and ending with another, and less of a tendency to see conflict as rooted in one actor and not in a relationship. But the conflict conceptualization is becoming verticalized, and not only in Japan with its long feudal tradition opposed to the ideal ‘temple and the tank’ autonomous village of classical Buddhism. As a consequence we would expect law, lawyers, and litigation to be on the increase in the Buddhist part of the world as the Buddhist perspective becomes secularized.

Is there a middle way position between the spirituality of the past, often very obscurantist, and contemporary conflict transformation processes, often steered by cynical outsiders who demand no inner, personal effort at all, only, possibly, a consultation fee? In the West there is the gentler Christianity of a softer Occident II, in the Orient a possible revial of Buddhist patterns of conflict processing. Buddhist spirituality may also prove more acceptable to Westerners whose God has died, than a Christianity with a God very much alive to Easterners.

2.4 Some Implications at the International Level

To explore international-level implications of how conflicts are conceptualized let us compare the Việt Nam War (the Second Indochina War) and the Gulf War, both with the USA as a major party. There was a major difference between the two wars. In the Việt Nam War the USA became increasingly convinced that ‘North Việt Nam’ was guilty of some crime, and more inclined to doubt its own righteousness. This was not only because the USA finally lost the war, whatever be the reason (more military talent on the Việt Nazems side headed by a military genius of the century; the US use of conscripts, including college students, some of them conscious and mobilized against the war; the US media coming closer to reporting accurately, not ‘patriotically’). By contrast, in the Gulf
War the USA/Bush were convinced of their own righteousness and the guilt of Iraq/Saddam. As the possibly most Christian country in the world, the USA would be expected to conceive of both wars as beginning with 'sins': transgressions on the other side. Whether this is really believed at the top level of decision-making matters less, as long as the conflict discourse takes place within that mind-set. 'Throwing the first stone' is often done in Christian countries despite the warning against doing so when not innocent, and in a glass-house. You may hit yourself, a Buddhist (and Jesus) would quickly point out.

As a background to the comparison, let us take a brief glance at two recent cases made to fit the Western script, USA–Japan and USA–Germany in World War II. There were transgressions defining the beginning: Pearl Harbor 7 December 1941, and the attack on Poland 1 September 1939. There were acts defining the end: the capitulation signed in Rheims, effective 8 May 1945, and in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945. With evil acts so well defined, identifying the authors of those evil acts was an easy matter.

Verticality was imposed on the situation not only through capitulation and surrender of arms as obvious acts of submission, but through tribunals (the Nuremberg and the Far Eastern tribunals being the most famous) extracting something close to confessions, individualizing the conflict with the concept of 'war criminals' who committed 'crimes against humanity'. The structure of occupier–occupied served to institutionalize the verticality. Reparations were only one form of punishment; another being marginalization from the world by denying UN membership.

The crimes of the Axis Powers being unspeakable, proofs of basic change afterwards were called for. The opportunity came with the Berlin blockade of 1948/49 and the Korean War of 1950/53, eagerly seized upon by the two occupied countries to prove that they had indeed embraced the cause of the occupiers, particularly of the USA – not difficult, as their anti-Communist credentials were impeccable. The Allies, particularly the USA, used this occasion to exercise the divine privilege of grace, bestowing peace on them (but no formal peace treaty with Germany), restoring them to international normalcy (1951 for Japan, 1954 for Germany, 1955 for Austria). General acceptance of the process no doubt derived from following the Western script so well, with the Japanese quickly learning what to do.

The Viêt Nam War witnessed none of this. The USA did not win, so there could be no sequence initiated by Vietnamese acts of submission. However, the Viêt Name did not win either, so they could not extract submissiveness, even capitulation from the USA, to be followed by Washington tribunals for premeditated crimes against humanity committed by such US war-makers as Lyndon B. Johnson, Robert McNamara, Richard Nixon, and Henry Kissinger.

There is still general uncertainty as to how to interpret the post-Viêt Nam War situation. Given the two scripts and the role of Buddhism in the East Asian san fa (three teachings, in Viêt Nam with Confucianism and nationalism), what to expect?

We would expect the Viêt Name to be less concerned with confessions of guilt as long as the other side does not insist on being non-guilty, and very much concerned with entering a dialogue to explore what went wrong and how relations could be improved. No doubt a dialogue of that kind would be conducted in secular terms by the Viêt Names, as by the other three Mahayana Buddhist countries (China, Korea, Japan); the Buddhist aspect being in the deep structure, not on the surface. There may be reference to inscrutable 'oriental wisdom' – 'inscrutable' only to those who fail to scrutinize. All of this would be done with no expression of rancor if the rule above is adhered to, with smiles (although it should be remembered that the semantics, syntax, and pragmatics of smiles in the Orient are non-Western). The basic ingredients remain the same: much inner dialogue (also known as meditation) within, much outer dialogue between.
... How does this look to the US side? First, they might see pleas for dialogues with the USA as signs of economic despair, but refuse to engage in them lest these be used for 'propaganda purposes', fearing harsh words. The absence of 'you are guilty' finger-pointing at the USA will, in a dichotomous zero-sum discourse, be seen as a sign that the Viet Namese have turned around, no longer seeing the USA as guilty and themselves as non-guilty. The thousands of refugees will be seen as confirming the shortcomings in socialist Viet Nam. From this it does not follow that the USA was right, but nor were the Viet Namese. And the subtle smiles may be taken as signs of forgiveness for possible US wrongs. Each party interprets the same phenomenon within its own framework, remaining as far apart as ever.

The Gulf War was less ambiguous, at least so far. There was at least a clear beginning in the act of aggression committed when Iraq occupied Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The ideal end would have been not only withdrawal from Kuwait and capitulation by some Iraqi military forces, but capitulation of the Ba'ath regime with a Baghdad tribunal for Saddam Hussein, and some others, for 'crimes against humanity', followed by the Germany–Japan routine. A sense of completion of the Christian conflict life-cycle Gestalt would have ensued. The book could be closed. The temptation must have been enormous.

Let us then introduce a Buddhist perspective on the Gulf conflict. In that perspective, 2 August 1990 and 17 January 1991 are still there, so are the twelve Security Council resolutions in general and 678 ('with all necessary means') in particular. But the conflict formation now extends sideways, backwards, and forwards, relating to other actors and parties, to past history and future consequences: a much more complex view than the simplicity of international law applied (correctly) to the Iraqi transgression. That backward perspective has also been used by Germany (Versailles as act of aggression) and Japan (Western economic sanctions as acts of aggression), but in an excoriatory, not holistic manner, picking what served their own guilt-budget.

The closest Western approximation to Buddhist conflict transformation would be a multilateral conference with all issues on the table and all parties seated around the table, and time to articulate and process the conflicts in the system, preceded by meditation, and without pre-conditions. Holistic and dialectic, mature; but very rarely practiced during conflict.

Notes

1. By this is meant the collectively shared, but usually only at the subconscious level, assumptions in a culture about what is natural and normal; how things simply are.

2. Thus, when two persons in conflict meet to negotiate we are (at least) dealing with four levels: the persons; the masks they show each other; the consciously held but not necessarily revealed strategies; the individual subconscious of both parties; and the collective subconscious which may or may not be similar depending on whether they come from the same culture or not. A conflict theory based only on levels 1 and 2 is rather naive.


4. An example: in multinational states, conflicts between national groups do not disappear with a transformation to federation. But some separation and autonomy may facilitate less violent approaches, with the center of the federation as ultimate decision-maker. However, that decision-making will often be quite vertical, meaning that it could also be an exercise in structural violence. Consequently, confederation, with a very weak center, might be a transformation away from structural conflict, meaning to a higher level. Needless to say, this is a delicate balance.


6. Right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. For a beautiful discussion of Buddhist ethics and practice, see
Conflict Transformations

3.1 The Formation/Transformation/Deformation Dialectic

In a conflict there is, somewhere, a contradiction. And in a contradiction there is, somewhere, dynamism. The Daoist idea of yin/yang, one waxing, one waning, in search of a harmony point is, as is said about causality, not a law but the form of a law. At the very least it can help us see conflict as something ever-changing, ever dynamic. One may be absorbed in harmony; the other opens up. We have an intellectual handle on the conflict when we can describe the conflict formation, i.e. answer the question: which are the m actors/parties, which are the n goals, which are the incompatibilities, the contradictions? But the conflict formation is slippery: as we describe it, transformations are taking place somewhere, before our (inner or outer) eyes.

In what direction? As pointed out in the preceding chapter: Occidental thought (also see Part IV, Chapter 2) will have us believe in an Endzustand, some final state where the conflict is either solved or given up as hopeless, 'protracted', forever ongoing. A conflict solution can be defined as a new formation that is (1) acceptable to all actors, (2) sustainable by the actors. Thus, the most naive view one can possibly have of a conflict is to believe that a conflict is solved once the elites from the parties of the conflict formation have accepted the solution, as indicated by their signatures on some document outlining the new formation. Not without reason this outcome of 'diplomacy' is often referred to as a 'scrap of paper'. Why?

First, the signatories may be dishonest. Second, even if they are honest, where are the other actors, the people all over? Third, even if they also accept, where are the sustaining forces, producing the less conflictuous formation, not just reproducing the old? A less contradictory formation (C) is good, but it has to be supported by the right attitudes and assumptions (A); otherwise the prognosis will be that the wrong behavior (B) will resume and hitch on to whatever residual or new conflict material (read: contradictions) may be around. A bad rebirth.

