

Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation Practice:
Is There A Difference?

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my husband, Dr. Bradley P. Lehman, and two inspiring children, Afton Elisabeth and Cormac Arthur.

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ABSTRACT

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION PRACTICE: IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

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This research is a comparative study of professional practice related to two schools of thought in the field of nonviolent conflict intervention: conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The research relies upon a thorough review of scholarly literature related to these two schools and on primary data collected from twenty semi-structured interviews with professional conflict intervention practitioners.

The central question that guided the research was: Do practitioners' definitions (self-definitions and definitions of the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*) and theories of practice, including goals, intervention strategies, and criteria for success, depend upon their self-identification with either the conflict resolution or conflict transformation school of thought? Categories of analysis for self-definitions and intervention strategies arose from practitioner reports. Data related to

goals and criteria for success were plotted on a framework for evaluating interactive conflict resolution which provided a structure for comparison.

The findings show that some practitioners do refer to their practice exclusively as either conflict resolution or conflict transformation. The data provide evidence however, that other practitioners use the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* contextually for strategic, pragmatic, or philosophic reasons. The subsequent comparative analysis describes the similarities and differences in practice between each of these categories of practitioners. The comparative analysis shows that practitioners across definitional categories look beyond the various schools of thought and share a broad range of goals, intervention strategies, and criteria for success.

The research is relevant to everyone interested in research on practice. It will be of special interest to all those in the evolving field of nonviolent conflict intervention where tensions related to professional identity are part of the current discourse in the field. The study encourages consideration of the philosophical and practical complementarity of conflict resolution and conflict transformation, two, sometimes competing, schools of thought.

Chapter One: Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This thesis is an exploratory and descriptive study of definitions and theoretical understandings of conflict resolution and conflict transformation, and theories of practice related to those two concepts. It provides a survey of the scholarly literature and reports the findings from qualitative research interviews in which practitioners were asked about their self-definitions, definitions of conflict resolution and conflict transformation, and their theories of practice including intervention strategies, goals, and criteria for success. These are compared and contrasted to determine whether they depend upon identification with either the conflict resolution or the conflict transformation school of thought within the field of nonviolent conflict intervention.

There are abundant terms in use in the field to describe both practice categories (e.g. Conflict Resolution, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Conflict Management and many more) and the processes and strategies in use within those categories (e.g. mediation, facilitation, problem-solving workshops, process design, training, among others). But as Kevin Clements, a practitioner and scholar, notes,

The reality is, however, that there is considerable confusion within the field about the meanings of terms such as *conflict management*, *conflict*

resolution, and *conflict transformation*. They are often used very loosely and interchangeably and sometimes refer to exactly the same strategies (2002).

The purpose of this study is to address this confusion by 1) contributing to theoretical knowledge about the terms used in the field, 2) contributing to an understanding of practitioners' implicit theories of practice and the distinctions practitioners make in relation to schools of thought in the field, and 3) clarifying distinctions practitioners make between their own definitions, goals, strategies, and criteria for success and those of other colleagues in the field.

Use of “conflict intervention”

Throughout the study, I have used the term “conflict intervention” or “nonviolent conflict intervention” and occasionally “consensual approaches to conflict” to signify the broadest possible conceptual category (represented by a term or short phrase) for the field in general. The term in this case may be taken to mean any nonviolent and/or consensual approaches in use in the field. The term is inclusive of all conflict resolution, conflict transformation, conflict management, dispute resolution, conflict engagement, and conflict prevention processes.

Contributions to the Field

The completed study contributes knowledge to the field by providing a thorough review of literature, clarification of theoretical similarities and differences, and a comprehensive analysis and comparison of direct findings from practitioner interviews. The resulting knowledge contributes to each of the areas of theory, research, and practice.

The initial questions that prompted the research appear below in each of these three areas with subsequent comments on contributions to the field.

Theory

The study seeks to support theory-building in the field by helping to distinguish between *conflict transformation* and *conflict resolution*.

This study investigated scholarly and practitioner **definitions** of *conflict transformation* and *conflict resolution* to determine if these definitions are distinct. The literature review in Chapter Two compares and contrasts these concepts as documented in the scholarly literature. The research findings described in Chapter Five clarify the practitioner definitions.

The study also sought to determine if *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* **philosophies** are distinct. Theorists argue that conflict transformation and conflict resolution have different values (Lederach, 1995a; Miall, 2002; Rupesinghe, 1995; Vayrynen, 1991). The exploration of the scholarly literature compares and contrasts conflict resolution and conflict transformation as separate schools of thought.

Chapter Five reports findings related to practitioners' understandings of conflict transformation and conflict resolution and whether they subscribe to either of these schools of thought, use only one or the other approach to practice, or if they see them as distinct strategic approaches to practice.

After carefully reviewing the literature on **processes** in use within conflict resolution and conflict transformation, the research reports differences and similarities. The study also contributes to the literature in conflict resolution and conflict

transformation by helping to clarify practitioner distinctions between intervention approaches, processes and strategies used, articulated goals, and expected outcomes of the two.

Finally, the study contributes to the theory of evaluation for both conflict resolution and conflict transformation by determining if broad assessment frameworks like the Framework for Evaluating Intergroup Interactive Conflict Resolution proposed by d'Estree, et al (d'Estree, 2000b), can be utilized for comparative purposes.

Practice

The study seeks to support practice in the field by encouraging practitioners to reflect on their practice by participating in interviews, by helping to distinguish between conflict transformation and conflict resolution as practical approaches, and by helping practitioners to understand theoretical distinctions in the field.

The study reports how practitioners classify themselves based on self-categorization and identification with the conflict resolution or conflict transformation schools of thought and how they view their practice in relation to those classifications and their definitions of conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

The study elicited practitioners' goals, criteria for success, and intervention strategies and processes in relation to how they identify themselves. By charting goals and criteria for success on an objective framework (d'Estree, 2000b), differences and similarities were identified. A broad array of intervention strategies and processes were also identified. These are compared in categories that arose from the study. All

comparative data on goals, criteria for success and intervention strategies and processes are reported in Chapter Five.

Research

The study seeks to fill a gap in research by investigating the field itself in order to provide insights into conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches or schools of thought related to conflict intervention.

Very little research has been done on either conflict resolution or conflict transformation as distinctive approaches to intervention. The study reviewed literature and questioned practitioners in order to determine the current state of conflict resolution and conflict transformation theory as well as practice. This study is among the first to ask in a systematic way if there are distinguishing features of conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

No research has been done to compare the theories of practice (goals, intervention strategies, or criteria for success) related to conflict resolution and conflict transformation. This research study is the first to attempt to document these similarities and differences.

Finally, this researcher has found no (published) comparative research studies between conflict resolution and any of the other schools of thought in conflict intervention (e.g. conflict management, dispute resolution, or conflict transformation). Clarification, through research, of the basic similarities and differences within and between these philosophical approaches to practice provides a valuable starting place for future research.

Structure of the Study

In order to systematically address the questions above, the study was structured to answer a central question and associated “guiding questions”.

The *central question* for the research was: Do practitioners’ definitions, theories of practice (goals, intervention strategies, and criteria for success) depend upon their identification with either a conflict resolution or a conflict transformation approach to conflict intervention?

This central question was considered in two ways:

- Are there differences in definitions and theories of practice (goals, strategies, and expected outcomes) **among** practitioners who describe their approach to conflict intervention as either *conflict resolution* or *conflict transformation*?
- Are there differences in definitions and theories of practice (goals, strategies, and expected outcomes) **between** practitioners who describe their approach as *conflict resolution* or *conflict transformation*?

The following diagram shows the relationships to be compared in the research:

	Conflict Resolution Practitioners	Conflict Transformation Practitioners
Conflict Resolution Practitioners	Comparisons among	Comparisons between
Conflict Transformation Practitioners	Comparisons between	Comparisons among

Guiding Research Questions

Using a multi-method research design (described in Chapter Four), the research investigated the following exploratory and descriptive questions:

Research Question 1: What are Practitioners' Definitions?

- a. What are practitioners' self-definitions and how do practitioners categorize themselves and their approaches to nonviolent conflict intervention?
- b. What are the definitions of *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* in use by practitioners?
- c. How do practitioner definitions of *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* compare to definitions in the scholarly literature?

Research Question 2: What are Practitioners' Theories of Practice?

- a. Are there distinct theories of practice (goals and intervention strategies) for conflict resolution and conflict transformation?
- b. What are practitioners' goals for their interventions? How do these compare among and between practitioners from different approaches?
- c. Among and between practitioners from different approaches to conflict intervention, are there differences in the processes (i.e. facilitation, training, consultation, mediation, problem-solving workshops, or round-table discussions) that they use?
- d. What are practitioners' strategies, practices, and tools for going about their work? Among and between practitioners from different approaches, are there differences in their strategies, practices, or tools?

- e. Do practitioner assumptions correspond to the scholarly literature describing conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches to conflict intervention?

Research Question 3: What are Practitioners' Criteria for Success?

- a. What are the criteria for success that practitioners articulate, and how do they compare and contrast between and among practitioners in the various categories?
- b. How do practitioners' espoused theories (goals), intervention strategies and criteria for success (theories-in-use) compare?
- c. Can practitioners' self-evaluations of success (or failure) be supported by evaluation documents or participant testimony?

Research Question 4: Effectiveness of ICR Framework?

- a. Is d'Estree's framework for evaluating Interactive Conflict Resolution an appropriate model for differentiating and comparing conflict resolution and conflict transformation?
- b. Are the identified criteria sufficient to categorize all data elicited from interviews with practitioners of conflict resolution and conflict transformation? Are there significant criteria identified by practitioners that are not included in this framework?
- c. Are the criteria sufficient for comparison between expected outcomes of interventions conducted from the conflict resolution approach and the conflict transformation approach?

Research findings from this study for each of these questions are reported in Chapter Five.

Motivation for the Study

The personal motivation for this research study comes from the experience of balancing my education and experience between two schools of thought related to conflict intervention: conflict analysis and resolution and conflict transformation.

As a Mennonite educated in Mennonite institutions for high school and college, I had a firm understanding of Mennonite ideals of peace, nonresistance and nonviolence. However, as a Mennonite socialized to value peace at the expense of personal goals and aspirations, I didn't have the tools I needed to understand conflict, much less do something about it.

Seeking sophistication, I looked to George Mason University for theories of conflict resolution and peace as well as skills for dealing with conflict. While my coursework in the MS program at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) did provide significant theoretical background and some valuable skills practice, it also provided something more. Faculty members and mentors including Christopher Mitchell, Juliana Birkhoff, Wallace Warfield, Frank Blechman, and Dennis Sandole helped raise important philosophical questions about why and how we do this work.

Before completing my studies, I was hired by Eastern Mennonite University's then Conflict Transformation Program (CTP) to help guide and implement the newly-formed Summer Peacebuilding Institute. My responsibilities included writing promotional materials and grants for the program. It was partly due to this assignment of having to write about and publicize a program with "Conflict Transformation" in the title and having been educated at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and "Resolution" that I

began trying to sort out the differences in how we talked about and marketed concepts in our field. I was frequently in the position of having to consider the complexities that arise around questions of definition (identity), differences in practice, and approaches to evaluation that arise in the practice of conflict intervention between these two approaches.

I spent many hours in discussion with colleagues, John Paul Lederach, Ronald Kraybill, Vernon Jantzi, Cynthia Sampson, and eventually Barry Hart, Nancy Good Sider, Lisa Schirch, Jayne Docherty and others, trying to sort out the definitions and words that reflected EMU's Conflict Transformation Program and its unique niche in conflict studies in higher education. I also participated in Bill Warter's Delphi Study of higher education programs and contributed to discussions about practice as part of the higher education gatherings at the 1995 National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution (NCPCR) and Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) conferences. Through these discussions and attending NCPCR, ACR and Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA) conferences, I began to suspect that others had similar questions about terminology in the field.

It has been in my teaching, however, and observing the teaching of my colleagues that I finally came to the important question. Are the practical approaches that we teach (tools, techniques, strategies) at a *conflict resolution* school different from the practical approaches taught at a *conflict transformation* school? When I construct my mediation course for EMU, how is it different from the mediation courses being taught at George Mason University? This comparison between various philosophies/schools of thought

and the realities of practice (or training for practice) became my key area of interest for this study.

The research study also emerged from my growing interest in evaluation criteria as a foundation for comparison. Returning to ICAR in 1999 for the doctoral program, I was privileged to have courses with Tamra Pearson d'Estree and to participate in testing the *Framework for Evaluating Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR Framework)* then being developed, by applying a research study from Northern Ireland. This provided a hands-on opportunity to compare conflict transformation and conflict resolution outcomes and criteria for success.

