

Peace and Conflict Studies: Evolution, Relevance, and Approaches for Change

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Abstract

Originally emerging from the amalgamation of varied disciplines, the field of Peace and Conflict Studies has evolved and transformed throughout the years. In its current configuration, it boasts a plethora of analytical tools, theories, and formal as well as informal processes for achieving lasting peace. The following paper details the different historical phases making up the field. It also explores international war, deconstructs conflict, examines theories of Peace and Conflict Studies, and distinguishes between conflict management, resolution, and transformation. It additionally elaborates on informal methods for conflict resolution while making the case for multileveled and collective efforts to transform societal structures, cultures, and mindsets, and to instill transformative peace.

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Introduction

Conflict resolution dates back to the beginning of mankind; however, the academic field of Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) was only established a few decades ago. It was created through the amalgamation of several disciplines and the integration of interdisciplinary theories, research, and practice. The field aspires to dissect conflicts and to find adequate solutions to these conflicts by implementing formal and informal methods. Some scholars insist on stressing both analysis and resolution, giving equal weight to the examination of conflicts and to the design of appropriate and proportional solutions addressing them. Academically, PCS delves into theory, research, and practice to understand the causes of conflicts and further develop conflict theory.

PCS utilizes multileveled analysis to examine issues. These range from the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels to intragroup and intergroup dimensions, all the way up to international and systemic scales. This approach challenges the interstate dimension of international relations (IR). Indeed, PCS emphasizes the study of individual and social structures and relations. The interdisciplinarity of the field makes it possible to adopt manifold perspectives from a plethora of academic disciplines. In turn, this enables the growth of conflict theory to analyze the layers of conflicts and get to their root causes. Throughout the years, the field has acquired a wealth of theoretical and practical tools for conflict analysis and settlement. Furthermore, it has benefitted from the elaboration and increased understanding of concepts such as conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Academicians and practitioners' reflexivity have additionally allowed PCS to transform and shape societies.

Often, conflict has been explained through the lens of goal incompatibility and some conflicts have been characterized as nonviolent or violent. Indeed, conflict can range from a siblings' quarrel over a toy to full-fledged wars leading to massive structural and human losses. For its part, peace is often seen under a positive light. Nevertheless, peace can be negative if tensions persist even when war is absent. Therefore, peace and conflict are not antithetical; peace is rather the opposite of war or violence. The latter can take on different meanings as demonstrated by Galtung.

Galtung's idea of structural violence perceives a type of violence embedded in the social system. This violence generates discrimination, inequity, social injustice, and oppression. Structural violence favors certain segments of the population whilst deprivileging other segments based on different identity considerations which may include class, ethnicity, nationality, race, and religion. Galtung's idea of cultural violence ties into attitudes and beliefs justifying structural violence. Speaking on direct violence, Galtung stipulates that it corresponds to physical violence ranging from verbal attacks to war which are the manifestations of structural and cultural violence. There are interconnections as well between the three forms of violence. As such, they need to be eliminated simultaneously to stop the vicious and self-perpetuating cycle.

The following paper investigates PCS as an academic field. It looks at its evolution, means of analysis, and theories of change. It first provides a historical account of PCS' development. It then explores the conflict analysis while scrutinizing prominent analytical models and theories. Lastly, it differentiates between relevant concepts, examines strategies to create positive change, and details formal as well as informal approaches for peace.

The Historical Evolution of the Field

PCS emerged out of discrepancies within the field of political thought, particularly in relation to realism and neoliberalism and their incomplete attempts at justifying war and peace (Goldstein and

Pevehouse, 2012). As a field, PCS advocates the thorough examination of war and peace linked to basic human needs, cultural differences, economic inequalities, gender dynamics, interpersonal exchanges, and institutional structures, among others.

Throughout the 20th century, PCS has developed through both conferences generating central ideas tied to peace and conflict and the emergence of prominent bodies of work around these notions relayed in books and journals. Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion* (1909) was one such book.¹ In this book, Angell argued that the economic cost of wars far outweighs the gains that they may bring. He posits that this makes war irrational, additionally stipulating that economic interdependence would prevent the occurrence of war. Nonetheless, Angell warns from the build-up of arms which heightens insecurity and the desire to go to war. He perceives the achievement of peace through the implementation of international law in a rational way through the creation of a world court (Angell, 1933). Other books have emerged in the 1900s echoing similar ideas. These were written by the likes of Pitirim Sorokin, Edward H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, Quincy Wright, and E. Jackson. Together, these bodies of work have laid the foundation for the later establishment of Peace and Conflict Studies as a field. Taken individually, their authors wrote on varied subjects, stressing critical inquiries tied to war and peace.