Unfortunately, this type of naiveté is rather widespread, particularly among diplomats, probably because of the feudal nature of their institution and its function in an inter-state system with clearly feudal characteristics. But the opposite – that only 'people' can solve conflicts by providing acceptability and sustainability – is also naive. Both/and, or double-track diplomacy (elite-track and people-track, with track interaction) would be a much better formula.

Another point made above is that sustainability has to be endogenous, being rooted inside the formation. If outside parties (sometimes called mediators) use carrots and sticks, paying the parties for accepting and punishing them if they do not, then there is no real acceptability or sustainability, unless one assumes that the 'mediators' are parts of the conflict formation, not outside, and certainly not 'above'. But in that case their goals should be clearly stated and added to the conflict, which may then become a conflict deformation.
Robert Aitken, *The Practice of Perfection* (New York and San Francisco: Pantheon, 1995), particularly pp. 28–32. The Buddhist precepts, in the *pancha shilla* and the *pancha dharmas*—like the Judeo-Christian-Islamic commandments—would also define stealing, adultery, lying and using intoxicating substances as violence. In the approach of the present book they certainly fall under the definition of violence as anything that harms and hurts, particularly when basic needs are insulted (the use of intoxicating substances hurting/harming the Self to start with). In all cases we would be talking about direct violence, as acts of omission (failure to tell the truth) and/or acts of omission (lying).

7. Resurrection of the flesh, not only the soul (the tomb of Christ was empty).

8. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose* and the famous philosophy in Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa’s *Il Gattopardo* (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore): we change so that everything remains the same (‘Perché tutto resti com’è’, p. 29; una di quelle battaglie combattute affinché tutto rimanga com’è, p. 31).

Maybe it is not by chance that both come from Latin countries? Wise, and somewhat cynical? Would a German, an American, or a Scandinavian not rather assume that when something changes then it is to have impact, consequences? The more it changes, the more it changes? We change in order for the rest not to remain constant? Sounds a little trivial, not quite sophisticated.

Cosmology theory (Part IV) is precisely about things that remain constant when the surface changes. And one observation by the present author: people in Latin countries grasp this cosmology theory immediately, people in Germanic countries tend not to understand, and if they do, to reject. Both see a contradiction in an author with that type of Latin insight, and yet so action-oriented (from my point of view this is not at all a contradiction, but an effort to be realistic when dealing with deep-rooted assumptions and behavior).

9. See Part IV, Chapter 2.1 for the definition. An illustration may serve the medieval period of European history.

10. The motive behind the Soviet acceptance of Austria turning to normalcy was the hope that unification with neutrality could serve as a model for Germany. If West Germany had been one-third or one-fourth the size of East Germany, and not the other way round, maybe that would have been a US and not a Soviet motive?
In the life-cycles of conflicts there are no doubt phases that may be referred to as 'solutions', coming reasonably close to satisfying the two criteria above. But basically conflict transformation is a never-ending process. Old or new contradictions open up. Negative or, hopefully, positive conflict energy of the A or B varieties is continually injected into the formation. A solution in the sense of a steady-state, durable formation is at best a temporary goal. A far more significant goal is transformative capacity, the ability to handle the transformations in an acceptable and sustainable way. The Way is the Goal, Gandhi said. 'The process is the goal' might be our formulation; and the moment one thinks a steady-state solution has been found it is lost. Those who think they can resolve all contradictions, thereby producing a contradiction-free, surprise-free, society, are in for the greatest surprises. Like seeds under asphalt or radioactivity under Chernobyl concrete, repressed contradictions will begin sprouting. Unless the formation is dead.

At the risk of repeating this point too often: conflicts do not arise by parthenogenesis, out of nothing, ex nihilo; nor do they evaporate or dry out, whether by themselves or by intervention; nor can they be annihilated through conflict euthanasia. Even if the three groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina manage to kill each other, the conflict, like the holocaust, will live on as a memory transforming Yugoslavia, Europe, the whole world to the worse: a colossal karma deterioration. Our responsibilities transcend the formations here and now. We are in all conflicts. And they in us.

3.2 Conflict Transformations: a First Overview

Transformations take place in time, and time is kronos and kairos, in the steady flow of physical time and in the eddies of that flow where time curls up in and on itself and stands still in an everlasting now, from which it jumps to a new kairos.

In Chapter 1 above five processes with potential kairos character were defined and described:

\((\text{dis})\text{artication: a complete vs. a truncated conflict triangle;}
\)\(\text{(de)consentization: making A and C more or less conscious;}
\)\(\text{complexification/simplification: seeing more/less actors/goals;}
\)\(\text{(de)polarization: seeing conflicts as (2,1)/(1,2) or not;}
\)\(\text{(de)-escalation: increasing/decreasing violence at the B level.}

There is a relatively simple relation between these processes: articulation and conscientization go together, so do polarization and escalation, whereas complexification and simplification processes have a complex relation to both.

With A and C consciousness, the conflict triangle is by definition completed. Consciousness of inner and outer contradictions, and of own attitudes to them, will almost inevitably have behavioral consequences, including the zero consequence of willed non-behavior. The conflict may simply be too overwhelming, like national conflicts in Eastern Europe in the socialist period. There is consciousness of contradiction and own attitudes but no behavioral manifestations. The conflict is taboo. Another example of zero behavior being behavior would be the thunderous silence about class conflict in the USA.

Polarization means reducing a conflict formation to the most simplistic level, assigning all \(n\) parties to one or the other of two camps, wrapping all \(m\) conflict themes together in one super-theme. All positive, cooperative relations are within the camps and all negative relations between them (but there may be neutral relations both within and between, as long as there is nothing negative within, or positive between). The Cold War was the classic example, with the inevitable consequence that conflicts within camps were
underplayed, conflicts between camps overplayed and the content of the conflict was vulgarized to anti-totalitarianism as seen by the West, and anti-imperialism as seen by the East. Of course such formulas catch something. But the result is a conflict formation put into a straitjacket, another type of conflict deformation in other words. Once that conflict deformation is resolved, or rather dissolved, meaning that the straitjacket is no longer there, the underplayed or repressed contradictions will surface. This is yet another example of how conflicts are reborn positively or negatively in many places and do not die, nor are given eternal life, nor do they reincarnate.

Does polarization necessarily lead to escalation, meaning more violence at the B level? Potentially yes; but not always.

At the individual level, polarization means cognitive simplification, eliminating ambiguities, clearing the ground for black-white, foe-friend cognitions, with corresponding emotions and volitions, willing harm to Other and bliss to Self – simply because through polarization Self and Other are well constructed. At the collective level, polarization means organizational simplification, defining the camps, defining the cause. So, with people’s minds cognitively, emotionally, and volitionally prepared and their bodies collectively organized, there is certainly ‘stripping for action’. The theory of arms races as actio-reactio, not as Eigendynamik, within each camp for its own endogenous reasons, usually takes as its point of departure a bipolar conflict formation. If both parties do this, meaning that there is a race, then a dialectic between mutual provocation and mutual deterrence will start operating, probably in a yin/yang relation, and this in turn means that there may be very dangerous phases where provocation gets the upper hand and less dangerous phases where deterrence gets the upper hand. Trivial – but many seem to forget that for violence to ensue it is enough that only one party is more provoked than deterred, whereas for ‘balance of power’ to have the much quoted si vis pacem, para bellum effect both parties (not only One) have to be deterred.

Equally trivial, but also worth mentioning: there may be other values at stake than the contested goal and violence-avoidance. Of course a Saddam Hussein may have wanted to get Kuwait, and in addition to get away with it. But even if he should lose Kuwait, and certainly not get away with it but lose quite a lot in addition, he might stand to gain in honor, display of courage, and self-respect. Much indoctrination is needed to be unable to imagine a culture where the latter three easily outweigh the former two, meaning that even the overwhelming power of the ‘US-led coalition’ did not suffice to deter.

These trivialities undermine balance-of-power ideology, particularly if in addition such factors as masochism and miscalculation, both of Self and Other, are taken into account. But much more important is the assumption that there is no alternative to violence (with ‘win’, ‘lose’, or ‘stalemate’ as the three possible outcomes) or no violence, meaning being effectively deterred. There is, of course, the vast tertium of nonviolence, to be explored in more detail in Part II, Chapter 5 below.

The British thought the Indian swaraj (self-rule) movement was effectively deterred through standard colonial state terrorism of an occupied people; Gandhian satyagraha opened a different action (including verbal action) discourse. Israeli Zionism had the same assumptions about the Palestinian independence movement, and was mentally equally unprepared for the intifada. In both cases the focus had been on ‘able-bodied young males with arms’, leaving out the power of women (the Indian case), children (the Palestinian case), and the power of nonviolence in both cases. In short, the assumption that violent action and non-action exhaust the action universe is simply wrong, as wrong as the assumption that political violence has to take the form of a spatially contiguous ‘front’ operating with continuity in time (standard warfare) and not the form of point activity, now here, now there (terrorism).

However, polarization is probably a necessary condition for escalation, even if not
sufficient. And escalation is probably a sufficient condition for polarization, even if not necessary.

Complexification/simplification is obviously a question of how a conflict is perceived, here discussed in terms of numbers of actors, \( m \), numbers of themes, \( n \), and particularly in terms of complexity, here defined as \( c = m \times n - 1 \); \( m > 0 \) and \( n > 0 \) for actors and values; \( m = 0 \) when there are only parties around and \( n = 0 \) when there are only interests around.

We could also have used the simple formula \( c = m + n \), the number of items the parties have to keep in mind as a very minimum to be able to map the conflict formation on their mental screens. But the parties have to be related to the themes to give content to the conflict, the contradictions in other words, meaning that the cognitive map is an \((m \times n)\) matrix with \( m \times n \) entries (like '1' if theme no. \( j \) is relevant for party no. \( i \), '0' if it is not). Consequently, the product is a better indicator of the mental work needed.