The questions of this dissertation are my personal questions as well as questions for the field. It is my hope that the proposed research will form a baseline for beginning to determine meaningful similarities and differences between the various schools of thought and practice. At the least, it may provide some insight into the difficulties of analyzing conflict resolution processes, and at the most, it may become the foundation for further research such as a large-scale survey or other study to confirm findings. It will most certainly provide a starting point from which other research can be undertaken.

Overview

The dissertation document is organized in six chapters. Chapter One has provided an introduction to the research, the motivation and rationale for the study, and guiding research questions. Chapter Two examines literature in the field relevant to conflict

resolution and conflict transformation evolution, philosophy, common themes and debates, and practice.

Chapter Three discusses research on practice including an introductory discussion of evaluation for conflict intervention and criteria for success in the field. This is followed by Chapter Four which provides an outline of the research methodology used for the study for purposes of replication and to provide a rationale for the methods used.

Chapter Five presents findings from the analysis of interview data based on the outline provided by the guiding questions presented above. It also includes discussion related to each of the Guiding Research Questions.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation with a summary of findings, a review of social identity theory as it relates to the findings, limitations of the study, and implications for theory, practice, and future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews what has been written by scholars and scholar/practitioners about definitions, philosophical foundations, theories of practice and assessment of desired outcomes related to the rapidly growing field of inquiry and practice that includes conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches to conflict intervention.

Along with rapid growth in the array of processes, strategies and schools of thought, there has also been an increasing number of terms used to refer to and describe those concepts. Unfortunately, the rapidly growing lexicon in conflict intervention has meant that a great deal of confusion and conflict exists among practitioners and scholars, not to mention the general public, about the meanings of the various terms used to describe the field.

Many scholars and practitioners have noted the increasing diversity of terms in the field and the difficulty of choosing terms to describe precise processes when the terms in use seem to have ambiguous definitions or no consensus on their meanings (Fast, 2002; Jandt, 1996; Mayer, 2004). “There is considerable confusion within the field about the meanings of terms such as *conflict management*, *conflict resolution*, and *conflict*

transformation. They are often used very loosely and interchangeably and sometimes refer to exactly the same strategies” (Clements, 2002). As Frank Dukes so aptly stated in the appendix of this book on *Resolving Public Conflict* (Dukes, 1996), ”The field of conflict resolution, whose study so clearly reveals the costs of distorted communication, does not itself have a shared language.”

The Problem with Language

In the world of words, this problem of definitions is tackled by lexicographers. Yet even in their world, there is confusion about how definitions are to be understood. One common approach is for a definition of a word to be a checklist against which all concepts are tested before being included in that category.

When considering words to describe the entire field of non-violent conflict intervention, for example, one could create a checklist. Such a list might be inclusive of the following concepts:

- Is non-violent.
- Involves a third-party.
- Promotes a positive change.
- Encourages participation by all who have a stake in the outcome.

With this checklist, however, coercive practices such as non-voluntary court-referred mediation could not be included. A term like Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) might not be able to pass the test because some ADR processes have evolved in a way that may not be inclusive of all stakeholders.

Patrick Hanks, a lexicographer for the Oxford English Dictionaries, suggests that there may be an alternative to the “check off” method. Instead, we must identify the

components of a word as “separate, combinable, and exploitable entities” (Hanks, 2000). Therefore when considering whether a term fits into a category, rather than comparing it to a checklist of criteria, we may need to determine how the word is used (exploited), whether it is used in combination (combinable) with another term that already fits into the definition, and whether it articulates something distinct (separate) from all the other terms already included.

With this approach, it is less troubling to consider the many varied definitions of the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* evident in the scholarly literature. Rather than hold these two terms up to a checklist, I have chosen to examine how the definitions are used, how writers connect them to each other, and where the terms are used to describe distinct concepts and ideas.

Like Wittgenstein who took up the question of word meaning in his *Philosophical Investigations*, I share an interest in investigating how people actually use words to categorize and identify things. He wrote,

Consider for example the proceedings that we call ‘games’. I mean board games, card games, ball games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? Don’t say, “There must be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’” – but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. For if you look at them you will not see something common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don’t think, but look (Wittgenstein, 1953).

In other words, one can think about and try to define differences between words and concepts, but for Wittgenstein, it was more important to look at how people are using language. Because language is fluid and ever-changing, there may be no time when all words in a category share all the descriptors of other items in that category. Just as there

is no single necessary condition for a “game” (after all we have checkers, video games, soccer, treasure hunts, virtual reality and hide-and-seek), there may also be no single necessary condition for all processes or approaches labeled “conflict resolution” or “conflict transformation”.

In this study I “look” at how language is used in the field of nonviolent conflict intervention. How have scholars sought to define concepts? How do practitioners describe their work? In attempting to sort out the definitions, it is necessary to begin with the difference between *generic* conflict resolution or transformation, and the *branded* concepts of *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*.

Generic Language versus “Branded” Language

In addition to the problem of definitions and word categorization, there is a related but more complex problem. How do we know when an author writing about resolution is referring to *conflict* resolution? Similarly, when there is a reference in the literature to a transformation that has occurred in a conflictual relationship, is that the same as *conflict transformation*? When does resolution of conflict (a *generic* way of describing a general process) become Conflict Resolution (a specific “*brand*” term meant to describe a specific process or practice of resolving conflict)? When does transformation of conflict (again, a *generic* term for a process) become Conflict Transformation (a specific “*branded*” approach to conflict intervention)?

Attaching meaning to particular words in particular ways and “claiming” or choosing specific words to mean specific processes is something like branding or trademarking a specific word or symbol. In academia, we would likely scoff at a scholar

who cared to trademark a specific word or idea, but we do guard our definitions almost as fiercely as companies guard their brand names. Rather than brand names, academics and scholars tend to talk about *schools of thought*.

On the other hand, the carefully selected names of the actual schools or programs that offer degrees and the organizations offering conflict intervention services give a hint of the importance placed on the terms used. For instance, there's George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and Conflict Resolution Associates LLC. There is Royal Roads University School of Peace and Conflict Management and the Kennesaw State University's Center for Conflict Management. There is the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation at Hofstra, the Alliance for Conflict Transformation, and the Conflict Transformation Group and so on¹.

These precise terms reflect not only concerns about communicating clearly about what is offered they also reflect the differing values, philosophies, and beliefs about conflict and the goals and objectives of the field².

Generic Conflict Resolution

Distinguishing the generic use of the term *resolution* or the term *transformation* from the branded use of the terms *conflict transformation* and *conflict resolution* as specific approaches within the field is one of the challenges of this research. Just as conflict has always been a natural and inevitable outcome of human interaction, humans have always found ways of resolving, managing, handling or simply dealing with

¹ It should be noted that one cannot assume that all individuals who are employed by institutions or organizations bearing a particular name are in agreement with that name, or support that school of thought.

² See Chapter Six for further explication of the concept of identity in relation to terms used to describe the field and practice.

conflict. Using terms like these generically to talk about how we deal with conflict is the norm for most of us.

Many authors from many fields including our own have written about resolution when they are describing a conflict outcome (Alger, 1981; McNeil, 1965; Partridge, 1971; Porter, 1987). The term *conflict resolution* is common in the social sciences in this generic sense. It is also common in other fields, such as mathematics, that also use the term *conflict resolution* in nomenclature related to their own specific processes and unrelated to the field of nonviolent conflict intervention³.

Even in the field of conflict resolution/transformation, the terms *resolve*, *resolving*, *resolution*, *transform*, *transforming*, *transformative*, and *transformation* are all regularly used to describe changes that occur because of conflict or due to conflict intervention, yet not all of them are used in the *branded* sense (Cloke, 2000; Shonholtz, 1997).

Uncharacteristic usage of terms must also be considered. Edward Azar argues, in his work on international conflict resolution (1986), that moving from a nonconflictual to a conflictual situation is a type of conflict transformation⁴. This type of transformation, in which conflict emerges and moves in the direction of overt antagonism or other undesired outcomes, is presumably *not* the definition in use by those who promote *conflict transformation* as a specific approach in the field of conflict intervention.

³ For example, see Woods (2003).

⁴ This example was first noted in Mitchell (2002).

Generic Conflict Transformation

Transformation of conflict is similar to resolution of conflict as a generic way of describing a conflict outcome. Though the use of *conflict transformation* to describe a specific approach to conflict may be a new way of using language to convey a specific construct, the idea in its generic sense is not new. Social *transformation* is a term in use in many other fields such as community and international development, community organizing, and education (Freire, 1992; Hope, 1984; Shor, 1987). Transformation in these fields often means the process of creating a just society. An example of this sense of the term *conflict transformation* (and in the earliest documentation of the term *conflict transformation* found) is from a dissertation from 1969 in which the author discusses *The Communication Ecology of Conflict Transformation and Social Change* (Randolph, 1969).

Transformation as a specific concept has also long been in use by religious communities to describe personal spiritual transformations (Beckett, 1993; Harper, 1989; Powell, 2003) and is a term common in theological study and in certain religious practices.

Within the field of nonviolent conflict intervention, as mentioned above, some use *conflict transformation* to describe a generic change that has occurred due to the nature of the conflict or as a result of intervention. Kriesberg, et al, provide an example of generic transformation in the book *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation* (1989). In it, the authors present a case for changing or “transforming” intractable conflicts into more negotiable ones. Kriesberg and other writers in that volume describe this as helping a

shift to happen. Elsewhere in the book, Northrup articulates a definition of conflict transformation (see later discussion) that helps to establish a foundation for an exclusive understanding.

An Umbrella for the Field?

Conflict resolution and *conflict transformation* are familiar terms in a field of endeavor that attempts to respond to conflict through nonviolent intervention processes. These processes take many different forms such as mediation, training, process design, negotiation, and facilitation, to name a few. These processes, each with its own set of varied definitions, have often been collected together under the umbrella of *conflict resolution* (Burton, 1996; Fisher, 1997; Miall, 2002; Sandole, 1993; Schellenberg, 1996). A few scholars use the term conflict analysis independently (Neuendorf, 2002), and many still use conflict analysis and resolution (Sandole, 1993).

The term *conflict resolution* is becoming more recognized by the general public, it has appeared more frequently in the media, and has been used to describe a broader range of processes than ever before. Scholars have used it to refer to everything from official diplomatic negotiations, to military intervention, to mediation, to collaborative public processes (Fast, 2002; Fisher, 1993).

Nevertheless, some scholars and practitioners use other common terms to describe the whole of the field. Some (Haynes, 2004; Lang, 1999) use *conflict management* as the term for the field that includes processes like mediation (see discussion later in this chapter). Reimann uses the term *conflict management* in a collection of articles about conflict transformation. She writes,

It is itself rather unfortunate, as it may well include approaches such as conflict transformation that go far beyond the ‘logic of management.’ However, in the lack of a better alternative, I will accept the use of conflict management as an umbrella term, while cautioning against its definitional and conceptual pitfalls (Reimann, 2004).

Not only does Reimann use *conflict management* as an umbrella for the field, her discussion subsequently defines conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation processes in ways that are confusing for the reader. She herself says that Ropers’ “non-uniform terminology” (Ropers, 1997) is “now more the norm than the exception in the overall field. This definitional imprecision of core concepts continually increases as more actors become involved” (Reimann, 2004).

Others use the term “mediation” to mean any process that involves conflicting parties and an intermediary (Crocker, 1999). Some, especially those connected to the law profession, use the term *dispute resolution* (see discussion later in this chapter). Some scholars and practitioners place their research and practice within other related fields such as the field of *Dialogue, Deliberation and Consensus-Building* (National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, Organizational Web Page, 2008). Still others avoid using umbrella terms altogether and instead use process terms like public processes, dialogue processes, collaborative problem-solving or problem-solving workshops (Saunders, 1999).

Many scholars have attempted definitive maps of the field (Clements, 2002; Kriesberg, 1997; Laue, 1991), but some of these add to the existing confusion. At least one notable source, the book *International Conflict Resolution: After the Cold War* (Stern, 2000), uses *conflict resolution* as an umbrella term for a field that includes

conflict transformation. It describes conflict transformation as one of four strategies for conflict resolution -- the others being power politics, structural prevention, and normative change (Stern, 2000).

However, the authors further complicate things by defining *conflict transformation* as “the effort to reach accommodation between parties in conflict through interactive processes that lead to reconciling tensions, redefining interests, or finding common ground.” As such, *conflict transformation* differs very little from many definitions of *conflict resolution*. In fact, among the strategies the book lists for *conflict transformation* are some traditionally thought of as *conflict resolution*, such as problem-solving workshops and alternative dispute resolution. Conflict transformation here is a strategy which includes a variety of processes, methods and other techniques including dialogue, facilitated meetings, and truth-telling commissions (Stern, 2000).