Karl Marx's work has particularly shaped the way in which we study and perceive conflicts. Indeed, Marx's vision of conflict ties this concept to societal change. He posits that the social classes comprising society are in constant competition over scarce resources. Conflict theory has emerged from this trail of thought to detail competition within society and to explain systemic inequalities in relation to power structures. Throughout the period stretching between the 1930s and 1940s, a group of German philosophers jointly known as the Frankfurt School derived critical theory from conflict theory in an attempt to explain the causes of structural inequality, map out actors capable of changing it, and develop norms to criticize and bring about social transformation. (Horkheimer, 1993).²

Particularly prominent in this effort is Georg Simmel who is well-known for his book *The Sociology of Conflict: I* which transformed our approach to conflict. Within this book, Simmel highlighted conflict's potential for societal stabilization. He argued that conflicts ranged in intensity based on various factors which may include parties' emotional investment in conflicts, their desired goals, and the solidarity of opposing groups. Simmel went on to state that conflict resolution would reduce hostility and lead to future agreements. In a nutshell, he made the case for the constructiveness of conflicts (Simmel, 1903).³

In another corner of the world, Mahatma Gandhi gained prominence for his ideas and practices of nonviolence/satyagraha which allowed him to achieve the 1947 Indian independence from Great Britain. These nonviolent thoughts and practices also cemented him as an authority within PCS. Indeed, Gandhi's conceptualization and implementation of nonviolence formed the cornerstone of nonviolent political resistance to social and structural injustices. He had argued that the British could not rule India solely through physical coercion (Gandhi, 1986). Instead, the British needed Indians' cooperation to extend their rule. As such, by withdrawing support from the British, Indians could nonviolently acquire independence. (Gandhi, 1986). Today, nonviolence is commonly used in social movements around the world to advocate for environmentalism, women's rights, LGBTQIA+ groups, and more. (Johansen, 2007).

Other theories have contributed to the evolution of PCS like David Mitrany's functionalism and Kurt Lewin's field theory. The former links to the stabilization of the world order and the increase of its peacefulness, while the latter calls for collective governance and integration, ideas which formed the basis for the creation of regional bodies of governance like the European Union. Mitrany's functionalism is also at the core of conflict analysis and resolution and democratic approaches within political economy (Long and Ashworth, 1999). Complementarily, Lewin's field theory scrutinizes individual and collective patterns of interaction with PCS. To elaborate, Lewin argues that social environments shape individual behaviors (Lewin, 1951). This prompts us to consider conflict cases holistically, including

group dynamics and causal linkages. Additionally, Lewin gained prominence for his three-stage model of change also known as the unfreezing – change – refreeze model which emphasizes the balance of forces making up behavior.⁴

The creation and publication of journals like the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and the *Journal of Peace Research* has further developed PCS. Publishing the very first issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* in 1957, Kenneth Boulding mentioned that such endeavors would help prevent global wars and deepen the study of conflict and IR (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 2015).

However, PCS was not institutionalized until after World War II. We owe its institutionalization to increased awareness about the threat of nuclear weapons (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 2015). The Peace Research Laboratory founded by Theodore F. Lentz in Missouri was the first institution dedicated to the research of peace and conflict. Furthermore, the work of Galtung particularly stands out in developing the field of peace research. The TRANSCEND Method: Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means rapidly gained notoriety around the world in relation to violence prevention and creative conflict transformation. It is anchored in six premises drawing from several religious schools of thought respectively perceiving conflict as a source of both violence and development and stressing the need for dialogue.⁵ John Burton is another academician who significantly contributed to the development of PCS. He is most notably known for his theory of human needs which shifted the body of thought around PCS (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 2015).

All things considered, PCS has exponentially bourgeoned since the 1960s, especially from the 1990s onwards. Today, PCS is interdisciplinary in nature and is taught at different academic institutions all over the world. It covers an array of topics pertaining to social justice, sustainability, multileveled disputes, tools for intervention, and more.

International War

War corresponds to the utmost level of violent conflict and is positioned as a key issue by all IR theorists (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001). Karl von Clausewitz in *On War* defines it as an intentionally violent act aiming to coerce opponents to comply with the other party's wishes (Von Clausewitz, 1989). For their part, Levy and Thompson define war as "sustained, coordinated violence between political organizations" (Levy and Thompson, 2010). War itself occurs among sovereign countries (Howard, 2014).⁶ Rousseau backs this claim; for, he declares that if sovereignty did not exist, wars would not take place (Howard, 2014). Nonetheless, the concept of war has also evolved with events, notably after the Cold War. Nowadays, diverse forms of war exist, including civil war, conventional war, defensive war, guerilla war, hegemonic war, limited war, preventive war, proxy war, total war, and more.

As a field, PCS tasks itself with the investigation of the causes and dynamics of war as well as its escalation and de-escalation based on different actors' behaviors. It acknowledges that versatile socioeconomic and political conditions can impact countries' conduct locally and internationally, thus shifting the nature of war. Understanding the causes of war is equally important as drawing up strategies to manage, resolve, transform, and later on prevent it. Due to the complexity of war, there is no single theory capable of explaining it. This is even more reason for the amalgamation of varied disciplines. Nevertheless, this poses its own epistemological problems (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001). One overarching issue is the idiosyncrasy of war and the impossibility of determining one common cause for all wars.