We have then subtracted 1 to arrive at the distinction between complex conflicts (\( c > 1 \)), elementary conflicts (\( c = 1 \)), frustrations (\( c = 0 \); an unreal conflict) and structural conflict (\( c < 0 \); either no actors, no values, or both).

The problem can now be explored, as was first done in Part II, Chapter I above: there is a Scylla as well as a Charybdis to be avoided.

The Scylla is too high complexity. We may debate where the upper limit for \( c \) is located, meaning for effective cognitive processing by a human mind (or a human mind that is to interpret a computer print-out and also check the program). Psychological theory tends to see 7 as an upper limit; meaning \( m \) or \( n \) being, say, 3 or 4, at least not much more, using the additive formula.

The Charybdis is reductionism down to \( c = 1 \), meaning too low complexity. This is polarization, and the accompanying dangers have been indicated above. If too high complexity is intellectually too exhausting, then too low complexity is intellectually too lazy. However, if escalation is a sufficient condition for polarization, then the more tense the conflict, the more will the actors tend to steer straight into Charybdis, thereby adding to the tension, and depriving themselves of possible avenues for successful conflict transformation.

The word for steering away from the Charybdis of reductionism is complexification, the word for steering away from the Scylla of too high complexity is simplification. In other words, make the too complex more simple, but be aware of the dangers of polarization. There will always be more conflict material around, always some more actors and more themes; so complexification does not have to be artificial at all.

Two examples from recent world politics.

In 1974 an important session of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS, took place in Caracas. About 5,000 delegates from about 150 countries were dealing with a catalogue of about 150 issues. Of course, no one could handle a cognitive complexity of that magnitude, 300 (or 298) by the additive formula, 22,500 (or 22,499) by the multiplicative formula. Computerization will not help; somebody still has to decipher the print-outs; moreover, each single issue for each single country has unique importance.

Some simplification was indispensable. The cognitive solution was grouping – of actors (countries) and themes (issues) – in three groups: countries that were land-locked, coastal countries, and islands (no coast, some coast, only coast); and issues of territorial limits and rights, ocean floor and below, and military issues. With three commissions and three country groups with similar interests, the complexity was simplified to 6(4) additive or 9(6) multiplicative.

The second example is one of fruitful complexification: the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Helsinki, 1972 (preparatory phase), and 1973. The Cold War had been simplified through reductionism down to the polarized (2,1) formula: East (Soviet
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Union/WTO), West (US/NATO) over freedom/fascism, depending on who was speaking. To loosen up this type of propaganda speech was a major task, and would probably have been impossible in the coldest years, before Stalin died, and around the attacks on Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Two methods:

First, the introduction of the Neutral-Nonaligned countries (NN) as a third group. Of course, they were NN to varying degrees. Finland had a pact with the Soviet Union from 1948, Yugoslavia was through the Balkan Pact of 1953 with Greece and Turkey closely related to the West from which it was supported, also militarily. Sweden was integrated with the West logistically, Switzerland spied on anybody suspected of having the slightest sympathy for the East, etc. All the same, as a caucus they had some independent positions or non-positions, so there were three parties.

Second, the vast gamut of issues was divided into three ‘baskets’: military-political issues (among them the borders), economic issues (among them joint ventures) and other issues (among them human rights). As a result the complexity was the same as in the first example, this time brought about through complexification. And the outcome no doubt had a thawing impact on the Cold War: borders were confirmed, joint ventures came into being, a human rights process started, slowly, in the Eastern bloc. The contradictions were blunted, so were A and B on all sides.

3.3 Conflict Transformation for Structural Conflicts, c<0

In a structural conflict there is, by definition, structural violence. The basic contradiction/content of the conflict lies in the verticality of the structure, the repression (of freedom) in the political case and the exploitation (of well-being) in the economic case. But this repressive/exploitative structure is then protected by other structural (meaning operating regardless of intent) arrangements. More precisely:

*preventing consciousness-formation, conscientization:
penetration, conditioning of the mind from above,
segmentation, those below getting limited vision of reality;
*preventing mobilization, organization of those below:
fragmentation, splitting those below away from each other,
marginalization, setting those below apart from the rest.

Conscientization and mobilization are precisely the processes needed to transform the interests in a structural conflict into consciously held values and to transform a non-organized, non-crystallized party (to a structural conflict) into an actor (in a conflict). Consequently, all four have to be overcome in order to be able to approach, creatively, the basic issues of repression and exploitation. How then to do this?

Let us first note, in passing, that benevolent action from above, blunting repression and exploitation, may be necessary but not sufficient. A more benevolent structure with the four characteristics intact is still violent. Given those four new forms of repression, exploitation may reappear, for instance as run by a vast welfare state bureaucracy rather than by a greedy upper class. Better, but still very vertical, as critics say.

Here are four steps for overcoming structural violence.

*Confrontation*, selecting an issue that encapsulates the general conflict, like the ‘pinch of salt’ for Gandhi in the famous Salt March (to Dandi in Gujarat, 5 April 1930), stating the issue clearly, and stating the desired outcome.

*Struggle*, to overcome repression and/or exploitation. The question is how that struggle is carried out. The peace research answer is obvious: by means of nonviolence,
according to the general formula of 'peace by peaceful means'. The genius of a Gandhi consisted exactly in presenting an alternative to the stark choice between submissiveness (to repression and exploitation) or a violent struggle to overcome them. Such a struggle would at best incur terrible losses on either side, lead to demands for revenge, sow long-lasting hatred, introducing new contradictions by the use of violence; at worst, in addition to all of this, might be lost. The Herr also has resource power, carrots and sticks for reward and punishment, in addition to the structural power built into his position up there, at the top.

Moreover, and this is a basic point: to 'win' in the sense of turning the tables, changing the roles of Herr and Knacht, is not necessary, nor desirable. The result is simply a new structural conflict after the trauma of the violence has been repressed. As Camus says, he sides with the Knacht as long as he is Knacht, after that he sides with the new Knacht. The peace researcher can say the same: a conflict can only be solved if all parties are convinced that they cannot force the other(s) to submit. Nonviolence, like the intifada of the Palestinians, made this popular will clear to the British and the Israelis.8

Decoupling, cutting the structural tie to the repressor and/or exploiter. This is Gandhi's famous non-cooperation; but then it should be noticed that he always insisted on keeping the tie to the person on the other side as opposed to the incumbents of a structural position (in order to establish or continue a dialogue). The purpose is less to hit and hurt the Herr by depriving him (it is usually a he) of his structural power, the submissiveness and concrete material goods that flow upwards through the structure. Instead, the basic purpose is to build autonomy and the capacity for self-reliance and autonomy in those below. In doing so they become less repressible and exploitable, making it even more evident that those on top cannot prevail. Empowerment, in short.

Recoupling. Decoupling cannot be the goal in the longer run. In the longer run the goal is a horizontal structure, with human rights instead of repression, equity instead of exploitation, autonomy instead of penetration, integration instead of segmentation, solidarity instead of fragmentation, participation instead of marginalization. Words, word-pairs. They can only become reality by being enacted. Decoupling serves to build these positive structures from below, recoupling to build new, more encompassing, less violent structures.

This has still not been accomplished between the former colonial powers and their colonies. Repression from above has been reduced. But economic exploitation may have grown, under what Kwame Nkrumah referred to as 'neo-colonialism'. And the other four characteristics are still present. The therapy for pathological structures is a long-haul problem, not a single shot, quick fix. And decoupling is only a step.

Interestingly, most human beings on earth have been through this process and are experts on transforming structural conflicts, without knowing that they are: during puberty, socially and/or biologically defined. A family is not always repressive and/or exploitative. But it certainly conditions the child for the entire duration of his/her life, a giant exercise in brainwashing, with massive penetration that builds national group identity. How many parents actively seek to expose their children to other languages and cultures than their own, giving them a broader competence, including for choice or eclectic combination? Moreover, how many parents give their children an integrated view of the family situation, as opposed to certain selected, segmented glimpses? Moreover, the mechanisms of bonding children to their parents very often pit siblings against each other in a struggle for attention, love, and material goods. And parents often carry out their deliberations in parental caucus rather than in plenary sessions.

The puberty revolt can be individual, collective with other siblings, or collective with other adolescents. At the very least, there is exchange of information. Individual consciousness is built through confrontation, banging of doors being an audible and defiant
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facial expressions a visible indicator known to many. The new consciousness often mirrors parental consciousness, by being its negation. Horizontal links are built to others in the same situation (adolescent groups, 'gangs'), a sub-culture emerges with entry of the younger and exit of the older. More integrative views of reality emerge, social platforms are conquered without parental guidance. A new generation is born.

3.4 Conflict Transformation for Frustrations, c=0

As mentioned, frustrations are conceptually located at the edges of conflicts. The basic characteristic there is: a goal, and something is blocking that goal, 'standing in the way'; but not efforts to realize other goals held by Self (dilemma), or by Others (disputes). How is that situation transformed?

Of course it depends on the goal and the block. But there are three general formulas that also apply to the general theory of conflict transformation.

Transcendence: the block is overcome, the goal is realized, possibly somewhat transformed. One reason may be that the block is not so massive as originally thought of, another that the actor had hidden resources, a third that the goal could be redefined. Thus, if a person is standing at the North Pole and the goal is to move 20 cm without moving South, frustration ensues till the possibility of jumping emerges. A vertical body move has then been made – but the decisive move was mental, broadening the paradigm mapping the frustration.