Other writers have placed conflict resolution under the rubric of conflict transformation. In the edited volume, *Peacemaking in International Conflict*, Rasmussen includes a most comprehensive definition of *conflict transformation*. He writes,

Peacebuilding, whether in the postconflict resolution phase or as efforts to prevent the eruption of nascent conflict, depends on the ability to transform the conflict situation from one of potential or actual mass violence to one of cooperative, peaceful relationships capable of fostering reconciliation, reconstruction, and long-term economic and social development. Subsuming the “conflict family” of terms (conflict prevention, management, settlement, and resolution) and the partially overlapping the “peace family” (Boutros-Ghali 1995a) used by the United Nations (peacekeeping, peace enforcing, peacemaking, and peacebuilding), “conflict transformation” is a more comprehensive process that goes beyond “conflict resolution” (Rasmussen, 1997).

It's clear that the confusion and assortment of terms used by scholars in the field of nonviolent conflict intervention are also appearing in other fields as well. For example, I received an e-mail message with the following announcement for the concluding session of a conference: *The End of Violence? New Approaches to Conflict Resolution in International Relations*, October 17th, 2007. The luncheon discussion titled *Partnering for Peace: Transatlantic Concepts for Conflict Resolution in Public Policy* included "an open dialogue on new insights in the field of conflict transformation."

Finally, Kevin Clements' chapter on *The State of the Art of Conflict Transformation* lumps conflict resolution and conflict transformation together as the umbrella term for the field. He defines the conflict resolution/conflict transformation field as divided into what he calls "four general theoretical and practical schools." They are Alternative Dispute Resolution, political and public policy conflicts, analytical conflict resolution, and forgiveness and reconciliation. By making this distinction, he places analytical conflict resolution under the broader heading of *conflict transformation*. However, he also notes that he uses the terms *conflict resolution and conflict transformation* interchangeably (Clements, 2002).

In the following sections of this chapter, each of the terms, *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* will be considered separately, looking at what scholars and practitioners have written about the evolution of definitions of the terms, the philosophical underpinnings, and the common themes and debates. It will conclude with the definitions in use in this study.

Conceptions of Conflict Resolution

Evolution

One of the contributing factors to the confusion of definitions is the normal evolution of meanings as definitions are negotiated and take on new subtleties in use. The definition of *conflict resolution* has had sixty years to develop and change. Some of the earliest academic writing about conflict resolution was done by Kenneth Boulding and colleagues in the 1950s. Drawing from the peace research field, he and colleagues founded the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan in 1956, and the associated *Journal of Conflict Resolution* in 1957. In his book, *Stable Peace* (Boulding, 1978), Boulding recalled that the Center was intended as a place for peace research, but they chose not to use the word *peace* in the title because of “the misunderstandings which might arise” due to the word’s negative and positive aspects. “On the positive side,” he said, “peace signifies a condition of good management, orderly resolution of conflict, harmony associated with mature relationships, gentleness and love. On the negative side, it is conceived as the absence of something – the absence of turmoil, tension, conflict, and war.” Ironically, choosing *conflict resolution* for the Center’s name was therefore a deliberate action to limit confusion.

For Boulding, an economist and peace researcher, in those early years, *conflict resolution* meant the development of a knowledge base of social, political and economic data that could help predict whether the climate of social relations was favorable or unfavorable (Boulding, 1961).

During the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, effective societal and community-based responses to conflict and social justice needs seemed absent. As a result, practitioners and scholars from diverse fields began to focus on conflict, doing research, developing analyses of conflict to uncover sources of problems, and expanding the theoretical work in various fields related to conflict (Deutsch, 1973a; 1973b; Kelman, 1972; Partridge, 1971)⁵.

Conflict Resolution as a field with an individual identity and definition began to coalesce in the 1970s and early 1980s as scholars sought answers for the complexities of human conflict. Burton reported on the emergence of the field of *Conflict Analysis and Resolution* in the late 1970s. Referring to the 1970s and 1980s, Kelman wrote, “In the past two decades or so we have witnessed the development and proliferation of a variety of new approaches to conflict resolution, which together amount to a new field of theory and practice”. He noted that precise boundaries in this new field are difficult to determine and that even people involved in the movement differ on what is to be included and excluded (Sandole, 1993).

However, Herb Kelman claimed that,

Despite the diversity in level, domain, and intellectual origin that characterizes the work in this field, there are certain common threads – shared insights and approaches to practice – that run through all of its manifestations. Thus, it can probably be said that, with different degrees of emphasis all of them call for a non-adversarial framework for conflict

⁵ Early writers on conflict and conflict resolution included John Burton (1969) *Conflict and Communication*, Adam Curle (1971) *Making Peace*, Singer and Small (1972) *The Wages of War*, Morton Deutsch (1973a) *The Resolution of Conflict*, P.H. Gulliver (1979) *Disputes and Negotiations: A Cross Cultural Perspective*, and Fisher and Ury (1981) *Getting to Yes*.

See Kriesberg (1997; 2007b) and Scimecca (1991) for further details on the establishment of conflict resolution as a field.

resolution, an analytic approach, a problem-solving orientation, direct participation by the parties in conflict in jointly shaping a solution, and facilitation by a third party trained in the process of conflict resolution (Sandole, 1993).

Research led to the development of a significant literature on *conflict analysis and resolution* (Burton, 1979; Kelman, 1972; Mitchell, 1981; Partridge, 1971). The analytical research processes being developed sometimes achieved benefits for the parties who participated in the protocols as subjects. Thus, Burton argues that the conflict research process was modified into a conflict resolving process. Problem-solving workshops and other conflict interventions were carried out (Kelman, 1972; Mitchell, 1996; Vasquez, 1995), and eventually a number of teaching centers were established for the study of conflict and conflict resolution (Bradford, 2000; Burton, 1996).

The Center for Conflict Management at George Mason University, which is now the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, was one of the early scholarly programs. Though it was initially called a conflict management program, the Center's mission statement defined *conflict resolution* as follows,

Conflict resolution refers to an analytical, problem-solving process in which parties or their representatives are helped to resolve their disputes by trained third parties. Conflicts are considered "resolved" when the parties have analyzed their conflictual relationships, jointly developed agreements which satisfy their basic needs and values, and therefore, are durable and require no external enforcement (Laue, 1987, reprinted 1993).

Kriesberg notes in his reflections on the history of the field that some of the people involved in the field "recognized that many conflicts were not to be resolved and hence thought the term 'conflict resolution' was a misnomer, but some disliked the term

‘conflict management’ with its connotations of manipulation, even more” (Kriesberg, 2007b).

As centers for scholarly inquiry were being established, there was also growth in practical areas related to conflict. The Law Enforcement Assistance Act of the late 1970s, for example, created a number of community mediation and neighborhood justice centers to promote community-based consensual processes that were termed *conflict resolution*. This practical and pragmatic approach to interpersonal and communal conflicts gave a great deal of visibility to the field (Mayer, 2004).

Scimecca discusses “new” approaches to conflict under the term “conflict resolution” in his chapter *Conflict Resolution in the United States: The Emergence of a Profession* in the 1991 book on *Conflict Resolution: Cross Cultural Perspectives*. He asserts that conflict resolution can be traced to four movements all of which began in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. In addition to 1) the problem-solving schools or analytical conflict resolution previously discussed, Scimecca names 2) Organizational Relations, 3) Religious Peacemakers, and 4) Alternative Dispute Resolution to the streams of practice that fed into the conflict resolution field. Each of these four streams contributed unique practical approaches to conflict, and Scimecca included all of these in his discussion of conflict resolution. Examples of the practical approaches included mediation and cooperative problem-solving used in the organizational relations field and problem-solving workshops used in international relations (Scimecca, 1991).

Many descriptions of conflict resolution from the 1980s focus such processes and expectations for them. For example, Azar and Burton declare that “A conflict may be

said to be resolved when all the parties freely accept a solution that has the following characteristics:

- By joint agreement, the solution satisfies the interests and needs underlying the conflict.
- The solution does not sacrifice any party's important values.
- The parties will not wish to repudiate the solution even if they are in a position to do so later.
- The solution meets standards of justice and fairness.
- The solution is sufficiently advantageous to all the parties so that it becomes self-supporting or self-enforcing" (Azar, 1986).

During the 1980s and 1990s, several private foundations including Hewlett, Mott, Pew, Ford and others, began seeing conflict resolution as a discrete field for investment (Mayer, 2004; Scimecca, 1991). Many of the funds provided by these organizations helped to further institutionalize *conflict resolution* as a discrete field. With the 1990s and the change of regime in Eastern Europe, the definition of conflict resolution again shifted. The focus of attention was on ethnic conflict and this brought about greater interest in intractable and deep-rooted or long-term conflicts (Avruch, 1991; Burton, 1987; Sandole, 1992; 1999).

Notable scholars and practitioners who have conducted research and practice and have used the term *conflict resolution* in writing about the field include scholar/practitioners John Burton (1990a; 1990), Christopher Mitchell (1993; 1998; 1996), Louis Kriesberg (1997), Dennis Sandole (1992; 1993), and Morton Deutsch (1973a; 1994). Many others also use the term (Azar, 1986; Clements, 2002; Fisher, 1993; 1997; Mayer, 1987; Rubin, 1997; Wallenstein, 2002).

Values and Philosophical Foundation

How scholars and practitioners define their work, create goals for practice, and generate expectations for outcomes relates directly to the values they hold and the philosophical foundation from which they think about conflict and conflict intervention.

A Value Free Approach

The Committee on International Conflict Resolution defines *conflict resolution* as a value-free approach to violence. The authors write that “efforts to prevent or mitigate violence resulting from inter-group or interstate conflict, as well as efforts to reduce the underlying disagreements” comprise conflict resolution. Further, they presume that conflict is inevitable and that the goal of conflict resolution is to “keep conflicts channeled within a set of agreed norms that foster peaceful discussion of differences, proscribe violence as a means of settling disputes, and establish rules for the limited kinds of violence that are condoned” (Resolution, 2008).

This description evidences deeply held values about “keeping conflicts channeled” within “agreed” norms that “foster[s] peaceful discussion,” “proscribes violence as a means,” and “establishes rules” for limited violence. Articulated goals and expected outcomes such as these are always based on values (d’Estree, 2001). Values vary widely, even in this field where the goal of conflict intervention generally seems to be held in common.

Positive Values

James Laue believed that *conflict resolution* was not just an alternative to something else like arbitration, government intervention, or litigation. He argued that it had its own set of positive values. Among those, he listed its emphasis on cooperation, its efforts to resolve conflicts quickly and inexpensively, with jointly determined, win-win outcomes in hands of the parties (Laue, 1987, reprinted 1993). The goal of *conflict resolution* for Laue was some form of consensus decision making rather than voting or settlement by force or coercion. Again, this statement of a goal shows an underlying value for nonviolence and non-coercion, and though this is widely accepted as a shared value, it is not shared by everyone in the field (Saposnek, 2006).

Laue also wrote,

We think that real resolution deals with underlying problems and improves the relationship of the parties when it is seen by them to meet certain standards of fairness, social justice, and self-determination (Laue, 1987, reprinted 1993).

The “standards of fairness, social justice, and self-determination” also point to another underlying value in the field that is not shared by everyone. There is a split in the field between those who define the field primarily as a social justice movement, and those who see it as a profession (Cormick, 1978; Mayer, 2004; Scimecca, 1991).

Social Movement or Profession

Many people are attracted to the conflict resolution field because, as practitioners, the field helps them to fulfill their goals to improve the world, work for social justice, or promote nonviolence (Mayer, 2004). Many key figures in the development of the

practice of conflict resolution have come from a social activist background (for example, John Haynes, James Laue, Christopher Moore, and Albie Davis, to name a few). This quality that conflict resolution often has of helping people work for social justice suggests it should or could be categorized as a social movement.

However, many practitioners and a few scholars disagree. Many mediators, especially those connected with court-based programs, seek the legitimacy that a profession ensures. The professionalization of the field is evident in the work of the Association for Conflict Resolution. It has dedicated many resources to strengthening the “profession” of conflict resolution including working on credentialing and creating codes of ethics. Its journal, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, tracks the profession of conflict resolution and details scholarly and practice-based research and theory building (Jones, 2004).

The general acceptance of conflict resolution as a profession has led to criticism from practitioners and scholars within the field who do not want to ignore the social justice implications of practice. Warfield and Schoeny make such an argument in their article on reconnecting the conflict resolution goal of systems maintenance with social justice (Schoeny, 2000).

Welsh and Coleman also articulate their values for social justice when they charge that “relationships between higher and lower power parties are likely to remain unchanged after conflict resolution efforts.” They call for integration into the field of conflict resolution such ideas as modeling and teaching inclusion, respect, and

commitment to social justice activism as a nonviolent means of fostering social change and building a peaceful culture (Welsh, 2002).