Overall, international conflicts have their origins in institutional structures, policies, and human beings' nature. Therefore, analyzing war should start within these structures, entities, and individual behaviors. As previously noted, a comprehensive approach factoring in diverse analyses is essential to get to the root causes of violence and war. Nevertheless, attributing social behavior to individual human

behaviors is more tentative nowadays and rarely occurs anymore (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001). That said, psychology remains an important part of dissecting international conflict, but it gives a more accurate picture when combined with macro theories. One of the most salient approaches to study war and its causes links back to Kenneth Waltz's level-of-analysis framework (Waltz, 1959). Waltz explains that war happens at multiple levels, notably the individual, state, and system levels of analyses. These levels may spillover into each other.

The individual level emphasizes the nature and behavior of human beings (Waltz, 1959). It is mostly linked to decision-makers and individuals in power who call the shots regarding domestic and foreign policy. This level enables us to understand how political leaders impact political processes. It also touches upon individual beliefs regarding the international system and community as well as how individual emotions and psychology impact decisions. An important takeaway is that even if confronted with similar circumstances, individuals' internal mechanisms may engender different decisions. Selfishness and greed might influence rational choices and policies too.

The state level focuses on elements which lead individuals and governments to wage war. The structure and internal political organization of a country might make war an appealing option (Waltz, 1959). Other societal factors are also at play. Indeed, democratic peace theory informs us that democracies rarely wage war against each other. Tir and Jasinski (2008) make the argument that leaders may choose to go to war to distract the public from their unhappiness with internal conditions. In this case, divide and conquer strategies may be used to pit the country's population against each other. For instance, Iraq employed this strategy against Kurdish, Shia, and Turkmen minorities in the 1980s.

The system level examines the nature of the world order as well as the power dynamics and military imbalances existing between countries. It also scrutinizes international institutions and law. Seeing as there is no central overarching structure governing the world, the international system operates

differently from national and local systems. World order still exists though and has evolved throughout the years from unipolarity to bipolarity and currently, multipolarity.

Deconstructing Conflicts

PCS aspires to study conflicts at varying levels in order to resolve them in a constructive way. Multidimensional research allows us to uncover deeply rooted causes of specific conflict cases. This research may lead to the emergence of patterns; however, each conflict has its own contextual and theoretical specificities. Deconstructing individual conflicts enables us to better understand their nature and to tailor our resolution approaches to the specific conflict at hand.

As a starting point though, examining conflict patterns can help with predicting the trajectory that individual conflicts may take. To this end, researchers and academicians have developed numerous tools, including those which aid with uncovering the root causes of conflicts. We will discuss some of them below.

Wehr's Conflict Map incorporates conflict history, environment, actors, problems, shifting dynamics, alternative resolution methods, and the potential for regulating conflicts. By specifying the context and the setting of the conflict, this tool distinguishes between the context of the conflict and the conflictual relationships and dynamics between actors.⁷

The Hocker–Wilmot Conflict Assessment Guide is another conflict analysis model. It is a compilation of questions focusing on conflict components such as the nature and orientation of the conflict, individual emotions, attitudes, and behaviors, tried solutions, and identifying opportunities for reconciliation (Wilmot and Hocker, 2007).

For his part, Fred Jandt has developed the Change-Oriented Conflict Analysis model outlining ten steps within conflict analysis (Jandt, 2016). These emphasize the story, information, context, actors, problems, interests and needs, social realities, power, resources, and options for resolution.

Lastly, Byrne and Carter examine *social cubism* and the images evoked by the term (Byrne and Carter, 1996). This model combines different sociocultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical elements. It translates the complexity of issues and the complexity that must be involved in solving them. When interconnections are explored, a more comprehensive approach can be developed to effectively solve a conflict.

Theories Within Peace and Conflict Studies

Being interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in nature, PCS tends to borrow theories from various disciplines to explain conflicts at multiple levels. We have selected the most saliently used and applied theories within conflict analysis and resolution.

Relative Deprivation

Relative deprivation relates to people's perceptions of themselves and of others. It elaborates on the formation of perceptions and explains how greed, selfishness, and a sense of deprivation or entitlement fuel multileveled conflicts (Gurr and Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs Center of International Studies, 1970). Entitlement, in itself, tends to exponentially increase at a faster pace than one's ability to fulfill it. This triggers anger and restlessness and widens the gap between value expectations and capabilities. At this point, individuals either perceive the existence of structural violence within their community or they become aware of its existence. Moreover, the potential degree of aggression increases with the perceived degree of structural violence.