Compromise: ambitions are lowered, then the goal is reduced, to the point that it may be attained. If the goal is a top position in society, power, wealth or fame (or all of these) most people will probably at some point in their life have to make some compromise, often referred to as 'becoming realistic'.

Withdrawal: the goal is simply given up, for instance as not worth the mobilization ('sour grapes'), and relegated to the deeper, subconscious recesses of the mind (from which it may re-emerge, with a vengeance); or it may be successfully eliminated.

Together these three are recipes for the art of living when combined, and for lifestyles when life is built around a single one. The creative uses transcendence, the adjusted uses the compromise, and the shy/coward/humiliated/lonely, the withdrawal. Playing only one card could be counterproductive, however.

3.5 Conflict Transformation for Elementary Actor Conflicts, c=1

Assuming that structural conflicts have been transformed to the point that interests have become values and parties have become actors, and assuming that the actor is of the opinion (rightly or wrongly) that what blocks the realization of that goal (value = consciously held goal) is a goal held by Self or Other, we are in the realm of elementary actor conflicts. As already noted, such elementary actor conflicts are more for textbook (like here) than real-life exercises. Real conflicts are giant conflict molecules, combining dilemmas and disputes at often incredible levels of complexity. But if we assume that their transformation passes through some process of simplification, then elementary conflicts become more realistic as approximations. And complex conflict molecules can to some extent be seen as composed of elementary conflict atoms, making insight in their transformation necessary.

Figure 3.1 gives the basic diagram for elementary conflicts.

The unit mapped here is a conflict formation with two actors, A1 and A2, and two goals G1 and G2 (A1, A2; G1, G2). If A1=A2=A the formation is a dilemma (in A; if in addition G1=G2, we have a frustration). If not we are dealing with a dispute; if in
addition \( G1 = G2 = G \), the dispute is over the same, contested goal ("my brother and I agree on one thing: we both want Milano"). The diagram can be used to map the trajectory, i.e. the history of the conflict formation. The general hypothesis is that the five points indicated are good candidates as temporary equilibrium points in the sense that acceptability and sustainability may be obtained, but with the warning that no resolution can be forever, hence 'transformation'. There will usually be conflict residues in the A, B, or C corners of the conflict triangle and these residues will then hitch on to conflict formations in the neighborhood, including molecules of which the atoms are parts.

Figure 3.1 Basic Diagram for Elementary Conflict Transformation

At this point another warning should be issued against a terminology often found in US conflict jargon: referring to points (1), (3), (4), and (5) as win, win; lose, lose; win, lose; or lose, win. First of all, these terms are mechanistic and in no way suggestive of the underlying processes. Second, and more importantly: they do suggest something else, that conflict is a game, as in the conflict discourse known as 'game theory' (originally developed from the theory and praxis of submarine warfare). The terminology alienates; it does not evoke images of life-and-death concerns, nor of the depth of involvement. Rather, parlor-game cleverness is elevated as metaphor for existential concerns, as when news is converted by mass media into entertainment (and, not by chance, in the very same country).10

1 Transcendence is the outcome that carries the proud title 'creative conflict transformation'. Something new, sui generis, usually unexpected, has emerged from the process, meaning that the positive aspect of a conflict has been made use of, the challenge to transcend (hence the term) the underlying contradiction. Both goals are realized, possibly somewhat transformed. There is bliss. Key word: creativity.

2 Compromise means that less than full goal-attainment has been accepted, for both goals. Key word: moderation.

3 Withdrawal means goals have been given up, for ever or for some time; more time horizon. Key words: apathy, perseverance.
These three outcomes are symmetric, usually brought about by some cooperative steering of the goal-attainment process, through inner dialogues (for dilemmas) and/or outer ones (for disputes). Located on the main diagonal of the basic diagram, all three are indicative of harmony rather than disharmony (as they are symmetric, which one is (4) or (5) does not matter). The other two are indicative of disharmony, with two interpretations.

First, these are the corners where the one prevails and the other submits, e.g., by eliminating the actor’s capability or motivation to pursue the goal further. Fighting it out is often the only alternative to compromise in the conflict transformation repertory of many people. Key word: violence (not peaceful).

Second, both acceptability and sustainability in these corners are possible, but then against some compensation. Counter-intuitive to some, other conflicts can be used, by broadening, bringing in more actors, and by deepening, bringing in more issues, or both. Key words: increased complexity.

Let us now turn to four illustrations of what transcendence, compromise, withdrawal, and compensation may mean in practice; two disputes and two dilemmas, two pedagogical and two realistic.

1. First dispute illustration: Two children, one orange. Obviously, they may decide by sheer force, and this outcome may be acceptable and sustainable if force is seen as a decision-mechanism in the culture. But most children would easily manage to arrive at a compromise solution, by peeling the orange and dividing the slices in two batches, or by slicing the orange and squeezing the two halves. In either case they may dispose of the residues, using the standard ‘you divide, I choose’ formula.

The transcendence becomes a little more advanced: using the seeds to plant orange trees, reaping the harvest (in due time) together. There is also the possibility of using the peel for cakes, for joint consumption or sale, splitting the profit.

All these outcomes call for action. Withdrawal would mean leaving the orange to itself, as an orange an sich, not für mich. This is compatible with another way of consuming the orange: with the eyes rather than with the mouth, enjoying its esthetic qualities, jointly or in parallel (this outcome is more frequently mentioned when the example is used in the Orient).

And then there is broadening: bringing in a third child, A3, with whom both have a conflict. A1 gives the orange to A2 on the assumption that A2 submits to A3 and A3 to A1, possibly making all happy. In the process of deepening, A1 and A2 would bring in another bone of contention between the two of them. One of them submits on that one, getting the orange as compensation, or vice versa: gets the orange first and then submits.

2. Second dispute illustration: Israel/Palestine. A1 and A2 are Israel and Palestine, G is the contested area east of the Mediterranean of which the Israelis claim legitimate ownership by virtue of Chosen People, Promised Land theology; and the Palestinians by virtue of being there before the Israelis came.

Clearly, a Two-State solution (e.g., as proposed by the Palestine National Council in its resolution of 15 November 1988) is a compromise, bringing up the obvious point that a compromise is not necessarily 50–50, but may be 70–30, 90–10, but not 100–0. And withdrawal would be both parties giving up their claims, ceding the territory to third parties (historically, the Roman Empire, the Seljuk Turks, the Ottomans, the League of Nations/the British, the United Nations/the British are examples).

What would be the concrete interpretation of transcendence? Obviously not two cases of self-rule, but the case of ‘together-rule’. There are several possibilities between the Compromise and the Transcendence points in Figure 3.1 above: if the compromise is a
dissociative, 'anarchic' system, then a first beginning would be associative cooperation built around treaties between Israel and Palestine (the assumption being that there is an independent Palestinian state, otherwise we are still in the wrong corners of Figure 3.1), then a confederation, then a federation, and finally a unitary state; the latter being the ultimate transcendence. In the view of this author that is unrealistic for the time being (however, 'never say never!'). But a confederation Israel–Palestine as equal partners in political, economic, military and cultural cooperation is a goal very much worth working for, with or without Jordan as a third partner.

3 First dilemma illustration: The couple planning vacation The couple has four weeks' vacation; the husband prefers the mountains, the wife the beach; they live in Denmark or the Alps. The two non-solution points are obvious: both do what the one wants, the other suffers, in silence or not. How to convert those points into solutions through broadening ("You have the problem that the children want to be on their own during vacation, I that their vacation costs too much: I yield to you, you leave them to their own devices, they reduce their ambitions") and deepening ("I'll go to that other place provided you stop harping about the furniture"). Another interpretation of deepening could be every second year the beach or the mountains, not the same as having two weeks in the mountains and two weeks on the beach.

One point of transcendence might be a place like Taormina, Sicily – both beach and mountains. The example illustrates one use of specific, empirical knowledge: what exists is possible. A person versed in geography from extensive reading and/or travel would be a better conflict-resource person than one who is not; indeed a key to the qualifications of conflict workers in general.

But transcendence could also come by asking both what they really want, and if the husband feels he needs climbing and the wife feels she needs tanning, a modern summer hotel or camp site might serve both. Redefining the goals a little may help!

Withdrawal is obvious: 'If we're going to quarrel like this every year I'd rather not take any vacation!' Or, escaping from the dilemma by cutting the linkage underlying the incompatibility, take the vacations separately, fission-disintegration. Or, by implication: fusion-integration, eliminating individual tastes.

4 Second dilemma illustration: The id-super-ego struggle G1 and G2 are in this case in the person system. Zwei Seelen wohnen, acht, in meiner Brust, as Goethe says; one pulls in this direction, one in that; one is ethereal, one is sensual. Maybe there are even more than two! To use Soro&'s terms again: in the ideational mentality, super-ego dominates the inner person completely; in the sensate personality id is in command, meaning that the personality is suppressive of the other mentality. If we stay within Freud's scheme it is difficult to broaden and deepen.

Freud's solution, his criterion of maturity, is of course transcendence, by which he seems to understand the emergence of an ego capable of a synthesis, of biology and religion in one formulation, adding individuality. Both get their due, at a bland level in compromise, and at a fully-fledged level in the transcendence; somewhat like social democracy relative to the Japanese model when it comes to Market-Plan integration.

But the move can also be in the opposite direction: both id and super-ego contracting, neither yielding to the other. Suicide? Death? Or, a serious mental disorder?

Separation as a way out of the couple's dilemma in the preceding example brings to mind images of schizophrenia: the manic-depressive trying to practice fission, oscillating between the two off-diagonal corners of the conflict diagram, neither attaining the maturity of integration, nor the quietude of death (or so we assume). Maybe mental disorders are desperate ways of getting out of this existential dilemma, finding no equilibria in
compromise or transcendence, seeking the extremes till extreme withdrawal becomes the equilibrium state?