Common Values

Bernie Mayer (2004), an experienced practitioner who has reflected on the state of the field, suggests that conflict resolution is at a critical place in its development. It has become an accepted field with schools of training, a literature, and an “accepted, established, and routinely used” practice niche.

Mayer lists six key characteristics at the core of what brings conflict resolvers together:

- A focus on the integrative potential of conflict (Lax, 1986).
- A needs-based approach (or interest-based) (Azar, 1986; Burton, 1996; Fisher, 1981; Pruitt, 1986).
- Focus on communication – conflict resolvers are communication experts.
- Commitment to empowering disputants.
- Process focused.
- System focused (conflict lies embedded in a system of relationships, needs, power exchanges, and historical dynamics) (Mayer, 2004).

Mayer concludes that, as a group, particularly in the North American context, these seem to be the characteristics that broadly define conflict resolution as a field and distinguish it from other approaches to dealing with people in conflict. It is likely, however, that not all scholars and practitioners would agree to each of the items on this checklist depending upon how each characteristic is operationalized.

Each of the core characteristics listed by Mayer above points to underlying values for conflict resolution. Mayer compiled a list of values to complement the characteristics

named above. Many of the items in his list are similar to those articulated by Laue and others. His list includes:

- Resolution is better than conflict.
- Cooperation is better than competition.
- Integrative solutions are better than distributive solutions.
- The coercive use of power is bad.
- Interests are important; positions are a problem.
- Communication among antagonists is desirable.
- Pressuring people to accept a solution is not helpful.
- Empowering disputants to solve their own problems is important (Mayer, 2004).

Common Themes and Debates

In addition to the general values and goals for the conflict resolution approach already presented, and to elaborate on some of them, there are numerous common themes (and the debates surrounding them) found throughout the literature on conflict resolution. The following is a short list of themes encountered while seeking definitions and interpretations of the term *conflict resolution*.

Cooperative Interaction

In a 1973 printing of a 1969 speech, Morton Deutsch talks about eliciting “authentic cooperative conflict resolution.” He stressed that “a *mutually* cooperative orientation is likely to be the most productive orientation for resolving conflict” (Deutsch, 1973b). James Laue, a practitioner and a scholar, shared Deutsch’s emphasis on mutuality and cooperation as a primary goal of conflict resolution. Cooperative work including joint decision-making is foundational for many in the field of conflict

resolution. This is in debate, however, for those who work with adversarial or adjudicatory processes.

Levels of Conflict and Levels of Practice

Whether or not scholars and practitioners agree on what constitutes the levels or areas of practice in conflict resolution, most agree on the idea that conflict occurs at different levels of human interaction (d'Estree, 2001; Dugan, 1996; Kriesberg, 1998; Schellenberg, 1996). Kelman (in Sandole 1993) describes practitioners who work at different levels (ranging from interpersonal to international). Cheldelin, et al, (Cheldelin, 2003) assert that conflicts primarily occur within four levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup and that practitioners provide interventions at these levels.

The lists of levels variously include interpersonal, family, small-group, community, communal, organizational, large-group, domestic, intra-state, inter-state, interethnic, international, structural, societal, and global. Some use the terms *micro*, *meso*, and *macro* to correspond accordingly to changes or interventions seen at the personal or interpersonal, organizational, communal, and societal levels (d'Estree, 2001). Others use the levels of positions, interests, values and needs (Fisher, 1981). Some scholars have employed levels to connect the various locations of energy related to a conflict with types of intervention outcomes. For example, Northrup (Northrup, 1989) talks about three levels at which change may occur in conflict:

- The issues level (settlement).
- The relational level (transformation if the relationship is redefined).
- The identity level (transformation if the self/other construct is redefined).

However the levels are defined or described, conflict at various levels seems to be an accepted commonality in conflict resolution.

Arenas of Work

Practitioners in conflict resolution usually focus on one “arena” of work (Cheldelin, 2003) that allows them to develop and provide depth of expertise. Arenas may include organizational, religious, environmental, family, community, national, and international conflicts among others.

Conflict versus Dispute

John Burton tried to define the field of conflict resolution by separating and clarifying the distinctions between *dispute* and *conflict* (Burton, 1990a; 1996; 1990). For Burton, *disputes* were disagreements over competing interests, especially material interests that could be *settled* (by negotiation or through some process with third party intervention). Dispute settlement processes, for Burton, included adjudication, arbitration, mediation, negotiation, or combinations of these.

Conflicts on the other hand, are struggles between opposing forces, implying that the issues are more serious than those relating to disputes and that they may therefore lead to violence. Resolution processes would be needed for conflicts. Burton argues that though this difference in definition is in the dictionary, in practice these two terms are treated as one. He attributes the confusion in practice to this fundamental divide because dispute settlement processes have been applied to both disputes *and* conflicts with the expectation that parties could come to a compromise. He writes,

At all social levels, from the family to the international, there are problems in social relationships that involve emotions and deep-seated needs in respect of which there can be no compromise. Such conflicts must be *resolved*, rather than *settled*. The dispute-settlement processes are inappropriate. Analytical processes are required that uncover the sources of the problem and deal with them accordingly (Burton, 1996).

Burton's clear distinctions between these words have not been shared by everyone in the field. Burton (1996) wrote, "Even some scholars working in this area use these terms interchangeably". Instead of "dispute settlement" and "conflict resolution," "conflict settlement" and "dispute resolution" are widely employed to describe processes. As the field has grown and theory, research and practice have expanded, this distinction seems to be less and less visible in the literature⁶.

Permanent End to the Conflict

John Burton (1990b) talks about "conflict resolution as a process of change in political, economic and social systems". Burton includes a broad array of processes under his term "conflict resolution" when he includes the examples of force as deterrent, legal decisions based on norms and arguments, settlement arrived at through bargaining, and compromise with the help of a third party. He concludes his definition as "terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem." He goes on,

Conflict resolution, as opposed to mere management or 'settlement,' points out an outcome that, in the view of the parties involved, is a permanent solution to a problem.

⁶ However, the distinction made by Burton may have been part of the separation of the field into the two current streams of practice: *conflict resolution* and *dispute resolution*. In the book he wrote with Frank Dukes, *Conflict: Practices in Management, Settlement and Resolution*, Burton separated the field into three distinct practice areas: management, settlement and resolution (1990).

Because it is a means of getting to the source of problems, conflict resolution is not just a way of resolving immediate social conflicts; it also provides insight into the generic nature of problems and thus contributes to the elimination of the source of conflicts and the prevention of their recurrence (Burton, 1990b).

Processes Included in the Approach

Like Burton's definition of conflict resolution in the previous section, some definitions in the literature focus on the processes and practices that are encompassed by the term. Cohen lists negotiation, adjudication, mediation, and arbitration as conflict resolution processes that share a number of similarities (Cohen, 2001). Schellenberg (1996) divides conflict resolution into five areas of practice: coercion, negotiation and bargaining, adjudication, mediation, arbitration, and a catch all category of other means. Porter and Taplin (1987) discuss conflict and conflict resolution from a sociological perspective. They list avoidance, conquest, education, spontaneous resolution, transactional resolution (negotiation and mediation), arbitration, judicial decision, and nonreconciliation as the primary means of conflict resolution.

These lists are broader than some in the field are comfortable with. Adjudication, for example, is commonly thought of as a coercive process. Conquest normally includes violence. Practitioners and scholars differ in the importance they accord to coercion and violence as a way of resolving conflict. Coercion tends to be used in more traditional "realist" types of generic conflict resolution, in which diplomats or parties are self-interested and willing to use coercive tactics. Some intervenors take the middle ground and use power to affect conflict outcomes through the use of positive and negative sanctions, persuasion, or altruism (Boulding 1989).

Practitioners and scholars from the problem-solving approach to conflict resolution, however, tend to reject the idea that coercion should be included within the field of conflict resolution (Kriesberg, 1997). Nevertheless, some practitioners, especially those who view conflict resolution as a social movement, disagree about what methods of conflict resolution may be appropriate especially when conflict escalation may be needed to achieve justice (Cormick, 1978). Some practitioners emphasize constructive ways of waging a struggle such as nonviolent action (Kriesberg, 1997).

As noted in the evolution section previously, negotiation and mediation processes were a primary focus in the early decades of the field. Those soon evolved into a range of processes including problem-solving workshops and other analytical conflict resolution processes. Burton and Dukes (Burton, 1990) separated conflict resolution processes from those of settlement and management (see the management discussion later in the chapter). Conflict resolution processes included citizen diplomacy, T-group resolution, Track II diplomacy, problem-solving conflict resolution, and deductive analysis, whereas settlement included adjudication, arbitration, and ombudsmanship.

This list of processes is somewhat dated, as the number and variety of processes has continued to grow. At the present, conflict resolution includes various online strategies, dialogue and circle processes, collaborative processes including large public policy participatory processes, strategic planning, education and training, restorative justice, facilitative interventions, rituals for healing and reconciliation and more.

Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse (Miall, 2005) have argued for a broad understanding of *conflict resolution*. They believe that conflict resolution should not

only focus on issues that divide the main parties, but also on the social, psychological, and political realities that affect the parties. They believe it important to include not only mediation between the parties but also efforts to address the wider context that sustains conflict in which other actors affect the parties in conflict. These might include international stakeholders, local constituents, spoilers or other extremists, relationships with broader communities, and social and institutional capacity for sustaining peace. For them, the implication of this broadening of scope and applicability of conflict-resolution approaches is the need for a wider range of types of third-party interventions. These, they argue, should be multitrack instead of just Track I (governmental/diplomatic) or just Track II (NGOs, churches, civil society, etc.), and they should address both elites and the grassroots (Miall, 2002).

Conflict Analysis

As presented earlier, in the *evolution* of conflict resolution, analysis was and remains a key defining component for the various scholars and researchers interested in doing something about human conflict. John Burton, for instance, wrote, “Problem-solving conflict resolution is based on an analytical explanatory theory.” Not all practitioners place such significance on analysis, however, and the field has grown in a way such that many do not include analysis as a primary definition. However, scholar/practitioners like Louis Kriesberg (2007a) still describe the “conflict resolution approach” as one that encourages parties to carefully analyze a conflict before engaging in it, whether as a partisan or intermediary.

Problem-Solving

While analysis has become core to the definition of *conflict resolution* for some in the field, *problem-solving* is fundamental to the understanding of conflict resolution for most. In 1981, Mitchell defined *conflict resolution* as techniques that “aim at providing a solution which is generally acceptable to parties to the conflict, which they themselves have evolved and which for these reasons is self-supporting” (Mitchell, 1998). Jeffrey Rubin called this the mutual gains approach, in which a conflict was a “puzzle to be solved” rather than a “tug of war” between the parties (Rubin, 1997).

In the 1980s, research initiatives of various scholars, including Christopher Mitchell, Edward Azar, Herbert Kelman, Ronald Fisher and Leonard Doob (see Fisher 1997) developed into practical initiatives aimed at ongoing conflicts. *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: the analytical problem-solving approach* by Mitchell and Banks lays out the history of the “problem-solving workshop” methodology and how it has been applied in deep-rooted, protracted conflicts (Mitchell, 1996). In it, Mitchell also describes these processes of *problem-solving* as distinct from traditional mediation.

One of the mainstream mediation models, and perhaps the dominant one, is that of settling the presenting conflict using “problem-solving” as the preferred methodology (Pruitt, 2006; Tidwell, 2001). Many scholar/practitioners have written about problem-solving in relation to mediation (Abramson, 2004; Della Noce, 2002; Kinsey, 2005).

Raymond Cohen describes the problem-solving approach to conflict resolution as one where “real needs rather than tactical positions should be addressed” (Cohen 2001). This points to another area of convergence in the field: that of human needs.

Human Needs

Regardless of the processes in use, many from the conflict resolution field argue that solutions to problems must address deeper or underlying human needs rather merely address the presenting issue. John Burton was a key proponent of the idea that addressing basic human needs is core to conflict resolution. He wrote,

We believe that the human participants in conflict situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments at all social levels to satisfy primordial and universal needs – needs such as security, identity, recognition, and development. They strive increasingly to gain the control of their environment that is necessary to ensure the satisfaction of these needs (Burton, 1990a).

Burton has been known to change his list of basic human needs to become more inclusive. More recently, Mayer also argues for a broader range of human needs (Mayer, 2000). Without going into detail, he suggests that the question that the field must ask is what needs do people have motivating them that must be addressed for them to be satisfied with the progress of a conflict process.

Short-Term versus Long-term Involvement

Some scholars feel that *conflict resolution* implies that conflict is a short-term, undesirable event that can be ended permanently through intervention processes (University of Colorado, 1999-2008). Vayrynen (1991) argues that conflict *resolution* implies the understanding that *all* conflicts should be resolved or ended. Some feel that Vayrynen is being too simplistic here (Tidwell, 2001). And some have argued that the field includes a variety of short and long-term processes (Mayer, 2004; Mitchell, 2003).