Relative deprivation provides explanations for conflicts at the individual and societal level. Traditionally, it has been geared towards group conflicts. At a group level, perceptions of relative deprivation may trigger social movements and calls for social change. At an individual level, feelings of relative deprivation lead to the expression of individual reactions in the face of disadvantages (Smith and Ortiz, 2002).⁸

Basic Human Needs

The theory of Basic Human Needs (BHNs) echoes Maslow's pyramid of needs ranging from basic human needs all the way up to self-actualization.⁹ At its core, this theory posits that every human being has fundamental needs. If these go unsatisfied, a conflict might erupt. Burton posits the existence of universal needs linked to "identity, recognition, and security" through which we navigate our existence, particularly within society (Burton, 1990). Perceived incompatible individual and societal basic needs may engender deviant behaviors. As multiple variations exist within Basic Human Needs, Galtung believes that it should be regarded as an "approach" rather than a "theory" (Burton, 1990).

Taking matters a step further, Sandole pushes the argument of existing interlinkages between human needs and biology. Parallely, Burton emphasizes a direct causality between the satisfaction of needs and the achievement of social harmony. He elaborates that individuals are willing to go to high lengths to satisfy their needs and that all individuals share similar values and goals. Burton also details "universal sociobiological values" tied to biological drives and motivations which him and Sandole explain in *Generic Theory: Basis of Conflict Resolution*. Our inability to repress certain universal sociobiological needs influences our behavior.

Culture

Cultural components are important considerations within social conflicts both as the conflict is progressing and during the resolution phase. Kevin Avruch maintains the necessity of factoring cultural analysis within problem-solving. He additionally advocates for the analytical leveraging of culture to understand conflict (Avruch, 2003). As an umbrella term, culture encompasses different individuals' beliefs, experiences, identities, thought processes, and patterns of behavior (Avruch, 2003). Avruch and Black (1991) navigate culture's multidimensional role in the creation and resolution of conflicts.

The individualistic or collectivist natures of culture shape societies and their ways of handling

conflicts. In the former, a single person's interest has predominance over that of the group. Orienting oneself and striving for individual achievements are prominent parts of individualistic cultures. On the flipside, collectivist cultures stress the prevalence of group interests over individual interests. Loyalty to the group and conforming to its rules and way of life are essential. Advocating for applying a cultural approach to conflict analysis, Avruch and Black (1991) believe that we have much to gain from adapting and implementing cultural approaches within PCS.

Identity

Identity theories touch upon core aspects of life which influence perception and conflict orientation. Examples of these aspects are gender, politics, and religion. The dynamic nature of identities makes them important yet volatile variables within conflict contexts. Identity threats tend to enflame conflicts. Strongly held in-group identities breed "us versus them" dichotomies and processes of stereotyping and dehumanization. According to Henri Tajfel, *social identity* corresponds to individuals' self-awareness of valued group membership (Tajfel, 1978). It falls within one's cultural community and may be fleeting or enduring, depending on the group and on the societal context.

The formation and persistence of identities or lack thereof remain controversial but nonetheless prominent points to comprehend conflicts and conflict dynamics as well as conflict evolution (Kriesberg, 2003). Human needs theory and other socio-psychological approaches help explain identity formation. The former posits identity as a primordial basic need, while the latter relates identity development to group relations and one's psychological and emotional development because of these relations.

Psychology/Psychoanalysis

Psychology and psychoanalysis allow us to grasp certain conflict dimensions and to fathom the basis for political decisions, particularly those which may launch war, genocide, organized violence, and intractability, among others.

Staub asserts that people leading difficult lives are psychologically challenged by their difficult conditions. As individuals attempt to weed through these challenges, they often engage in dehumanization and enemy view as well as blame infliction on other individuals or groups. Relatedly, Volkan sets forth some psychological approaches tied to protracted ethnic conflicts. He advances that individuals' psychological conditions prolong human conflict (Volkan, 1997). For instance, othering and enemy view perpetuated mistrust among communities in Northern Ireland.¹⁰

Conflict Management, Resolution, and Transformation

Conflict management, resolution, and transformation are alternative means of tackling conflicts to halt violence or prevent its escalation. Conflict management and resolution predate conflict transformation. Conflict management refers to formal and informal processes allowing us to positively control conflict and reach a peaceful solution. Conflict resolution encompasses strategies and approaches moving parties away from zero-sum thinking to win-win outcomes. It targets the de-escalation and annihilation of conflict and aims to reach a state in which all parties are satisfied with the result. (Lederach, 2003). Conflict management and conflict resolution should not be used interchangeably as they are two different processes (Robbins, 1978). To elaborate, conflict management centers around controlling a conflict to prevent further escalation. It does not however require conflict resolution or transformation.

This points us towards conflict transformation which goes a step further than conflict resolution. Conflict transformation emerged in the 1990s. It has evolved and developed throughout the years. Lederach particularly takes it to signify an intervention for lasting and sustainable positive change.¹¹ Conflict transformation is a continuous process that is relationship oriented. It aims to reach constructive change which allows for the deepening of relationships' quality.