Two conclusions should emerge from these illustrations. First, the conflict analysis paradigm developed here can accommodate very different cases, from the intra-personal to conflict formations in very different social systems. This is not strange. We are dealing with goal-seeking systems, whether values or interests, and such 'systems' can be found wherever there is life, however complex the organization. The balance between harmony and disharmony may tilt in favor of the latter. And the similarities are not only imposed by the paradigm but are also 'out there'. At least, so it seems.

Second, however: transcendence, compromise, withdrawal, broadening, deepening, fission, fusion are not in themselves solutions, only the forms of solution hypotheses; and 'solutions' are not final resolutions or resolutions, only more or less stable equilibria in the life-cycle of a conflict. In any one of these stages there may be A and B residues searching for a new C (contradiction, content) to hitch on to; there may be new C material building up, piecing together fragments of the old content or contradictions (as when a new border solves some historical problems, but not security or economic problems of access to raw materials and markets, nor of social togetherness).

Nevertheless, these five points are useful as guidelines for moves in conflict space (which generally will have m actors, A1, A2, ... Am and n goals, G1, G2, ... Gn; in other words m+n dimensions). They constitute transformations of the conflict formation, avoiding violence and attracting challenge. For the latter, transcendence is usually the best answer. But a nonviolent road to transcendence is not always easily found.

3.6 Conflict Transformation for Complex Actor Conflicts, c>1

Clearly, the simplest answer to the problem of handling a complex actor conflict is exactly that: simplification, but then with the accompanying problem that reductionism in the sense of polarization lurks just around the corner, with the danger of escalation in its wake. Yet polarization is so tempting, down to two blocs in the social system of persons, groups, societies, regions etc. (with all positive links within and all negative links between), two blocs inside the person-system of values, inclinations, images (again with all positive links within and all negative links between), and with the images in the person-system of friend and enemy mapping the surrounding social system.

As mentioned, reductionism exaggerates the conflict between, while underestimating the conflicts within. The concrete implication is that whatever transformation toward transcendence, compromise, etc. is obtained for that type of formation, the chances are that suppressed conflicts will blossom once the steam has left the polarized conflict. National conflicts, and not only in Eastern Europe, erupted after the Cold War conflict formation had disappeared, among other reasons because it had been grotesquely exaggerated (for instance, so far, 1996, no proof has emerged that the Soviet Union ever seriously planned an unprovoked attack on Western Europe). There is the Chinese boxes argument: let us start treating a complex conflict as if it were an elementary conflict, through reductionism, transform that one, open the boxes, assume that two new conflicts surface, solve them, and then go on with 2^n jobs at step N-1. For a linear, dichotomous mind this is the natural/normal approach.

The position taken here, however, is that complex conflict formations are sui generis, of their own kind, and should be treated as such. The seven approaches developed above, based on the three approaches from c=0, the two additional from c=1, and then fission and fusion, are equally meaningful for complex conflicts, only often more difficult (or so
we assume) to attain. Dividing Bosnia-Herzegovina among Serbs, Croats, and Slavic Muslims is not that different from dividing Krajina between Croats and Serbs or Kosovo/a between Serbs and Albanian Muslims.

These are simplistic transformations anyhow, with low levels of both acceptability and sustainability, for all the reasons mentioned above. Transcendence, in the form of new types of confederations, or a Confederation of Southeast Europe, will work better at higher levels of complexity with more possibilities of broadening and deepening. The basic point would be training to enable thinking in terms of three, four actors with two, three goals each, and not regressing to lower levels.19

But there are also approaches that combine bilateralization with multilateralization. Thus, the conflict molecule may be seen as constituted by conflict atoms, but not only two, any number; like Israel, in principle in bilateral conflicts with all Arab states, particularly the four/five bordering on Israel (and Iraq). This set of conflict atoms may then be divided into two subsets: the center (or core) and periphery (or margin) of the conflict. From this division three approaches emerge:

- diachronic approach: start in the center with 'basic links';
- diachronic approach: start in the periphery with 'easy links';
- synchronic approach: start with all links at the same time.

The two diachronic approaches suffer from the general shortcoming of linearity. The assumptions underlying them are similar: undo the basic contradiction and the rest will start unraveling; or get the easy agenda items settled and the rest will be smooth sailing because of the improved 'atmosphere'. The first idea conjures up images of Marxist thought: the basic contradiction being in the social infrastructure, between labor and capital (or between means and modes of production). The second idea brings to mind liberal thinking: the world is a conflict cafeteria, you pick your conflicts and mix them together to create agendas, starting with the lighter dishes, even hors d'oeuvres, to create 'atmosphere' before the real oeuvre.

Translated to Israel the latter approach is sometimes known as 'peace by pieces', the process is known as a 'peace process'. However, there could be little doubt that the people most affected by the creation of Israel as a Jewish state were the people living there, particularly the Palestinians. Bringing this contradiction up front would be the first approach above. It remains to be seen whether that brings the total formation closer to a more stable equilibrium than the second approach.

The third, more synchronic approach is what is preferred here. Some progress on all contradictions is better than a giant step taken in only one direction, leading to major conflict deformation. The process image is more Oriental, more Buddhist, assuming that circular, synchronic relations reflect better the reality of life at any level of organization.19

There is also the advantage of avoiding the uncertainties that surround the division into center and periphery, and of knowing where to start.

3.7 Conflict Transformation: a Second Overview

Conflict transformation takes place in time, in physical k\textit{hr}onos and organic k\textit{ai}ros, as time flows evenly without any turbulences, and inside those turbulences. The latter are more dramatic, bringing to mind negotiators working through the night against deadlines, emerging in the early hours with their glasses raised, praising themselves. But the former should not be underestimated, among other reasons because so much else happens as k\textit{hr}onos flows. There is a limit to how many conflicts anybody may have in mind,
CONFLICT TRANSFORMATIONS

participate in, not to mention try to solve. Conflict fatigue may set it and force a conflict into oblivion.

The second axis for general thinking about conflict transformation is complexity: some kind of uni-dimensionality imposed on phenomena that are different, yet similar. Dukkha unfolds in very different settings. Time is needed, sometimes a great deal of it, both as khrnas and in the kairos form of inner and outer dialogues, for moves toward sukha.

Transformations do not just happen. They are willed; only when willed are they real. They have to be subjectively forced, the subject is the force motrice. This in turn means that the processes of articulation and conscientization are absolutely essential, aiming at the A, B, and C corners, breaking out of the darkness of structural conflict and, if needed, through the ice cap of the frustration image of reality.

The problem is that this image may become too complex to be manageable. And the antidote? Some simplification, avoiding polarization, and then guiding the formation, gently, towards higher levels of transformation, possibly through intervention.

Notes

1. 'The yang having reached its climax retreats in favor of the yin; the yin having reached its climax retreats in favor of the yang' (Wang Ch’ung). This is a statement about the parti(s)es in a contradiction; the assumption being that they do not find the (elusive) point of harmony. It should be noted that Daoism also suffers, in this formulation, from the Western tendency to see contradictions as something involving two parties; of course more general formulas can be imagined.

2. This felicitous term comes from James S. Coleman.

3. These excellent terms with corresponding perspectives were introduced into peace studies by Dieter Senghaas.

4. For an exploration of some of the many conditions that have to be satisfied for the balance-of-power doctrine to have some plausibility, see Johan Galtung, 'Balance of Power and the Problem of Perception', pp. 38-53 in Essays in Peace Research, vol. II (Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1976).


7. For instance on the author of these lines, one more victim of les fichocrates in that country.

8. The intifada ("shaking off") is in the West mainly associated with throwing stones, which, even if the intention might not always be to hit, is clearly violent, at least as body language. So are the words accompanying the throwing. But the intifada is so much more: general strike, closed shops, a general attitude-behavioral syndrome expressing very well the volonté générale of the Palestinian people. See Johan Galtung, ‘Intifada: The Palestinian Struggle for Liberation’, pp. 61-72 in Nonviolence and Israel/Palestine (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1989).


10. On the other hand, if we rise above the terminology or introduce another discourse (as has been done here), game theory is also a good way of ordering one’s thoughts about a conflict process. Any discourse can be misused. Game theory can also be used for cooperation problems, as in the enormous literature on the Prisoner’s Dilemma. As a means of solving conflicts it may have been overadvertised, however. See Richard B. Bruthwaite, Theory of Games as a Tool for the Moral Philosopher. An inaugural lecture delivered in Cambridge on 2 December 1954 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955).

11. Interest in this example comes from a stay in La Habana, Cuba, as Visiting Professor in 1972. Experiments were conducted testing the hypothesis that children raised in private families would arrive at asymmetric outcomes and those raised in socialist, public kindergartens at cooperative outcomes.

PART II: CONFLICT THEORY

The "Middle East" Conflict, pp. 37–57 in Solving Conflicts (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989).

13. Notice how clumsy this word sounds, whereas 'self-rule' is unproblematic. Language will need much time to adjust to peace and conflict studies, like 'peaces' in the plural, for instance (not only wars and conflicts).

14. See Part I, Chapter 5 for more details.

15. Of course, if this becomes a habit it may lead to separation in a deeper sense, and to divorce, the final disintegration of the couple. The assumption, then, would be that in post-modern society having/taking vacation together is a substitute for working together (as nomads, on the farm) in earlier formations.