Welsh and Coleman (Welsh 2002) suggest that because of the nature of conflict, intervenors are eager to try to reduce the crisis, stop the violence, and ease anxiety and discomfort. This has meant, they suggest that the field tends toward responses to conflict that are “immediate”. They add that when intermediaries are located within social institutions, that natural tendency to short-term responses can be heightened because of a desire to maintain stability in the institution. They also state that these “short-term response tendencies and stability-inducing intentions” have largely shaped the field and contributed to what we now understand as “mainstream” or “institutionalized” conflict resolution.

Impartiality/Neutrality

Another primary debate in the field is whether intervenors are to be neutral. Many promote neutrality as one of the core competencies of conflict intermediaries (Abramson, 2004; Moore, 2003; Saposnek, 2006) and most accept that one of the core characteristics of a conflict resolution intermediary is one of impartiality. Some disagree and argue that “neutrality” is unnecessarily limiting to the field, and there is much debate on this (Cobb, 2001; Mayer, 2004). Nader has been a consistent critic of conflict resolution, especially when intervenors claim neutrality because of the potential for conflict resolution efforts to become an instrument of control over parties and outcomes. She argues that weaker parties tend to give up more in a mediated or negotiated agreement and therefore *neutral* mediators maintain the status quo of power imbalance which ultimately may contribute to social injustice (Nader, 1991).

Fast acknowledges that the definition of *conflict resolution* is still being debated (Fast, 2002) and wants to use the concept of *impartiality* to help delineate the field. For her, one of the core characteristics of a conflict intervenor is that he/she must be impartial or treat all sides equally. The understanding and use of the word *neutrality* is often used interchangeably with this definition of impartiality.

As the previous discussion suggests, the boundaries of the field of conflict resolution are not strictly defined. “Given the great variety of sources and experiences, a clear consensus about CR ideas and practices among the people engaged in CR is not to be expected” (Kriesberg, 2007b). Some are comfortable with the malleable edges of the field, but Fast warns,

If conflict resolution does not delimit its boundaries, it is possible to co-opt the field and argue that it is not needed. If, for example, international development projects address conflicts at the grassroots and mid-range levels, and diplomacy addresses conflict resolution efforts at the top level. Then what need is there for Conflict Resolution as a field (Fast, 2002)?

Conflict Resolution Practitioners

As has been shown, the field of conflict resolution practice is a large and diverse one. Much of the literature already cited includes descriptions and expectations about practice. Conflict resolution practitioners, Mayer (2004) says,

operate in different domains (courts system, public policy, labor-management relations, interethnic relations or international diplomacy). Their ideas and theories come from a wide range of sources including law, psychotherapy, management theories, group dynamics, peace research, decision theory, the study of conflict resolution in traditional societies, and theoretical models based in the entire range of the social-science disciplines.

Even in situations of violent or protracted conflict and war, conflict resolution has gained currency and many more conflict resolution attempts are being made (Miall, 1999). Miall, et al, argue that conflict resolution practice involves different kinds of actors, addresses different groups, and varies in form, duration and purpose. They assert that conflict resolution practice includes Track I (official/formal), Track II (unofficial/informal), Track III (grassroots) and multitrack diplomacy.

Warfield (2002) notes that practitioners in the field now encompass a much broader range than traditionally, and that these “nouveau practitioners” [my term] are coming from “different epistemic communities of practice whose analysis of conflict and testing of theory is largely unknown to the more ‘professional’ practitioners” (Warfield, 2002). He also reports that “dimensions of practice can exist in areas where an intervenor might look more like a community organizer, or counselor, or psychologist, or some other agent of intervention.” Warfield suggests this may be resisted by professional conflict resolution practitioners “because identity in these new (and challenging) roles has not been validated by espoused theory, much less theory-in-use” (Warfield, 2002).

Definitions in Use

At its simplest, *conflict resolution* usually refers to “the process of resolving a dispute or a conflict permanently. This is done through a process of identifying and then addressing the needs and interests of all parties involved in a conflict so that they are satisfied with the outcome” (University of Colorado, 1999-2008).

Mitchell (2002) has been defensive of *conflict resolution* with the emergence of *conflict transformation*. In his article “What does conflict transformation actually

transform?” he seeks to clarify what writers mean when they talk about conflicts being resolved “permanently.” He says,

This claim is rather more modest than sometimes appears. It involves a contention that an acceptable and durable solution to the issues in a particular conflict between adversaries has been discovered -- or mutually created -- by the parties themselves, possibly with outside assistance from other ‘third’ parties or possibly through their own efforts and sometimes with local assistance from ‘insider partials’ (Mitchell, 2002).

He argues that this definition of conflict resolution does not mean that the parties will never again engage in conflict, nor does it guarantee a conflict-free future (Mitchell, 2002).

For this study, the term was initially defined as “non-violent, cooperative intervention process used by a mutually acceptable third party to intentionally understand the sources and dynamics of a problem and find a mutually acceptable, peaceful solution” (Shapiro, 1995). The key identifying features include a process that is cooperative, is used in conjunction with a third-party, includes analysis of the underlying issues, seeks a jointly crafted solution to the problem, and meets underlying interests and needs. These are the key identifying characteristics for the field in use for this research study.

Conceptions of Conflict Transformation

Evolution

Conflict transformation, the second term with which this research is concerned, is relatively new in the field as a term used to denote specific assumptions about conflict intervention.

As noted in the introductory section of this chapter, the term *transformation* has been used broadly in referring to the changes that occur because of conflict or conflict intervention. However, one of the contributors to the formulation of a *conflict transformation* concept was James Laue. The title of his 1987 inaugural lecture for the Vernon M. and Minnie Lynch Chair in Conflict Resolution at George Mason University was *Resolution: Transforming Conflict and Violence*. Laue spoke of *transformation* as a qualitative shift in individual behaviors of the parties that leads to a transformation in their relationship. He thought that this ultimately also leads to a transformation in the substantive issues and outcomes. Therefore *conflict transformation* for Laue was a crucial component required for conflict resolution to happen (Laue, 1987, reprinted 1993).

Another extremely influential figure in conflict transformation theory was Johan Galtung. His work on direct, cultural and structural forms of violence and their relationship to power asymmetries is foundational to the conflict transformation literature. His ideas on intervention are collected in his 1996 book *Peace by Peaceful Means* (Galtung, 1996).

Adam Curle, a Quaker practitioner, mediator and scholar, also used the language of *transformation* to describe his work (Curle, 1990). He spoke especially about transforming social space in order to increase peaceful relationships. Curle's work (Curle, 1971) built on Galtung's approach. He put forward a model that showed how relationships can be transformed through a shift from unbalanced to balanced power. This transformation may rely upon processes of education (what Curle called conscientization), confrontation, negotiation and development (see Figure 1 from Lederach, 1997).

Framework for Peace

13

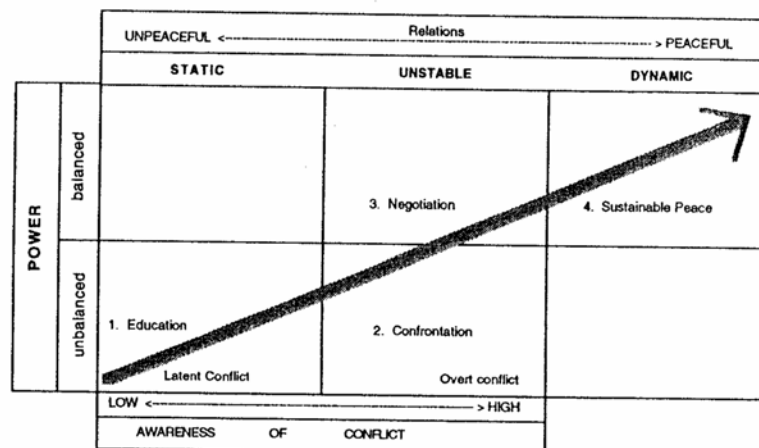


Figure 1
The Progression of Conflict
(Based on Curle 1971 and used with permission)

Source Note: Taken from Lederach (1997).

Figure 1 The Progression of Conflict

Northrup (Northrup, 1989) presented a case for the development of a *conflict transformation* approach as a reaction to perceived weaknesses in conflict resolution.

She identifies four key assumptions of resolution:

- Parties to conflict are rational.
- Misperception constitutes a central cause of conflict.
- Conflict resolution principles apply across social settings (i.e. labour, international, interpersonal).
- High value is placed on peaceful resolution.

Northrup (1989) argues that in response to these four assumptions, conflict transformation practitioners and theories may argue that 1) rationality depends upon cultural context; 2) misperception is too shallow a concept to represent the deep feelings associated with different world views; 3) conflict is always in flux and different stages may require different approaches; and 4) not all parties may want peace as an outcome but may want to continue fighting.

Though some in the conflict resolution field may not agree that Northrup's list reflects the key assumptions of the field, her analysis that conflict transformation has largely been a reaction to and criticism of the conflict resolution approach is an important contribution to the discussion.

Another early publication with a specific use of the term *conflict transformation* is the 1991 book, *New Directions in Conflict Theory: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation*, edited by Raimo Vayrynen. Vayrynen (1991) argued that there is an implicit value in conflict resolution that all conflicts should be resolved. This criticism is

another of the key catalysts for the *conflict transformation* school. Many conflict transformation theorists and practitioners have agreed that many conflicts are better off being transformed than being resolved” (Francis, 2002; Lederach, 1995b; Tidwell, 2001).

Vayrynen also presented four areas in which transformation may take place (actor, issue, rule and structural transformation). The last of these, *structural transformation* puts forward the idea of changes in the whole structure of relationships between parties. His ideas complement those of Galtung (1995; 1996) who developed his views on the resolution of the structural, attitudinal and behavioral aspects of conflict into a full theory of non-violent conflict transformation.

Wallensteen’s essay in the 1991 book clearly separated *transformation* from *resolution*. He wrote,

The concept of solution, or more specifically conflict resolution, is associated with a purposeful search for ways of accommodating the explicit interests of the parties in conflict. Thus, it does not mean the same as termination of conflict through victory, nor does it refer to transformation of conflict. Victory means that one party dominates the other and is able to impose its order on the other. Transformation of conflict is the result of the struggle itself where the contention transforms the parties, their interests and actions. Thus, transformation can occur through victory or through conflict resolution, but can best be understood on a more general level. It is no longer the individual war or battle that is of interest, rather the focus is the more general experience of conflict over a longer period of time. Transformation may occur as a result of repeated experience involving struggle, victory, defeat, resolution. Transformation, in short, is a generalized learning from historical experience (Wallensteen, 1991).

By setting out this definition, Wallensteen notes change in the parties themselves or their “interests and actions”, and an interest in the conflict at a “general” level over a “longer period of time.”

Several years after the publication of Vayrynen's collection, then UN Secretary-General Kumar Rupesinghe (1995) published a book titled *Conflict Transformation*. Rupesinghe identified a "sea change" in the field in which conflict had begun to be seen not as something to be resolved but as something dynamic, needing dynamic and sustained responses.

Also included in Rupesinghe's collection was an essay by well known theorist, Ted Gurr (in Rupesinghe, 1995), whose essay used *conflict transformation* in the sense that Wallensteen and others (Wallensteen, 1991) had used it when defining conflict transformation as a real change in people, their relationships, and their actions.

The final essay in Rupesinghe's collection was written by John Paul Lederach, a practitioner, who had previously been known because of his publications related to the cultural implications of conflict resolution practice (Avruch, 1991). Lederach's contribution was nothing less than a *Case for a Comprehensive Framework* for conflict transformation in protracted internal conflicts. The framework included a rationale for a short and long-term perspective, a proposed infrastructure for peace, and encouragement for the building of a peace constituency.

Lederach went on to develop his framework and strategies for practicing conflict transformation in several publications, *Preparing for Peace, Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (1995) and *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997). Lederach's work built upon Curle's model of conflict and change in situations of power asymmetry (see Figure 1) and went further.

Lederach's initial definition of *conflict transformation* was both descriptive of conflict and prescriptive for conflict intervention,

Unlike resolution and management, the idea of transformation does not suggest we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather points descriptively toward its inherent dialectic nature...transformation as a concept is both descriptive of the conflict dynamics and prescriptive of the overall purpose that building peace pursues, both in terms of changing destructive relationship patterns and in seeking systemic change (Lederach, 1995b).

By describing conflict and conflict transformation in this way, Lederach creates a definition of the concept of *conflict transformation* which is no longer a generic "transformation of conflict". Instead, it has key characteristics that separates conflict transformation from conflict resolution (*eliminate*) and conflict management (*control*). The definition includes the key understanding that conflict causes social change (*descriptive of the conflict dynamics*) and that *conflict transformation* as an intervention practice is also interested in social change (*prescriptive of the overall purpose that building peace pursues*). This understanding is complemented by the recognition that conflicts can be enacted in either constructive or destructive (*destructive*) ways, that changing relationships is an important component of the work (*relationship patterns*), and that conflict transformation is concerned with broad structural change (*systemic change*).