Mediation

Mediation is a conflict resolution approach which engages a neutral third party in assisting

conflicting parties to draw up an agreement that is acceptable to them. It is a recognized method of transforming conflicts in a satisfactory way. Impartiality is a key characteristic for its success. Mediation exists in three main forms: facilitative, narrative, and transformative.¹² The first emphasizes the creation of a safe environment for parties to actively engage in mutual listening and to take turns in asking questions. In this form of mediation, the third party does not provide input geared towards conflict resolution. Nonetheless, mediators focus on encouraging communication to increase mutual awareness of the other's viewpoints and needs.

Meanwhile, narrative mediation targets conflict perceptions and outcomes. It similarly stresses on curiosity, reflexivity, respect, and trust. It urges parties to share their stories. It is based on the premise of social constructivist elements found within conflicts such as discourse, language, or narrative. The language and word choices of individuals when portraying their thoughts and ideas open a window into their experiences and perceptions of conflicts. This helps build commonalities and shared meaning which ease conflict resolution.

Finally, transformative mediation attributes ownership of the process to conflicting parties who take responsibility of the outcome. Beyond conflict resolution, transformative mediation revolves around quality human interaction and the deepening of relationships.

Negotiation

Negotiation is utilized in conflict resolution to tear down differences between conflicting parties. Fisher and Uri flesh out the back-and-forth within communication during processes of negotiation. This method spotlights similar and dissimilar interests (Fisher and Ury, 1991). It plays up mutual gains and interdependence to diverge from zero-sum views (Wilmot and Hocker, 2007).

Barsky foregrounds capacity building within conflict resolution to reach positive outcomes. This entails conflict assessment, trust building, and pre-mediation (Barsky, 2000; Barsky, 2008). It prepares

individuals and groups for dialogue and negotiations through motivation, skills development, and resources. It also helps get parties to the dialogue or negotiation table (Barsky, 2000; Barsky, 2008). Part of capacity building relates to creating shared value and mutual contexts which enable conflicting parties to expand options without commitment to results (Ross and Rothman, 1999). Examples of this include informal discussions and problem-solving training.

Fisher and Ury advocate for the use of “principled negotiation” as a replacement for bargaining strategies tied to positionality (Fisher and Ury, 1991). In stringent and strenuous negotiations, zero-sum thinking dominates, and positions harden. This usually deadlocks negotiations and prevents them from moving forward (Holmes, 1992). Nonetheless, concessions solely made by one party leave lingering tensions. This is where principled negotiation comes in as an innovative approach and middle ground between parties to create win-win scenarios (Fisher and Ury, 1991). It involves collaboration and problem-solving to push parties towards integrative negotiation (Holmes, 1992).

Among negotiation theories, it is important to unravel ripeness theory and readiness theory. The former accentuates the prominence of timing within negotiations and the finding of a “ripe” moment when parties are ready to overcome a stalemate. This usually occurs when parties realize their discomfort or the cost of the conflict or their inability to win the conflict (Zartman, 2000). As for readiness theory, it adds to the reasons for which conflicting parties are inclined to negotiate. Readiness theory spotlights a single party and delves into its process of thought. On the one hand, it highlights motivation impacted by conflict costs, risks, and external pressure. On the other hand, it stresses the need for optimism regarding a conflict’s end results. Both elements should be present to trigger positive outcomes (Pruitt, 2007).

Informal Methods of Conflict Resolution

Both formal and informal methods of conflict resolution are utilized to positively manage, resolve, and transform conflicts (Askerov, 2014). Empowerment, interfaith dialogue, interactive problem-solving

workshops, storytelling, and transitional justice represent some of them. Lederach reasons that conflict transformation must simultaneously begin at the top, middle, and grassroots levels to bring about sustainable peace (Lederach, 1998). As we take a closer look at each level, we understand that what is Lederach would like us to pinpoint or map out active actors within each of level and to examine how their work and positionality within the system can contribute to building a multileveled peacebuilding approach. We will now delve a little deeper into explaining Lederach's levels.

Efforts at the grassroots level are carried out in local spaces where local leaders, NGO staff, community organizers and others assist individuals in defining respect and in engaging in intercultural dialogues tackling trauma and stereotypes (Lederach, 1998). Grassroots leaders' localized power and influence help them in these endeavors (Pearson, 2001).

Middle-level leaders encompass individuals whose authority, power, and influence transcend local contexts to permeate different ethnic, racial, or religious communities. These include intellectuals, humanitarians, and religious as well as ethnic leaders. They engage in problem-solving initiatives such as peace education training, problem-solving workshops, and the creation of peace commissions.

Lastly, at the top level we find the cultural, economic, military, political, and religious leaders who sit at the negotiation tables. All three levels operate synchronously and combine together to exacerbate violence or permeate peace (Lederach, 1998).