16. Even if the expression of this dilemma may sound like a dispute, even a quarrel, it should be noted that this is a (1,2) not a (2,1) conflict, the contradiction being within the couple as one actor. Obviously, when the choice of vacation for one member of the couple is independent of the other member's choice that type of incompatibility disappears. And the same would happen if they should arrive at a total alignment of values and interests, complete fusion/integration in other words.


18. The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1992) expresses one of the basic assumptions of Tibetan Buddhism, that dying and death are only stages on the way.

19. Thus, merely to learn that Krajina and Bosnian Serbs may have goals that do not necessarily coincide with the goals of Serbia-Belgrade (whereas they may be compatible with each other) took the international community (whatever that is) at least two years of violent conflict time.

20. For an introduction to C. G. Jung's thinking in this connection, see Ira Progoff, Jung, Synchronicity, and Human Destiny (New York: Delta, 1973).
Conflict Interventions

4.1 Conflict Intervention as Communication: Eleven Approaches

Let us start by assuming a conflict formation involving $m$ actors and $n$ goals, the tension level is high. The conflict is consuming more and more of the resources thrown into it (perhaps even more than the value of the goals); it is even consuming the actors themselves. The problem is no longer who wins most, but who loses least. Conflict reality is already bad; the prognosis is worse. The actors are unable to stop the process and reverse it. The material and non-material suffering the actors inflict on things, themselves, and others is intolerable, also to outsiders. The case for outside intervention, solicited or unsolicited, is strong. Yugoslavia 1991–1995 comes to mind. The Why is clear. But exactly what is to be done? Who does it? How? When? Where? For whose benefit, at whose expense?

Quick, superficial answers as a first guide to intervention:
Why? To stop further suffering and material and non-material destruction; if possible to arrive at a solution, meaning a formation that is reasonably acceptable and sustainable.

What: Three answers are fairly useful:

- **Peace-keeping:** control the actors so that they at least stop destroying things, others, and themselves (B-oriented).
- **Peace-making:** embed the actors in a new formation; in addition, transform attitudes and assumptions (A-oriented).
- **Peace-building:** overcome the contradiction at the root of the conflict formation (C-oriented).

Who: In principle anybody – by State ((inter-)governmental), Civil Society ((inter-)non-governmental), Capital ((transnational)-corporations); or by individuals of any kind.

How: By entering into a communication process with the actors in the conflict formation; expanding that formation.

When: ‘Anywhen’ (at any time) the negative and positive purposes of conflict intervention can be served.

Where: Anywhere, not necessarily around a table, and not necessarily with everybody together at the same time.

For whose benefit: for the benefit of the participants in the conflict formation and for others in similar formations.

At whose cost: those who benefit from further destruction.

To understand how conflict intervention works we need a typology, and one that derives from a *fundamentum divisionis*, not merely listing words floating around in this field (mediation, arbitration, conciliation, etc.). As usual we shall include ‘the zero case’, the non-intervention, of which there may also be several types. The parties coming in
from the outside, intervening in the conflict, will not be referred to as 'Third' parties, a highly unfortunate terminology as it ties the mind to a conflict of only two parties. Much better is simply outside parties, coming from the outside yet joining the conflict.

A first question would be what their goals are. To get the challenge? To gain experience? A Nobel Peace Prize, or some other prize? To show who is the ultimate conflict manager? To make use of the conflict to market conflict resources, 'sticks' (military means) for general intimidation, or 'carrots' (humanitarian aid, technical assistance) to generate a demand in the wake of the supply? All of this in order to reinforce a hegemonial system, the position of the hegemon and the system of hegemony in general, on behalf of other hegemons?

Or, just to serve? Just to do, neither seen, nor heard? Discreet, in ways to be described below? There is much to be said for that, lest the goals of the outside parties distort the conflict formation, resulting in a conflict deformation derailing the process. An example would be the UN operation in Somalia 1992–1997 where, through strange processes, the goal suddenly became to preserve, not even enhance, UN prestige by imposing the UN image of the conflict despite its absurdity.

But 'neither seen, nor heard' will not do either if the basic method is communication. And that is the dimension that will be used to establish a typology for conflict intervention.

A. No communication with outside parties
Type 0: Dissociation: disintegration, fission. The conflict parties do not communicate but separate, dissolving their formation. There is no communication, neither among them nor with outside parties (although the latter may have recommended this pattern). If the medium is the message, then the non-medium may also carry a message: for the time being they may not be ready for any conflict transformation process beyond the non-formation.

Type 1: Association: communication inside the formation. The parties are able to communicate with each other; communication is reasonably symmetric, even taking the form of a dialogue.

B. Asymmetric communication to outside parties
Type 2: Outside parties provide the venue. This is a very minimal form of intervention, but not to be scoffed at. Neutral meeting ground is provided (Geneva!), with amenities, perhaps even with expenses paid. The rest is, in principle, Type 1.

Type 3: Outside parties provide an empathetic ear. Now they are present, but their role is minimal. The parties may be unable to keep a dialogue going, even unable to be alone with each other in the same room. Outsiders provide the social and communicative glue. The parties have difficulties emptying the room because the outsiders are there, and they cannot stop talking because outsiders fill the empty time between their statements, if only with an encouraging 'uhum?', not to mention the classical 'would you care to elaborate that point?'

C. Symmetric, dialogical communication with outside parties
Type 4: Outside parties enter dialogue on conflict diagnosis.
Type 5: Like type 4, but adding conflict prognosis.
Type 6: Like type 5, but adding conflict therapy.

D. Asymmetric, imposed communication from outside parties
Type 7: Mediation. At this point outside parties listen to the D,PT as seen by all participants and then communicate what they see as the solution, on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.
Type 8: Arbitration. Like Type 7, but with prior commitment by the parties to accept, 'take-it', the proposed solution.

Type 9: Rule of Law. Like Type 8, but with higher level of predictability (and rigidity!), written rules, precedents, etc.

Type 10: Rule of Man. This is the conflict dictator who imposes a solution, backing it up with carrots and/or sticks:

- the soft conflict dictator: if you do as I say, you will be rewarded (in cash, technical assistance, MFN status, etc.);
- the hard conflict dictator: if you don’t do as I say, you will be punished 'with all necessary means' in the military sense.

We have deliberately used the term 'type', not 'step', as there is no assumption of any 'progress' from lower to higher numbers, nor of any time order in the sense of starting at any point and then adding others. A process can start at any point. Type 6, for instance, does not presuppose Type 5 (although some arguments will be made for that particular order). The difference is that the agenda of Type 6 is richer. Start anywhere, stay there, jump to others, combine, leave the process, at any point, in principle. However, there are weighty arguments for and against certain types, with the additional rider that 'it depends on the circumstances'.

4.2 Four Correlates of the Conflict Intervention Approaches

As we proceed from Type 0 to Type 10 we are accompanied by a number of important variables, all highly relevant for the outcome; all relating one way or the other to the communicative relationship.

1. Increasing appropriation of the challenge derived from solving the conflict by outside parties
   Obviously, in Types 0–2 the inside parties monopolize that challenge; in Types 3–6 the challenge is shared, with an increasing proportion going to the increasingly active outside parties; in Types 7–10 the outside parties monopolize that challenge.
   Once again: if a conflict is 'good' because the contradiction can serve as a force motrice for creative change in the person, social, and world systems, then that positive aspect is increasingly 'stolen' on the way from 0 to 10.
   In Types 0–2 the parties have conflict autonomy; in 3–6 outside parties enter as conflict facilitators; and in 7–10 as conflict managers, or as conflict thieves, in plain language.
   They take the conflict away from the parties: from Type 7 'you have an interesting conflict going on there, let me solve it for you' to Type 10 'I am sick and tired of this nonsense, I’ll tell you what you have to do'.

II. Increasing verticalization of the mode of conflict transformation increases the power distance inside the system
   In Types 7–10 the mediator, arbitrator, judge, and dictator will all tend to be high up – and increasingly so, in terms of authority and/or in terms of resources they can use to tip the balance of the outcome. There are elements of this in Types 3–6 if we assume that the outside parties will use resources like knowledge, skill, and experience that will show up as

- cognitive resources (imagination to transfer insights from work on similar, and different, conflict formations);
- emotional resources (empathy, sympathy, compassion); and
- volitional resources (perseverance, ability to steer, even drive the transformation process).

The sum total of all of this yields authority. Participation as outsider is likely to increase the resources. For a society to have people with conflict knowledge and skills is in itself a resource; the problem is the uneven distribution of that resource. There is also the conflict dictator who may get requests to supply more means of destruction (stick) and means of construction (carrot). The result is increased power distance, and more so the higher the type number.

III. With increasing type number, inner acceptance may decrease and external sustainability increase. With less participation and more dictates from above, it stands to reason that acceptance may decrease, even undergo steep downward jumps. The inner process - including the agony of working one's way to a solution, adding bit by bit, clearing the fog away from acceptable transformations - is not there. On the other hand, outside parties may provide outside resources sustaining the final construction, throwing their authority behind it, implicitly or explicitly using moral power to the point that it seems immoral not to comply with the plan, and/or submit to the remunerative and punitive power.

This yields two extreme types that can be found at the lower and higher type numbers: a transformation so high on acceptance that little or no external support is needed to make it sustainable, and a transformation not internalized in the parties, but sustained from the outside. Put in simple terms: in Types 0-2 the parties owe the compliance morally to themselves; in Types 3-6 they owe it morally to the facilitators in addition to themselves; in Types 7-10 they owe it to the outside parties morally, or they are in for reward/punishment.

IV. With increasing type number, the possibility of attaining the goal-state of being right increases. One thing is the feeling within a party of being right and having a right to this or that; something else is a shared feeling by the parties in a conflict formation of how that precious good is distributed; and a third 'you are right' bestowed upon you vertically, even with a signed certificate, from above.