The definition in use in Lederach's *Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (2003) is "Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce

violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships” (Lederach, 2003).

By choosing to term his work as *conflict transformation* and not *conflict resolution*, Lederach contributed to a growing literature on conflict transformation. By 1998, Tidwell was able to identify a *conflict transformation school* that he believed could be identified by its assertion that conflicts are always changing and always being transformed into something else. He also argued that this school was indebted to the functionalists, Simmel and Coser, for their formulation of theory related to conflict and social construction of conflict (Tidwell, 2001). Reimann (2004) has also argued that Burton’s concept of *provention* was also related to the emerging theory of conflict transformation. Burton defined provention as “deducing from an adequate explanation of the phenomenon of conflict, including its human dimensions, not merely the conditions that create an environment of conflict and the structural changes required to remove it, but more importantly, the promotion of conditions that create cooperative relationships” (Burton, 1990).

Even though he said it was “a pity” to add one more term to the group of conflict intervention terms already available, Christopher Mitchell wrote,

The one central thing most writers and practitioners agree about is that transformation takes the business of coping with destructive protracted conflicts beyond the cessation of violence, the achievement of a compromise settlement or even the joint creation of an acceptable solution to the issues currently in conflict between the adversaries – in other words, beyond resolution (Mitchell, 2002).

Miall also supports this idea of a distinct theory of conflict transformation that is different from conflict resolution (Miall, 2004).

In her overview of peacebuilding literature, Michelle Gawerc (2006) provides a contemporary definition. She writes that *conflict transformation* has “carved a niche for itself in the peace studies and conflict resolution literature.” She suggests that this has come with the recognition across the field that conflicts are rarely solved completely, that to solve, resolve or end a conflict may be at the expense of justice, and that the best way to ensure sustainability of an agreement is to allow for “higher mutual participation by the conflict groups” (Gawerc, 2006).

Notable scholars and practitioners who have conducted research and practice and have used the term *conflict transformation* in writing about the field include scholar/practitioners Adam Curle (1990), Johan Galtung (1995, 1996), Raimo Vayrynen (1991), Kumar Rupesinghe (1995), Kevin Clements (2002), Hugh Miall (2004), Frank Dukes (1996), Joe Folger and Robert Baruch Bush (1994) and John Paul Lederach (1995a; 1995b; 1997; 1989).

Values and Philosophical Foundation

How scholars and practitioners define their work, create goals for practice, and generate expectations for outcomes relates directly to the values they hold and the philosophical foundation from which they think about conflict and conflict intervention.

Miall writes that Lederach’s work (1997) serves as “one of the most comprehensive statements to date of conflict transformation thinking for practitioners. He sees peacebuilding as a long-term transformation of a war system into a peace system, inspired by a quest for the values of peace and justice, truth and mercy. The key dimensions of this process are changes in the personal, structural, relational and cultural

aspects of conflict, brought about over different time-periods (short-, mid- and long-term) and affecting different system levels at different times” (Miall, 2004).

By articulating conflict transformation in this way, Lederach (1997) highlights the values of reducing suffering and increasing well-being, acknowledging interdependence between people (at all levels), increasing justice both in the sense of equality in participation in outcomes, but also in creating equal social structures and social, economic, and political institutions, and finally in changing the structure of society.

Social Justice

Lederach has been critical of resolution approaches because he felt that they involved the continuation of injustice and the perpetuation of the status quo. His sensitivity to justice concerns came partly from the values of the Mennonite community of which he is a part. Values of respect for the individual (as a child of God), respect for the social realities of others, and a critical approach to unequal power distribution (priesthood of all believers), as well as a commitment to non-violence and processes of non-violent social change were deeply embedded in Mennonite/Anabaptist doctrine (see further details in (Sampson, 2000). Lederach was also influenced by the work of Adam Curle (Curle, 1971; 1990), Paulo Freire (Freire, 1970), the popular education movement, and liberation theology.

Lederach is not the only writer who expresses social justice values for conflict transformation. Diana Francis (2004), another scholar/practitioner, has been eloquent in her discussion of justice issues. Of conflict transformation, she writes,

The term not only refers to action for change and a body of theory informing and informed by action; it also implies certain goals, based on particular values. It is not domination by one party over another, but the transformation of dominatory and violent relationships and structures and manifestations of violence. Conflict transformation instead aims towards relationships of respect, cooperation and consent and constructive means and norms for dealing with conflict (Francis, 2004).

This emphasis on going beneath the structures that exist, rather than working within them for social change, is another key difference from conflict resolution. As Mitchell notes, in conflict transformation, “There is nothing sacred about the status quo” (Mitchell, 2002).

Concern about social justice has informed the practice of conflict transformation by insuring the participation of all those affected by a conflict and those who care about the outcome. Miall, et al, (Miall, 1999) argue that with its focus on social relationships and addressing the root causes of conflicts, *transformation* is especially useful in asymmetrical conflicts. Thus they suggest that in situations of injustice or unequal participation, conflict transformation may be an approach that can help balance relationships.

Francis identifies an identity group of people who share the values of equality and inclusive participation common in conflict transformation. This group she says is,

formed by the adherents to conflict transformation and the wider value group from which they come (culturally liberal, philosophically egalitarian, politically democratic, concerned with socioeconomic justice and unhappy about war). These values are confined to no particular culture and are universal in none, but they constitute a culture in themselves. They are in clear opposition to the universally prevalent culture of domination, which has its own long-term as well as short-term agenda. They are also in clear opposition to sexism, racism and discrimination of all kinds. This needs to be honestly acknowledged. It also challenges those who work for

conflict transformation to do their work in respectful, non-dominatory ways – in line with their own theory and values (Francis, 2004).

Common Values

Though different writers focus on different desired outcomes for conflict transformation, Mitchell's (2002) compilation of what he believes to be the common criteria for effectiveness provides a solid starting point for articulating a core of common values of conflict transformation that reaches more broadly than any single scholar or practitioner. He lists the following attributes of effective conflict transformation:

- Multi-level participation, involving elements from all social levels of all the involved parties, from top, middle, and grass roots, including those who may normally be excluded from formal negotiations.
- Efforts to empower the 'underdogs' in the struggle so that solutions and changes can be sought between parties that are more equal.
- Efforts to ensure that those directly involved in the conflict can control the process to their own satisfaction. Outcomes are approved by those affected.
- A focus not merely on immediate issues, but also on longstanding traumas and hurts, and on past injustices.
- Appropriate intermediaries who understand the cultural and social structures in which the parties are embedded.
- Co-creation of a new understanding of the conflict.
- An ability to create and put in place procedures that will maintain and continue the changes found necessary to resolve the current conflict and prevent future ones from arising.
- The mutual, inter-active education of adversaries about the nature of the socio-political and economic systems from which the conflict arose and of the dynamics of that conflict; and their training in skills that will enable them to deal with that conflict and others that may arise (abridged from Mitchell, 2002).

This list points out values for participation at all levels of society, equality of participation and input into outcomes across those levels, dealing with long-term effects of conflict, violence, and injustice while also dealing with current issues, culturally sensitive practice, shared creation of a shared future, and education.

Common Themes and Debates

In addition to the general values and goals for the conflict transformation approach already discussed, and to elaborate on some of them, there are numerous common themes found throughout the literature. The following is a short list of themes encountered while seeking out definitions and interpretations of *conflict transformation*. To the extent that *conflict transformation* is, to many people, a reaction to the *conflict resolution school*, many of debates described here are related more to distinctions between conflict transformation and conflict resolution than to debates within the conflict transformation school of thought.

Nonviolence

Along with practitioners and scholars in conflict resolution, writers on conflict transformation typically describe nonviolence as a foundational concept (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1989). However, not all *conflict transformation* writers share the general focus on nonviolence. For example, with the armed intervention in Kosovo as the backdrop and foundation for the book, the authors of *The Quest for Viable Peace* advocate for conflict transformation in certain military operations (Covey, 2005). In their operation in Kosovo, they dealt with the problem of establishing peace where there are persistent internal conflicts in which violence continues even after peace processes or peacekeeping is in place. In those cases, the authors argue that only by seriously addressing the need to transform these types of conflicts in postwar periods can peace evolve. “If conflict has been extinguished, the strategic challenge can be confined to ‘postconflict

reconstruction.’ If it has not, the operation must aim at nothing less than ‘conflict transformation’.”

“Transformation,” Covey (2005) says, “entails diminishing the means and motivations for violent conflict while developing more attractive, peaceful alternatives for the competitive pursuit of political and economic aspirations. The strategic imperative should be to transform internal conflict in the first years of an intervention.” Covey’s sense of conflict transformation includes the possibility of armed intervention, but most writers who adhere to the *transformation* school are typically interested only in nonviolent approaches.

Constructive vs. Destructive Change Processes

Conflict transformation theorists argue that conflict is caused by *and* causes changes in relationships. Therefore, in this view, it is impossible to treat conflict as something that has an end if the relationship is ongoing. In order to build peace, negative or destructive interaction patterns within relationships need to be transformed into positive or constructive relationships and interactions (Lederach, 2003).

As noted earlier, Clements (2002) uses the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* interchangeably. “Conflict transformation,” he says, “has more favor with theorists and practitioners at present because it underlines that fact that conflicts are never finally resolved, only reframed, altered, or changed so that nondestructive relationships can be developed.” Despite his confusing use of terms, Clements points to a clear focus on developing nondestructive relationships.

The desire to build positive relationships however is not done at the expense of justice in order to maintain status quo relationships. For this reason, the conflict transformation school does not promote conflict prevention, but rather a reduction of *violence* in all of its forms direct, structural, and cultural (Galtung, 1996). Rather than attempting to reduce or lessen conflict activity, in some cases, conflict transformation seeks to bring conflict to the surface in order to help constructively address problems.

Miall (2004) has developed a generic framework for conflict transformation in protracted conflict. The five elements are transformations in context, structure, actor, issue, and within the individual and/or group. In discussing these five areas, Miall does not assume that transformation necessarily moves in a benign direction. Rather, it may require nonviolent escalation of conflict in order to address justice and power issues. This reinforces the idea of transformation as descriptive of conflict change processes as well as prescriptive for conflict intervention practices. This broad conception of conflict transformation with multiple levels, tracks, and actors, connects very well with Lederach's goal for conflict transformation of "increasing justice, reducing violence, and restoring broken relationships" (Lederach, 1995b).

Despite the fact that scholars and practitioners typically describe constructive conflict as part of the conflict transformation school, numerous authors have articulated these concepts in relation to conflict resolution (and conflict management). Miall, himself, quotes Bloomfield and Reilly's definition of *conflict management* and then includes a definition of *conflict resolution* that shares these terms,

Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing

conflict, [it] addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference (Bloomfield and Reilly 1998, in Miall 2004).

Conflict resolution is about how parties can move from zero sum, destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum constructive outcomes (Miall, 2004).

Notable scholar/practitioners from the conflict resolution school have also described destructive and constructive processes of conflict. Morton Deutsch, in his 1968 lecture to the American Psychological Association, asked “what gives rise to a destructive or constructive course of conflict? Next, I shall consider the more difficult question: What can be done to change a destructive conflict into a constructive one?” (Deutsch, 1973b). Louis Kriesberg has also focused on the possibility of constructive conflicts with publication of his book on *Constructive Conflicts* (Kriesberg, 1998) and its updated editions. In the most recent edition, Kriesberg includes a chapter on conflict transformation (3rd edition, 2007).

Levels of Conflict and Levels of Practice

Some authors claim that unlike conflict resolution, conflict transformation seeks to involve actors at all levels. This argument is based on the assertion that conflict resolution’s processes rely upon actors of more-or-less equal status (such as Track I actors and intervenors primarily working within Track I). Track II processes occur outside government or formal structures. Some have reported about Track II processes as conflict transformation (Davies, 2003).

Reimann (2004) stresses that “building on Burton’s notion of needs satisfaction, any successful conflict transformation strategy must include Track III actors in the peacebuilding process, as they deal with those most affected by the effects of violent conflict”. Reimann bases her conclusions on Lederach’s work. Lederach (1995) promotes not only a focus on the grass-roots, but rather an integrated approach to relationship-building with actors (especially leaders) at all levels (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 Approaches to Peacebuilding

Processes included in the Approach

A number of writers have described conflict transformation as a philosophical rather than practical distinction from conflict resolution. In other words, conflict transformation approaches to practice are not distinct on their own, but draw on “many of the familiar concepts of conflict management and conflict resolution, and ... it also rests

on the same tradition of theorising about conflict. It is best viewed not as a wholly new approach, but rather as a reconceptualisation of the field in order to make it more relevant to contemporary conflicts” (Miall, 2004).