Turning back to informal conflict resolution approaches, we find that they are diverse and many. Some examples include peace education, interfaith dialogue, interactive problem-solving workshops, forgiveness, reconciliation, negotiating for mutual gains, empowerment, storytelling, and nonviolence. These may build on each other to amplify peacemaking and peacebuilding processes within informal contexts. As for negotiations, they negotiate space within both formal and informal settings. We will now briefly discuss the theoretical grounding of these informal conflict resolution processes.

Peace Education

Peace education is a powerful means of achieving positive change through commitment to humanity and common consciousness (Harris and Morrison, 2003). It is an essential component within conflict transformation at all levels, and particularly within religious conflicts and ethnic conflicts (Bekerman and McGlynn, 2007). Continuous peace education is needed to orient individuals towards peace and peacebuilding. Nonetheless, it must be accompanied by structural changes, especially within the economic and political realms.

Today, peace education is widespread, particularly within divided societies (Askerov, 2010). In fact, several countries prefer soft approaches favoring political diplomacy instead of hard approaches and divisive hostilities. Nonetheless, diplomacy, on its own, is insufficient to piece matters back together in the aftermath of conflicts occurring within divided societies. Moreover, when peaceful cultural coexistence is hindered due to feelings of injustice towards *the other*, peace education gains prominence as a primary tool for knowledge acquisition and cultural transmission (Zuzovski, 1997).

Intergenerational trauma and historical memories surrounding violent demeanors mold young minds. This increases the need for adult education to reframe historical recounts and integrate them in the conflict transformation process, especially within protracted conflicts (Ury, 2001). Additionally, systemic attempts at peace education must incorporate multileveled engagement from the part of governments, ministries of education, political parties, labor unions, commercial enterprises, schools, universities, and families as well as communities (Johnson, 2007). For Galtung, the localization of peace and peace education are critical for the inclusion of all people (Galtung, 1983).

Peace education also contributes to teaching individuals about compassion, love, nonviolence, and the sanctity of all life (Harris and Morrison, 2003). It primarily aims to oppose violence and to show individuals that there are alternative to violence. It likewise teaches about the causes of violence and its

consequences (Harris, 2002). Finally, peace education seeks to positively influence and transform existing conditions by altering social structures and thought patterns as well as mindsets developed due to archaic social structures (Reardon, 1988).

Interfaith Dialogue

If religion can motivate individuals to fight for their rights, then it should have the power to also increase mutual understanding and pave the way for constructive conflict resolution and transformation (Amaladoss, 2001). If religion is used in a constructive manner, several religious traditions can come together to strengthen human solidarity and stand opposite to dehumanization, human suffering, and violence (Francoeur, 2006; Arinze, 2002). Interfaith dialogue taking place within and through religious institutions has the capacity of bringing people from varied faith backgrounds together. It can also connect individuals at different top, middle, and grassroots levels. Interfaith dialogue itself takes a plethora of forms having different goals. These dialogue sessions have the capacity to delve into an array of issues which are primordial for participants. Conversely to debate and rivalry, interfaith dialogue aspires to generate conversation around mutual problem-solving. Likewise, it promotes trust building to ease tensions and anxiety and to decrease fear within tumultuous conflict areas.

Interactive Conflict Resolution

Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR) is an intervention aiming to alter the views and perceptions of middle-class elites who have the power to influence conflict and the capacity to interact with it. Informal conflict resolution techniques such as ICR emphasize subjective relationships and build on certain individuals' ability to impact their milieu. This is important, particularly in the case of ethnic conflict and it has been gaining traction (Fisher, 2007). Fisher and Mitchell underline the need for interplay between

official and unofficial processes of conflict resolution to address and redress intractable conflicts of an ethnic or political nature (Fisher, 2005; Mitchell, 2008).

Herbert Kelman maps out five assumptions revolving around the nature of conflict and conflict resolution. These ensue from social-psychological analyses which can support third parties to outline and develop the content and interactive exercises within interactive problem solving workshops (IPW) for parties within a protracted conflict (Kelman, 1997; Kelman, 2000). International or interethnic conflicts posit the individual as an appropriate unit of analysis due to key conflict resolution processes' reliance on individual skills and competencies such as creative problem solving, empathy, and learning. Furthermore, international conflicts are simultaneously intersocietal or interethnic phenomena. This renders them complex and requires that we broaden our views towards diplomacy to incorporate a mixture of formal and informal conflict resolution processes, thus showcasing the essential role of IPWs within interethnic conflicts. Additionally, the dynamic nature of conflicts, their interactivity, as well as their self-perpetuating trait demand interactions to reverse their escalation and perpetuation. Breaking this cycle necessitates informal approaches alongside formal ones. Moreover, constructive conflict resolution greatly benefits from the utilization of power and influence to achieve results. It also relies on refining strategies and buttressing them with positive promises and incentives. Withal, human-oriented initiatives delving into people's needs and their rights are essential in reaching positive change. Lastly, the dynamic nature of ethnic conflicts urges us to explore possibilities to achieve this positive change and to look for conditions enabling its realization. This includes overcoming old mentalities which are resistant to change (Kelman, 1997; Kelman, 2000).