When the mediator, arbitrator, judge, or dictator comes out more in favor of one than the other(s) in the conflict formation the meta-goal of being right (see – I told you so!) may even overshadow the pleasure of having attained the original goal. This is probably a major reason why people take cases to courts: not merely to be entitled to this or that, but to get moral righteousness.

The general conclusion, then, is to support lower number types: the challenges are where they should be; the processes will empower people all over society, not only a conflict managerial elite; acceptance will be high and so will inner sustainability; and the focus is on the conflict itself, not on some abstract right which may come close to righteousness. However, the parties may not be able to do this: they may have neither the capability nor the motivation; they may even prefer the thrill of the conflict in general and escalating tension in particular, regardless of how they destroy for themselves and others.

So, lower number types are beautiful, but some higher number types may be necessary. The parties may even have to be forced to undergo a transformation that resembles a solution. But, given the many arguments against the highest number types, steered by a general in medias res inclination, this would make us focus on Types 3–6. Before we do that, as a contrast and to explore fundamental aspects of conflict transformation, let us have a closer look at Types 0-2.
4.3 Types 0–2: Autonomous Conflict Transformation

When are parties ready for autonomous conflict transformation? What are the preconditions?

First, deep down in themselves they will have some prognosis of how the process is going to end. There will be some more or less explicit ideas of what the outcome looks like: maybe unclear even to themselves, and still more difficult to communicate to other parties, lest they make use of it in the struggle.

There is the ‘win-lose’ dimension, short term, long term; depending on how they manage the C level. Obviously, short-term ‘win’ and long-term ‘lose’ makes for willingness to enter into dialogue; the opposite profile does not.

But then there is another dimension: diverging versus converging prognoses in the set of actors in the conflict formation. Two actors may disagree on very much, but still know deep inside themselves who will ‘win’. Or that neither will. In either case there are good reasons to short-circuit the conflict process and simply say: ‘Since this is more or less how it is going to end let’s bypass a phase which can only be destructive to all of us and get straight to the more creative phase of finding an acceptable and sustainable outcome.’ A mature thought, not so likely to emerge as long as they differ as to who will ‘win’, whether because they think it is Self (‘keep going, and we’ll end up with a much better deal!’) or Other (‘keep going so we can at least go down with honor?’).

Convergence in prognosis may be more easily identified by outsiders, and then communicated to the parties. But the actors may also, intuitively, identify convergence; perhaps because they suffer from conflict fatigue, or the intensity has peaked anyhow.

Second, the key word is dialogue. That relation is profoundly horizontal, with communication among all actors. In Chapter 2 above about conflict life-cycles the argument has been made that the apology/forgiveness paradigm has very limited applicability: it could be entirely verbal with no soul-searching on either side, presumptuous, and above all: after apology and possible forgiveness there may be no further search for a solution.

The double Buddhist formula seems better. First inner dialogue, in person space, also known as meditation, to clarify one’s own attitudes and assumptions; and then outer dialogue, in social space, also known as dialogue, tout court. In this there is no denial that the Christian approach may also have some validity.

Meditation, then, is seen as indispensable. Space and time should be provided. Meditation is concentration, and it is serious. Body position, breathing, etc. may help; so may a mantra. Basic is the clarification of one’s own inner motives and general conflict philosophy, an often painful self-examination, being one’s own potentially most knowledgeable judge. Entering the conflict dialogue with only one thing in mind, a clever strategy to ‘win’, will hardly contribute to any solution, not even to this ‘winning’.

For the outer dialogue there already exists a good model: the seminar. There may be an initial presentation, or two, or more, but most of the time is made available for mutual brainstorming. The search is on. A room with a round table, all actors around the table and all themes/issues/goals on the table + TIME — that is in principle all that is needed. The basic point is to retain the searching spirit, trying to keep in mind that much more may be obtained for all if nobody tries to ‘win’ by turning the dialogue into a debate, trying to corner others.

Human beings are visual, not only auditory, so diagrams may convey patterns better, just as the verbal presentation may be better for sequential reasoning. There should be paper all over, plenty of felt pens and easy access. The joint search is on, for creative ways out of a destructive conflict.
4.4 Types 3-6: Dialogical Conflict Transformation

We now switch to Types 3–6. Enters the conflict facilitator, someone presumably knowledgeable about this type of situation, preferably experienced in social, political, and world systems, not only one of them. We shall refer to that person as she, which does not necessarily exclude men. But there may be reasons for assuming that women are better for this role: more compassionate and holistic, less aggressive in their verbal and body language.

She might have had some preliminary talks to explore basic facts about the D,P,T triangle as seen by the parties to the conflict, among other reasons to find out whether she herself is suited for that particular case. She would have paid special attention to the level of convergence in the prognoses, not for that reason excluding conflict facilitation if the level is low.

In other words, she is already acquainted with the conflict, perhaps she should use the parties as the first guide into the conflict, not some general or even special literature. Reading may come later. The point about mediation mentioned above is as relevant to her as to the parties: to clarify the mind, to understand one’s own pre-cognitive, emotional and volitional assumptions that may cloud the sensitivity to the merits and demerits of the case. Metaphor: purify the instruments for a very difficult job, like any good chef, or surgeon, or any other kind of artisan would do. Very difficult, but hardly impossible.

The basic question on the road to an acceptable and sustainable outcome (not to be confused with conciliation, which is more at the A level) is how to use dialogue to clarify the D,P,T triangle. But first, let us take the typology as set out in Table 4.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Praxis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliving, factually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliving, counterfactually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prescription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Prognosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Therapy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, what we find among conflict participants is a focus on the past, and on analysis. There are good reasons for this. The focus will tend to be B-oriented, 'he did this, and then I did that', usually very rich in detail, maybe one-sided but not for that reason false, only incomplete. The outsider well-equipped to listen, empathetically, to the analyses, and then add them together, may be close to an adequate picture – permitting, even forcing, the images to complete each other.

But we are not engaged in a social science project with a time dimension, collecting data for a project on oral history. Transformation may be a question of life or death, the extremes of creation and destruction. The whole group, the original conflict formation with outsiders, the facilitators, have somehow to end up in the opposite corner, future- and praxis-oriented rather than past and diagnosis-oriented. Not in the sense that a linear or curvilinear one-way trajectory must be traced in Table 4.1 from the upper left to the lower right corner. Jumps, sidewaywards, backwards, whatever, can and should be made, and simultaneous work on all six combinations. But the general thrust will be as described, and this means that there are two hurdles to overcome: too much focus on the past, and on the analysis.
To overcome both at the same time may be too ambitious, although such jumps ('now, how can this be avoided or solved in the future') followed by a return to analysis of the past, may be recommended. A safer method is probably one step at a time, from past to future, and from analysis to praxis.

The move from past to future. This move is indispensable, since the past evokes all the memories of what went wrong, of direct and structural violence of all types. The actors are likely to be experts here. The past offers an empirical basis for guilt-distribution, mutually among the actors and from above, as they may be hoping that the facilitators will issue 'you were/are right'-certificates, not only leaning toward one party's diagnosis rather than the other's, but also legitimizing past behavior, pushing the guilt away from them and onto somebody else.

The past can be mined for data, and the data can be used, are indeed indispensable, for moral processes and judicial procedures. But these are very special approaches to therapy, shifting attention from the conflict among the participants to the relation of one or some of them to higher authorities: God, or at least the priest; Justice, or at least the judge.

Between the past and the future lies an icy crust: the present, a narrow band in time, cutting out history and future. The attitude may be referred to as a presentism that impedes diagnosis, substituting for it some kind of (journalistic) snapshot description of what is going on right now, blind to roots in the past. What come out are prescriptions, not therapy sensitive to positive and negative side-effects in the future. And the future is like the past: it lasts for a long time.

On the other hand, pastism and futurism are not much better. Digging for roots in the past will increase understanding, which is indispensable. But this may lead to the fallacy of tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner, morally, and to the search for solutions in the past, or extrapolating from the past. Evidently something basic was wrong with that past, so the past can never be a sufficient basis for designing a better future (if it were sufficient, and since we have been in the past for a long time, we would probably have entered that better future already). And a single-minded focus on the present is conducive to the opposite fallacy, a moral judgement not tempered by any understanding. Scylla and Charybdis again.

A single-minded focus on the future may, however, lead to something that for lack of a better word can be referred to as the 'cafeteria fallacy': that the future is open, and we can pick and choose any solution/dish we want. The future may not be totally closed – there may be a positive window, even for a prisoner of the past. But any live system has memory, not only persons, but also social systems (artifacts, such as monuments) and world systems (borders, national days). The past will always be with us, particularly the unprocessed past; inside us, around us, everywhere. How to overcome the time barrier?

The proposal is to stick to analysis and simply invite the participants to make projections on the basis of their diagnoses. The analytical frame of mind, guided by data and challengeable extrapolations from the past, can be kept. The point is to enter futurelandia, together. Once there, so much more can be done, always in an open dialogue with the facilitators participating like the rest, with knowledge and opinions, not holding back. Not too much diagnosis – that may come later.

Of course there will be resistance. The past is safe – not only because participants think they know it, but also because they have built so much of their conflict image around the past. And yet they want to escape from the prison of the past. An invitation to dwell in the future, guided by projections, may reinforce that desire to transcend. If all parties agree that the conflict will take care of itself the facilitators can call it a day. If they do not, the next question, 'how can we change the course of events so as to produce a better future' will come very easily. A turn to the future next door, in Table 4.1.
The move from analysis to praxis. In principle, this should be easier: after all, conflict actors (not merely parties) are acting much of the time. But the present is a barrier, a minefield of strong emotions, and the future is threatening because somewhere there in futurelandia the outcome is located, and there may be so much less in it than they hoped for. That leaves us with the fourth possibility not included in the D,P,T triangle as usually conceived of: returning to the past—but emotionally, experientially, not analytically, in the sense of reliving it.