This sharing of practical approaches by different schools of thought in the field adds to the confusion in terminology about practice. Nevertheless, a number of practitioners from the conflict transformation school have written about their practice. Kraybill (2001) writes about mediation process and facilitation skills. While much of his recommended practice is based on familiar models, his rationale for practice and his interest in structural level change (including dealing with power) are purely from the conflict transformation school. His mediation techniques are distinct from the *transformative mediation* school, however, and could be said to be a blending of both problem-solving and transformative goals and processes.

Frank Dukes (1996) writes about public policy processes and the deeper structural and relational goals while advocating straightforward collaborative public policy process. Simon Fisher, Dekha Ibrahim, et al, (Fisher, 2000) and others (Dane, 1997) have written about large-group consensual processes for working with inter-ethnic conflict. While they term this work *peacebuilding*, they are conceptually working from the conflict transformation school while promoting conflict analysis and other facilitative interventions.

Assefa (1999) distinguishes between conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches by showing their relationship on a “conflict handling” spectrum that includes a level of mutual participation in search for solutions. He places

mediation and reconciliation processes in the conflict transformation approach, but does not include negotiation or non-consensual processes. Conflict resolution exists in a middle position where processes of adjudication, arbitration, negotiation, and mediation are included. Assefa does not include force as a component of either conflict resolution or reconciliation (see Figure 3).

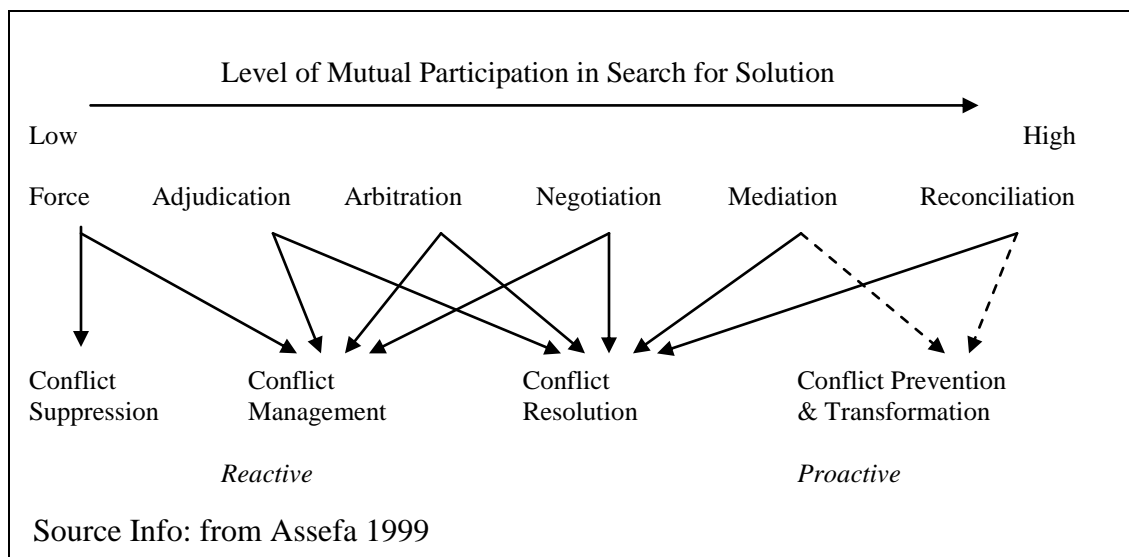


Figure 3 Conflict Handling Spectrum

A complicating factor in sorting out conflict resolution and conflict transformation processes is that also within a single process, such as mediation, there are a number of philosophical and theoretical approaches. The *ACResolution* special issue on paradigms of practice, for example, includes a look at facilitative mediation, narrative mediation, evaluative mediation, as well as transformative mediation (see discussion on transformative mediation later in this chapter) (ACResolution, 2007).

Long-term Involvement

The common understanding articulated by most writers about conflict transformation is that intervention must be thought of as a commitment to constructing and sustaining relationships and structures over time as opposed to focusing on an intervention that achieves an immediate result (Lederach, 1995a). Francis (2002) and other conflict transformation practitioners have also contrasted conflict resolution to conflict transformation in this way.

Lederach distinguishes conflict transformation from conflict resolution by charging that *resolution* is primarily focused on content and that its purpose is to achieve an agreement and solution to the presenting problem. He sees it as short-term and as working to de-escalate conflict processes (Lederach, 2003).

The conflict transformation school places a strong emphasis on peace education and other forms of intervention aimed at generational change and the *cultural* level of conflict. Such interventions are necessarily long-term in approach. Ryan, in his chapter *Transforming Violent Intercommunal Conflict* (1995), cites Lord Davies' (Davies, 1945) argument that "education is the cement which holds the pillars of peace together." Ryan continues, "In fact it is difficult to see how there can be positive developments in conflict transformation that do not involve some element of education, in the broad meaning of the term."

Structural Change

Conflict transformation is concerned with what is happening in the broader social structures within which a conflict is happening. Mitchell (2002) argues that one of the

often discussed components of conflict transformation is that of constructive change in “many aspects of the conflict, the parties and the participants, it also implies the need for major changes in the socio-political and economic systems from which the conflict originated.” Conflict transformation seeks to change the economic, political, and social structures that gave rise to the conflict in the first place.

This type of deep-level societal change connects with Vayrynen’s fourth category of *structural transformation*. It is also reflective of Wallensteen’s (1991) essay on structural transformation in Vayrynen, and Galtung’s (1995) work on structural and cultural violence and its transformation. For Reimann, conflict transformation connects directly to Galtung’s work. She defines conflict transformation as “outcome, process and structure oriented long-term peacebuilding efforts, which aim to truly overcome revealed forms of direct, cultural and structural violence” (Reimann, 2004).

Miall (2004) also shares the view that conflict transformation differs from conflict resolution and conflict management approaches in that it recognizes “that contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes. The very structure of parties and relationships may be embedded in a pattern of conflictual relationships that extend beyond the particular site of conflict. Conflict transformation is therefore a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict” (Miall, 2004).

Conflict Analysis

Though not all scholars emphasize this component, most conflict transformation practitioners believe that good conflict analysis is a crucial component of action. Miall believes this is best developed “in conjunction with groups in conflict.” He identifies that basic technique as “a snapshot of the conflict” in which it is important to identify key actors, stakeholders, issues and relationships, and then identify the actors, third-parties or potential peace alliances capable of bringing about change (Miall, 2004).

Simon Fisher, et al, have also included practitioner-friendly conflict analysis tools in their handbook on *Working with Conflict* (Fisher, 2000).

Transformative Mediation

It is important to clarify an area of practice that has been gaining a following and some notoriety related to the concepts of transformation. *Transformative mediation* is a practice of mediation described and promoted by Robert Baruch Bush and Joe Folger in two editions of their book *The Promise of Mediation* and other publications (Bush, 1994; 2005; Folger, 2001). They present transformative mediation as an alternative to traditional problem-solving or settlement-focused mediation. Their approach encourages decision-making and participation by parties that encourages building self-respect and self-confidence, termed *empowerment*, and “some degree of understanding and concern for one another despite their disagreement” (Bush, 2005), termed *recognition*.

Transformative mediation, Bush and Folger say, “can best be understood as a process of *conflict transformation* – that is, changing the quality of conflict interaction. “The unique promise of mediation lies in its capacity to transform the quality of conflict

interaction itself, so that conflicts can actually strengthen both the parties themselves and the society that are part of” (Bush, 2005).

“Success” in *transformative mediation* is not necessarily reaching an agreement. Transformative mediators employ techniques meant to be non-directive and non-controlling unlike strategies of some mediators (Saposnek, 2006). Rather, they restate, re-emphasize, and re-frame what is being said so that parties can better understand one another and so that relationships can be built. Dean Pruitt (2006) critiques this approach. On the one hand, he approves transformative mediation’s focus on relationship when mediators wish to promote joint problem-solving, encourage later compliance with the agreement, and self-facilitation of problem-solving in future conflicts. Pruitt is less likely to approve of a focus on relationship building (and therefore of using transformative mediation), however, when the participants only want/need procedural help, when they do not wish to improve their relationship, when people are seeking expert advice, or in civil or small claims mediation which research has shown not to be affected by strained relationships.

Bernie Mayer, a scholar/practitioner, is also critical. He assumes the goal of the transformative approach to mediation is to change disputants in some significant way through the conflict experience (Mayer, 2004). He suggests that changing the disputants cannot and should not be a primary goal of an intervenor because it imposes intervenor values and purposes on disputants. The conflict experience may have a transformative effect on the parties, but Mayer argues that if the primary goal is disputant

transformation, the intervenors interferes with his/her own ability to help parties whose goals and needs are not to be personally transformed.

Mayer's criticism is based on an understanding of *conflict transformation* as aiming for social transformation of conflict. He notes that Lederach, Kriesberg, and Northrup and Thorson share this broader understanding that is not limited to interpersonal contexts, and does not impose an "agenda" on disputants in the same way that Bush and Folger's approach does (Mayer, 2004).

Beth Roy, another practitioner, also criticizes transformative mediation (Roy, 2007). To her, defining *transformation* narrowly as Transformative Mediation (focused on empowerment and recognition) does an injustice to practitioners who see transformation of individuals, conflicts, and relationships as part of their practice. When providing mediation training to an organization, she encountered what she called a question of "upper case versus lower case miscommunication." She said, "I thought I was teaching mediation that might be transformative, while they wanted the version with capital letters."

Transformative Mediation has become well-known and in some cases institutionalized. One example is the dispute handling mechanism for the United States Postal Service through their REDRESS program. Their website states "The REDRESS program uses the transformative model of mediation, which strives to change the on-going interaction between the parties in a positive direction" (USPS, 2008).

Conflict Transformation Practitioners

Conflict Transformation practice included in the literature of conflict transformation theory. Distinctions between conflict resolution and conflict transformation tend to involve philosophical differences rather than practical ones.

For example, Ron Kraybill writes in his book, *Peace Skills*: “What words should we use to describe work in conflict? The question is important, because our words indicate much about our understanding of the context in which we operate and what we seek to do there.” He describes his reasoning for selecting the term,

In this manual, we will speak of ‘conflict transformation,’ for it suggests that the goal is not only to *end or prevent* something bad but also to *begin* something new and good. Transformation asserts the belief that conflict can be a catalyst for deep-rooted, enduring, positive change in individuals, relationships, and the structures of the human community.

By calling our work ‘conflict transformation,’ we signal awareness of important possibilities: human beings and the communities in which we live *can* change for the better (Kraybill, 2001).

Though Kraybill sets out an expectation for deep-level personal, relational, and structural change that is familiar in the conflict transformation language, his book, as noted earlier, relies upon practical techniques of mediation (listening skills, process skills), and facilitation (large group process skills) developed by conflict management and conflict resolution practitioners and others.

Conflict transformation practitioners tend to be found in organizations that seek long-term and structural change (as opposed to providing an alternative to systems already in place, aka ADR practitioners). As such, they include what Miall (2004) calls four principal kinds of practice – that of governmental and intergovernmental

representatives, development agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local parties and groups within the conflict setting.

Of these, NGOs have probably paid the most attention to theories of conflict transformation. Miall notes that NGOs have been deeply influenced by conflict transformation theory. He says,

Following Lederach, NGOs practitioners advocate a sustained level of engagement over a longer time period. They seek an in-depth understanding of the roots of conflict, working closely with people both within and outside the conflict parties. They seek to open a space for dialogue, sustain local or national conferences and workshops on paths towards peace, identify opportunities for development and engage in peacebuilding, relationship-building and institution-building over the longer term (Miall, 2004).

Such practitioners as John Paul Lederach (1995a; 1995b), Kraybill (2001), Louise Diamond (1994), and Eastern Mennonite University's Conflict Transformation Program have used the term exclusively to describe their work in conflict intervention.

In addition, there is evidence to suggest that whatever the difference between conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches, practitioners do distinguish between the two. To illustrate, one international conflict intervention program changed its name from the Coordinating Committee for Conflict Resolution Training in Europe (CCCRTE) to the Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS) (Support, 2003).

Definitions in Use

The Conflict Resolution Info website (University of Colorado, 1999-2008) includes a glossary that defines *conflict transformation* as a term “used more and more to

refer to a change (usually an improvement) in the nature of a conflict – a de-escalation or a reconciliation between people or groups. Unlike conflict resolution, which denies the long-term nature of conflict, or conflict management, which assumes that people and relationships can be managed as though they were physical objects, the concept of conflict transformation reflects the notion that conflicts go on for long periods of time, changing the nature of the relationships between the people involved, and themselves changing as people's response to the situation develops over time” (University of Colorado, 1999-2008). This definition points to a relational environment of conflict processes that change over a long period of time.