Storytelling

Storytelling is yet an additional unofficial conflict resolution process. It prioritizes personal stories, feelings, and recounting past experiences to build trust and understanding among parties within a conflict

(Bar-On, 2002). In a way, storytelling is a double-edged sword as it can be simultaneously constructive and destructive (Senehi, 2000). Indeed, stories that are told may bring up past traumas and shine a more explicit light on “us versus them” dichotomies. They might also bring up stereotypes, prejudgments, and prejudice as well as conflicting images of others while masking inequalities, misrepresenting societies or communities, and heightening negative perceptions and tensions. Nevertheless, they have the ability to enhance peace at the same time. This is done through mutual dialogues in which power is shared in addition to recognizing the self and the other. Raising consciousness is another key element within these dialogues in addition to the resistance of domination and the practical teaching of conflict resolution through storytelling and other strategies (Senehi, 2009). Storytelling leverages the linkages between stories and societies or communities to transform conflicts. Indeed, it contributes to the co-production of meaning during dialogues, but also within social life. It also fleshes out the realities of everyday life and of the conflict itself. Since stories act as sources of local knowledge, it is fundamental to integrate them within conflict resolution initiatives to thwart colonial reproduction, coercion, and oppression between parties (Senehi and Byrne, 2006). Finally, storytelling is a form of empowerment as it makes people aware of the conflict and of their conscious and unconscious conditions. Therefore, it acts as a wake-up call and as an awareness-raising tool about the nefarious aspects of conflict and the positive opportunities which exist for risk reduction, peace promotion, and the fight against oppression (Senehi, 2000).

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Morton Deutsch states that forgiveness is “giving up rage, the desire for vengeance, and the grudge toward those who have inflicted grievous harm on you, your loved ones, or groups with whom you identify” (Hawk, 2007). Additionally, forgiveness underlines the acceptance of “the other into one’s moral community so that he or she is entitled to care and justice” (Hawk, 2007). It has overlapping dimensions tying back to behavior, cognition, and emotions. According to Cioni, restructuring our thoughts and re-

envisioning offenders are both pivotal to begin walking the path towards psychological and spiritual forgiveness (Cioni, 2007). As mentioned by Hawk, forgiveness does not translate into forgetting an event or relinquishing justice; rather, it foregoes the idea of revenge to achieve justice, seeking more conciliatory and less harmful actions and processes (Hawk, 2007). Garrard adds that forgiveness is inextricable from human nature. Furthermore, it is a factor choice rather than one of obligation (Garrard, 2002). From a religious standpoint, the majority of religions preach about forgiveness and the importance of forgiving those who wronged us (Lauritzen, 1987). Moreover, various studies demonstrate the positive correlation between forgiveness and religious duty and problem-solving (Webb, Chickering, Colburn, Heisler, and Call, 2005; Lauritzen, 1987).

As for reconciliation, it holds varied meanings which unveil different interpretations and understandings of the concept and the process (Meierhenrich, 2008). Reconciliation centers around the reparation of a broken or tense relationship. It reconnects individuals, reinvigorates their exchanges, rebuilds their trust, and restores collaboration between them in the aftermath of a conflict (Hawk, 2007). Shriver speaks about four core aspects of reconciliation: commitment, empathy, forbearance, and tolerance (Shriver, 1995). These tie into the acknowledgement of existing interdependencies between parties. Authentic truth must be admitted and recognized by conflicting parties before engaging in reconciliatory practices. If omitted or unacknowledged, conflict resolution might reach an impasse (Gibson, 2006; Lerner, 2007; Staub, 2006). Parties' beliefs in different truths or versions of the truth might as well hinder attempts at reconciliation.

Nonviolence

Nonviolence condemns the infliction of physical harm and/or psychological hurt on human beings. Some practitioners go as far as stating that it prohibits harm towards all living entities, including the global ecosystem (Lyons, 2007). Nonviolent actions have been established as a cornerstone for social and societal

change in addition to being a way of life for reaching positive peace (Vellacott, 2000). Throughout history, several outspoken and enthusiastic change-makers and leaders have instrumentalized nonviolence within social movements to pressure governments and protest oppressive policies.

Techniques pertaining to nonviolence can be positively implemented to various causes ranging from freedom of speech to human rights and women's rights. Direct nonviolence stipulates the use of nonviolent approaches to peacefully impact conflicts (Burrows, 1996). It encompasses strategies and tools to directly oppose decisions and condemn systems grounded in injustice and inequality. On the other hand, structural nonviolence integrates societal structures which encourage cooperation, equality, openness, reconciliation, and recognition within conflicts (Burrows, 1996). NGOs and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in addition to democratic institutions all constitute structures that help propagate nonviolence or that utilize nonviolent tools to advocate for peace. Finally, cultural nonviolence pertains to the transmission of a culture of peace and nonviolence, including relevant values, attributes, and practices (Burrows, 1996).