This can be done two ways, factually and counterfactually.

Imagine a case of sexual harassment, or the Soviet–US crisis in Cuba in the fall of 1962. Get the actors together, not only to analyze what happened, but to enact it. This does not work for conflicts at high B levels, but then the most violent parts may be omitted or indicated only. Why should anyone relive a trauma? To demystify the past, to show that these were ordinary, frail, and vulnerable human beings with all their strengths and weaknesses, nothing mysterious that had fallen down from the sky.

The basic point is the counterfactual way of reliving. Play the drama up to the crisis point, indicate what happened, and then ask the key question: what could have been done? Usually there is some point of no return where the freedom of choice of one or more of the actors is dramatically reduced, because of passion, or interest, or both. Further away from the crisis the cone of choice expands. There were choices on the road, if not in the A, C corners, then certainly in the B corner. Behavior could have been different.

What is the point of this exercise? To show that what happened was not a law of nature; events could have followed a different course. Foresight would have been one condition, and above all empathy, even compassion, with others in the formation, to assess better the consequences of one’s own action. To foster a sense of responsibility, for oneself, and for others. If in that type of session the actors are willing to accept advice about the past from other actors, weighing the pros and cons without claiming that they had no choice, much has been gained.

The factual approach demands good recall; the counterfactual approach calls for imagination. The former may be clouded by distortions and projections, the latter, much in demand, may be in very short supply. So the task of a facilitator becomes to help, to serve as the famous midwife for memory and imagination, the latter also defined as alternative memory. She has to ask and suggest, and then suggest and ask again. The purpose of the factual approach is to overcome the past by reliving it, the purpose of the counterfactual approach to invent the future by changing the history of the past. Both are needed.

After such exercises, breaking the barriers between past and future, and between analysis and praxis at least for the past, any entry into the therapy corner of the Table should be less scary. And at that point the brainstorming dialogue approach is probably the best general formula. The facilitators will, of course, have in the back of their minds the general formulas for conflict transformation from Chapter 3 above, or some similar formulas, and at some point they may suggest one or more of those.

But the best would generally be together to arrive at possible solutions, whether they are of the transcendence, compromise, withdrawal, compensatory, fission-fusion or any other type. For higher complexity, simplification may be needed; for lower complexity, complexification, always with concreteness.

What kind of personality and behavior should one expect from a facilitator? Generally speaking: the best role-models known to all are probably those of the physician and the priest. The basic trait is acceptance that someone is in trouble, in need of assistance. There may be some scolding related to wrong choices, but after that comes general acceptance, and competence. For conflict intervention this means knowledge both of general conflict
4.5 Types 7–10: Imposed Conflict Transformation

This is a different game. The participants have entered a Faustian pact with the Devil—submission on their side, in return for a solution from Other. Even with the conflict dictator, there is a pact of total submission against total dictation. There is always the possibility of refusing to accept, to receive, to hear what the dictator has to say—even if the price could be enormous. Submission means compliance.

The four roles on the top of the mediation—arbitration—rule of law—rule of person paradigms would all have much to learn from Types 3–6. The mediator may still come out with his proposal on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. Chances are that if the conflict participants have all been through the process described in section 4.4 above, the proposal stands a better chance of being acceptable and sustainable. The same applies to the arbitrator. Participants have to take it; but in that case they may even accept, and the result may be sustainable. However, if the actors are representatives of collective actors, even self-called leaders, all that has been obtained is acceptance at the top, with a few signatures. Let one thousand sessions blossom, repeat the process in many places, with maximum participation. Do not fall into the 'like leader, like people' trap, with scraps of paper the only result.

Can the judge enter into dialogue with the defendants? Of course he can, for instance by asking what punishment (criminal case) or decision (civil case) they think would be appropriate. That dialogue might have enormous conflict-solving potential; and the judge could still come up with his own, well-reasoned, verdict. Both sides in this vertical set-up might learn.

Can the conflict dictator be moved to play such games? Only if his will is resisted through tactics like non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Only if the whole conflict formation makes a united stand—like Serbs, Croats, and Muslims uniting to fight a UN/NATO intervention force out to impose a Security Council resolution—will the conflict dictator sooner or later have to resort to lower number types of intervention. Or withdraw.

There are good reasons for all of them to consider bringing dialogical conflict transformation into the picture. To steal challenges may not worry them very much, nor, for that matter, the issue of increased power distance through imposed conflict transformation. But the lack of internal acceptance and internal sustainability may worry them, because it gives their approaches a bad name. A meta-conflict over conflict intervention?

A basic problem is the low likelihood that participants in the conflict will be honest and constructive when exposed to imposed conflict transformation. There is a person to impress because he has power over them. The obvious strategy would be to hold back information, and to be frightened rather than constructive, waiting for the verdict instead of participating in constructing it. Maybe we are dealing here with the remnants of old social orders that took wisdom at the top for granted, or at least a mandate from higher forces. Mediators/arbitrators are not that different from random conflict-solving devices, so there must be a lot of faith in both the wisdom and the mandate. But general horizontalization of conflict transformation would be a major revolutionary change. Lawyers may be unpopular; but anti-judge revolts are still for the future.
4.6 Conflict Interventions and the Conflict Triangle

Back to the conflict triangle: if there is a successful conflict intervention process, carried by the participants, or by outsiders, or by both in a symmetric communicative relationship — what does it do to the corners of the triangle?

First, there is the peace-keeping aspect of lowering B, the level of destructiveness. However, to demand ceasefire or generally good behavior before a communication process can start may be to put the cart before the horse. Communication channels should be kept open for possible conflict transformation.

Second, there is the peace-making aspect in the A corner, changing attitudes and assumptions, but also highly concrete measures to make the new formation sustainable. Attitudes have to become more positive, and assumptions more conducive of peaceful coexistence within that new formation. An emotional outlet is probably a pre-condition; the praxis of reliving the past enters here. But all parties also have to be reasonably convinced that a deeper change in assumptions has taken place, making less likely any reproduction of the same conflict behavior, when given a chance. A mutually guided reprogramming would be the ideal. (For an exploration see Part IV, Chapter 5.)

Third, the peace-building aspect of trying to overcome C, the contradiction. General formulas have been given in Chapter 3; conflict interventions are deliberate ways of trying to implement them. Throughout that effort conscientization, raising the general level of consciousness, will and must take place. The goal is an acceptable formula, defining a new formation; new structures, new institutions.

This is the most difficult and hence most neglected part; this is where things may go wrong.

Notes

1. One model would be Rogers' non-directive counseling; see, for instance, W. U. Snyder, with the collaboration of Carl R. Rogers (and others), *Case-book of Non-directive Counseling* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1947).

2. Types 4, 5, and 6 have not been spelled out. As they form the centerpiece of the typology, they will be dealt with at some length in section 4.4.

3. This is the more technical, hard, use of the term 'mediation'. But there is also a more popular, softer use of the term covering all approaches by outside parties, more like 'conflict worker' or 'facilitator'. I prefer the more technical use since there is a need for a term for that activity. Håkan Wiberg uses 'low key' versus 'high key' mediation for this distinction.

4. One type of conflict resolution might actually be to give the meta-goal to one and the goal to the other: 'A, you are actually right; however, I am going to award the piece of land to B because he needs it more and I am sure you, knowing you are right, will generously accept this decision.'

5. For a definition and exploration of dialogue, its relation to debate (like brainstorming for mutual enrichment versus a verbal game in order to win), and why Socrates cannot be said to have engaged in dialogues (the outcome was pre-programmed), see Johan Galtung, 'Dialogues as Development', *Methodology and Development* (Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1988), ch. 2, pp. 68–92.

6. The word dia does not refer to the number 2, but means 'through' (can also mean 'apart, separate'), in other words through the word, logos. The concept opens for any number of participants. At an approach it favors those gifted with words. This is a good reason why particular attention should be paid to non-verbal communication, including body language, and not only negatively, to avoid expressions of hostility, but positively, to exude an atmosphere of positive transformation.

7. 'Who are you to think you can apologize yourself out of this?', and on the other side, 'Who are you to think you are entitled to hand out forgiveness?'. And yet there is also something beautiful to this paradigm, opening for a new beginning, provided that new beginning is used to move forward.

8. The general formula for winning a debate, particularly in the Occident, is to catch the other in a contradiction between two or more data-, theory- or value-sentences. In a dialogue the focus is on helping each other out of contradictions, or on using the contradictions fruitfully.

9. I am indebted to Professor Svetozar Stojevic for this felicitous formulation of an attitude
found among many outsiders to the situation in ex-Yugoslavia, who neglect the shadows of the past completely, not to mention the shadows in the future.

10. Rapists, or sexually aroused males in general, will tend to claim this. Rightly, or wrongly?

11. Among the many texts in this field the reader may find Roger Fisher and William Ury, Getting to Yes (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1982); John W. Burton, Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), and E. Victoria Shook, Ho’oponopono (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1983) useful. I have serious reservations about Fisher’s book, and they all relate to the subtitle, ‘Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In’. A non-yielding attitude cannot be a good basis. On the other hand, the basic point is, of course, to seek a transcendence whereby no party to the conflict has to give in. Burton’s book contains 56 very useful rules, particularly about third parties, sponsors, panels. And Shook’s book serves as an introduction to how the Hawaiian culture tries to handle conflict.