Empowerment

Peace requires resilience, strength, outspokenness, persistence, and perseverance to concretize and actualize. Empowerment builds up individuals and their skills to become effective peacemakers and peace practitioners. It strengthens individuals within all societal and institutional levels and comprises principles of access to education, good governance, access to healthcare, and human rights. In order to bring about positive change in the aftermath of a conflict, individuals must be empowered with knowledge, resources, and skills so that they can be involved in the peacebuilding process. The concept of empowerment falls under the umbrella of human security which includes economic well-being, physical safety, social inclusion, and the enjoyment of all human rights (Askerov, 2019; Ogata, 2003). Democratic norms and values help forward the concept of human security as they emphasize openness and responsibility (Wilson,

2006). To be achieved, human security necessitates collaborations and partnerships across different levels and should involve varied actors such as CSOs, governments, private entities, and more.

That being said, social conflict is all the more intricate to the extent that no single theory from those mentioned above can adequately portray its causes. Therefore, it is important to ensure that we are capturing the intricacies of each conflict when engaging or preparing to engage in conflict management, resolution, and transformation. As such, a combination of various theories is needed to convey the smaller details and to gain a better understanding of the bigger picture. For instance, community-based problem-solving approaches can enable us to tackle conflicts from multileveled perspectives and allow us to design processes building towards lasting peace. This is solely possible through the involvement of top, middle, and grassroots leaders, thus multiplying the efficiency of the peacebuilding process (Lederach, 1998).

Conclusion

Having developed from the amalgamation of different fields, Peace and Conflict Studies nowadays is a free-standing discipline which challenges fundamental approaches to conflict analysis and resolution. It also provides insights into social relations happening at varied levels ranging from the individual to the communal and international arenas. PCS thrives on raising awareness about world issues, amplifying minority voices, underlining individual responsibility, and advocating for social justice. It seeks to build equal and equitable gender relations and to foster interfaith dialogue and intercultural understanding to achieve local and global peace. This requires collective efforts to transform relationships, structures, and spaces. As a field, PCS rises above borders and obstacles in its quest to connect individuals and groups.

Overall, PCS acknowledges underlying theoretical and practical implications. It examines attitudes, behaviors, cultures, identities, and structures within varying contexts and conflicts and at multiple levels to gain a better understanding of the root causes of conflict. It likewise strives to address conflicts in a nonviolent and peaceful manner and to iron out disagreements among versatile actors. It

posits that the combination of formal and informal conflict resolution processes is essential to resolve and transform conflicts and to build lasting peace.

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Notes

¹ *The Great Illusion* was originally published in 1909 in the United Kingdom. The 1909 version was titled *Europe's Optical Illusion*. The book was then republished in 1910 and 1933 as *The Great Illusion*.

² For Horkheimer, a critical theory should be explanatory, realistic, practical, and normative at the same time. It needs to elaborate on problems, pinpoint actors capable of intervening to solve them, and offer critical norms as well as realistic goals to transform conflict.

³ Simmel wrote that “Conflict itself is the resolution of the tension between the contraries.”

⁴ Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), the brain behind social psychology, theorized a three-partite change model: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. *Unfreezing* revolves around changing old and counterproductive ways and patterns. *Changing* centers around altering behavior, feeling, thoughts, or a combination of these. As for *Refreezing*, it enables the establishment of change as a preventive habit in order not to go back to the initial state of matters.

⁵ TRANSCEND leverages education/training, dissemination, and research to build lasting peace. It does so through the nonviolent transformation of conflicts and the use of creativity and empathy to develop sustainable solutions. For more information, visit transcend.org.

⁶ Howard describes war as abnormal and pathological. He believes the same of all conflict types.

⁷ Context includes communication networks and patterns, decision-making methods, geographical boundaries, political structures, relations, and jurisdictions.

⁸ Different accounts of relative deprivation do not distinguish between relative deprivation at the personal level and relative deprivation at the group level.

⁹ According to Maslow, basic human needs vary between basic physiological necessities and psychological requirements tied to self-esteem and actualization. Our behavior is an attempt to meet these needs.

¹⁰ Volkan's written works, particularly *Bloodlines* (1997) and *Immigrants and Refugees* (2017), stress psychoanalysis' role in conflict analysis.

¹¹ J.P. Lederach delves into the key characteristics of conflict transformation in *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*.

¹² *Transformative Change* by Reimer, Schmitz, Janke, Askerov, Strahl, and Matyok details the discrepancies between three types of mediation. Putting their unique characteristics aside, these three models of mediation share the common goal of assisting conflicting parties to comprehend their differences based on the positionality of the other.