Lederach echoes this definition when he describes conflict transformation in his *Little Book* (Lederach, 2003). Conflict transformation’s key question is, he says, “How do we end something destructive and build something desired?” In Lederach’s definition, *conflict transformation* is relationship-centered, it promotes constructive change processes (that includes immediate solutions but are not limited to them). It sees the presenting problem as a chance to respond to symptoms and engage in the systems where relationships are embedded. Change is long-range and it is responsive to crisis rather than driven by crisis. It envisions conflict as an ecology that is relationally dynamic (de-escalation to pursue constructive change, or escalation to pursue constructive change)” (Lederach 2003).

More simply, and for purposes of this study, *conflict transformation* includes the concepts of creating long-term social change by reducing destructive conflict and increasing constructive conflict in relationships and the systems in which they are found.

Other Terms in Use in the Field

Throughout the decades that conflict resolution was growing into a field of study and practice, practitioners and scholars alike were beginning to define their own understandings and approaches to conflict in nuanced ways⁷. In addition to *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*, terms like *conflict management* (Azar, 1990; Boulding, 1961; Haas, 1972; Mayer, 1990), *dispute resolution* (Campbell, 1987; Goldberg, 1985; Ray, 1983; SPIDR, 1977, 5th Annual Meeting), *settlement* (Burton, 1990; Spangler, 2003), and *conflict regulation* (Wehr, 1979) are common in the field along with others. These terms were defined in specific ways to reflect differing pragmatic and philosophical approaches to conflict intervention.

It is not the purpose of this study to include these alternative terms, however, three of these terms are discussed below in order to provide distinct definitions.

Conflict Management

The term *conflict management* has been used alongside *conflict resolution* since the 1950s and is defined as the long-term control of intractable conflicts and the people involved in them, so that they do not escalate out of control and become violent. An early record of the term *conflict management* appeared in a report edited by Elise Boulding (Boulding, 1961). The *conflict management* school of thought acknowledged that conflict was a natural aspect of any relationship and may be positive (functional) or negative (dysfunctional).

⁷ See discussion by John Burton in *Conflict: Practices in Management, Settlement and Resolution* (Burton and Dukes, Eds., 1990c) and *Conflict Resolution: Its Language and Processes* (1996).

Jandt and Petersen (1996) defined conflict management strategies as different from conflict resolution. “Conflict management brings conflict under control, whereas conflict resolution attempts to terminate the conflict. Conflict management recognizes the importance of positive conflict in relationships and may be a strategy to prevent conflicts from being resolved.”

Conflict Management is frequently seen in the scholarly literature and typically supports the role of management as control in protracted conflicts (Bercovitch, 2001; Crocker, 2005; 2007; Möller, 2007). But again, the waters here are muddy. In sorting out conflict-handling processes, Burton and Dukes (Burton, 1990) place a variety of types of mediation into the conflict management category. They include divorce mediation, victim-offender reconciliation, community mediation, environmental, and public policy mediation. As mentioned earlier, Reimann (Reimann, 2004) uses conflict management as an umbrella term over conflict resolution and conflict transformation. And Miall, in a chapter in the same publication writes,

Conflict management theorists see violent conflicts as an ineradicable consequence of differences of values and interests within and between communities. The propensity to violence arises from existing institutions and historical relationships, as well as from the established distribution of power. Resolving such conflicts is viewed as unrealistic: the best that can be done is to manage and contain them, and occasionally to reach a historic compromise in which violence may be laid aside and normal politics resumed. Conflict management is the art of appropriate intervention to achieve political settlements, particularly by those powerful actors having the power and resources to bring pressure on the conflicting parties in order to induce them to settle. It is also the art of designing appropriate institutions to guide the inevitable conflict into appropriate channels (Miall 2004).

The term continues to be chosen by practitioners to describe their work (Haas, 1972; Haynes, 2004; Mayer, 1990; Ross, 1993; Shapiro, 2004) and by such organizations

as the International Association for Conflict Management and The Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland.

Dispute Resolution and Alternative Dispute Resolution

A second widely used term is *dispute resolution* used to denote the settlement of disputes⁸. Within the United States, most definitions of *dispute resolution* are aimed at disputes that otherwise may need to be settled by a court of law such as those over land, labor, management or environment. Dispute resolution covers a wide range of processes including negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication (Goldberg, 1985). The Federal government institutionalized the roles of intervenors in dispute resolution when it founded the U.S. Conciliation Service in 1918 to help with labor disputes. A series of Federal programs followed including the National Mediation Board in 1926, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (FMCS) in 1947, and the Community Relations Service (CRS) of the U.S. Department of Justice created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Dispute Resolution as a term was claimed by the American Bar Association (Ray, 1983) and the American Arbitration Association (Campbell, 1987) to describe specific processes within the civil justice system (notably arbitration). These organizations, along with the Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR) (SPIDR, 1977, 5th Annual Meeting), began to use these terms exclusively for legal processes other than adjudication by the early 1970s. As such, these legal processes provided an *alternative* to the processes of rights based advocacy within the contemporary law field.

⁸ See discussion in *Dispute Resolution* by Goldberg, Green and Sander, Eds. (1985).

Dispute Resolution is frequently used interchangeably with the term *Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)*. The first application of the term *alternative dispute resolution* to the formal work of the FMCS, for example, was in 1975 when it was asked to intervene in a land dispute between the Hopis and Navajos.

Dispute Resolution or Alternative Dispute Resolution are terms for a growing field with its own theory, research and practice base (Fox, 2006). Scholarly work is done mostly through schools of law. Notable journals in dispute resolution include the *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution*, and the *Dispute Resolution Journal* of the American Arbitration Association.

Some writers claim ADR as the umbrella term for the field of nonviolent conflict intervention in the U.S. The history of ADR by Barrett, for example, includes an understanding of dispute resolution at its very broadest level (Barrett, 2004), inclusive of all human dispute-handling mechanisms.

Conflict Engagement

Among the more interesting terms proposed by practitioners to describe the field of conflict intervention is that of *conflict engagement*. Mayer asserts “the goal of engagement is to help people enter into conflict at whatever phase they are in and to work with them on accomplishing the developmental tasks of conflict with which they are struggling” (Mayer, 2004). He distinguishes this from both conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The goal of conflict resolution he says is “a thorough resolution of all issues involved” in a conflict, and the goal of conflict transformation is to “change disputants in some significant way through the conflict experience” (Mayer, 2004).

Mayer encourages practitioners to consider themselves as “conflict specialists” or “conflict engagement specialists.”

Though there are many others, these examples show that not only are there a variety of terms used for similar processes, but also that these terms are becoming associated with specific schools of thought. While this may not be a negative outcome in a growing field, it does show that few of the terms in use in the field have been clearly associated with specific practices (intervention processes, strategies, and techniques). Rather, definitions seem to be philosophical and idealistic with practice strategies shared by many schools of thought.

Conclusion

Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation are by turns defined as schools of thought, approaches, and strategies in the growing field of nonviolent conflict intervention. Conflict Resolution may have developed as a consensual and nonviolent conflict intervention in response to diplomatic and *realpolitik* schools of thought where coercion and self-interest are acceptable. Conflict Transformation may have grown from criticism of the conflict resolution school. Either way, I believe the scholarly literature supports the conclusion that conflict transformation and conflict resolution have each developed into distinct schools of thought with supporting literature, theory, and practice. With this now solid foundation of scholarly literature and thinking about conflict intervention, the research question of this study comes to the fore. Do practitioners make similar distinctions? And does this in fact affect the nature of their work? These questions form the basic foundation for this research.

In order to answer these questions, it is also important to consider scholarly literature on practice. The following chapter explores the nature of practice in the field of conflict resolution/conflict transformation and the scholarly literature related to practice including research and evaluation of practice.

Chapter Three: Learning from Practice

Introduction

The discussion of the literature thus far supports a distinction between conflict resolution and conflict transformation schools of thought based on articulated theories and philosophies found in scholarly literature. Though there continues to be a tension between those who pursue theory and those who practice (whether in conflict resolution or transformation)⁹, it is clear that theory and practice are linked by the values and goals that both scholars and practitioners bring to the field.

There is much to be learned from careful and systematic study of practice. As described in Chapter One, this research study focuses on practitioner responses to questions about practice including the terms they use to describe their practice, the definitions of their terms, and their theories of practice (intervention strategies, goals, and criteria for success). In this study, I have attempted to discover whether these categories of information about practice depend upon practitioner identification with either a conflict resolution or a conflict transformation approach to intervention.

⁹ A number of scholar/practitioners have explored this tension as it relates to: negotiation (Susskind, 2008), mediation (Gadlin, 2002), policy making (Bercovitch, 2005), and the field at large (Cheldelin, 2003).

The following section provides a brief overview of the scholarly literature relevant to practice as it relates to this study, including literature on practitioner roles, reflective practice, theories of action and practice, goals, criteria for success, evaluation in the field, and evaluation as a framework for comparison.

Practitioner Roles

Cheldelin, et al, (2003) ask “What is Practice?” Their simple answer is “the work that professionals do”. They give an example of professionals in the field: negotiators, mediators, consultants, conflict resolvers, and peace-builders. Other scholars have also attempted to clarify the roles that practitioners in the field play. James Laue distinguished between parties and practitioners in this way,

Any party’s stance toward a given conflict depends largely on variables such as ideology, power (who has it), and goals (that is, who wishes to maintain or gain what). Low-power groups generally do not call for conflict resolution or peace; they want empowerment, change, and justice. Their more typical approach is to agitate conflict. More powerful parties are more likely to wish to deter, suppress, repress, or control conflict. Third-party intervenors may aim to resolve, manage, regulate, or settle conflicts, whereas academics analyze, teach and predict (Laue, 1988).

Laue’s model also described the roles of intervenors in relation to the power held by parties in conflict relative to one another. These roles depend upon how “close” they are to the party in conflict and may include activist, advocate, mediator, researcher or enforcer.

Mitchell expanded on these roles (Mitchell, 1993) in a 1993 publication where he wrote, “our concept of mediation might be increased if we treated it as a complex process, to which many entities might contribute, simultaneously or consecutively, rather

than as the behavior of a single, intermediary actor.” In this broader conceptualization of intermediary action, Mitchell (1993) included a list of intermediary roles and their descriptions. They included explorer, convener, decoupler, unifier, ensembler, envisioner, guarantor, facilitator, legitimizer, enhancer, monitor, enforcer, and reconciler (for complete details, see Mitchell, 1993). Lederach, in turn, used Mitchell’s roles to describe appropriate responses by intermediaries at specific times in the progression of conflict (Lederach, 1997).

Bill Ury, a educator and practitioner, also wrote of practitioner roles. He describes the role a practitioner should take as a third side (Ury, 2000). He suggests ten third-side roles: provider, teacher, bridge builder, mediator, arbiter, equalizer, healer, witness, referee, and peacekeeper (see Ury, 2000 for a full discussion of these roles).

Bernie Mayer (2004), a mediator and practitioner in the field, has become a critic of traditional conflict resolution roles. He is clear to note that everyone is a conflict resolver as a fact of human necessity, but that there is a difference between conflict resolution as a basic human skill and conflict resolution as a field of practice.

He asserts that conflict resolution practitioners are typically defined as third-party neutrals (mediators, arbitrators, or facilitators, or fact finders). Though he acknowledges the role of a neutral can be important and powerful, he concludes that it is only one of many roles that parties need practitioners to play. He proposes, rather, that conflict resolution practitioners see themselves as conflict specialists who have knowledge of conflict and the variety of ways it can be approached. He writes that *conflict engagement specialists* of this type are,

people who have special knowledge of the dynamics of conflict, conceptual tools that assist people in developing constructive approaches to conflict, and a range of roles they can play and intervention strategies they can use in assisting people who are involved in conflict (Mayer, 2004).

Mayer's perspective on the roles of a conflict engagement specialist is that they should directly assist disputants to engage in conflict as advocates, coaches, advisers, representatives, consultants, advocates, teachers, and substantive experts, as well as facilitators, conciliators, and mediators (Mayer, 2004).

The Reflective Practitioner

Donald Schon is well known for his work on professional practice. In his book *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schon suggests that a successful practitioner "reflects in action," actually "becoming a researcher and testing theory in the practice context" (Schon, 1983). These types of practitioners intuitively make decisions as their experience increases. The intuitive decisions usually lead to desired results; however, it is when intuitive decisions lead to surprises that practitioners then respond by "reflection in action." This type of reflection assumes that practitioners are aware and critical of their own behavior. When surprises happen, they are able to adjust their approach, test their new understanding, and respond with a new action. Through this process, a new "theory in action" emerges.

Theories of Action

Theories of action were originally described by Argyris and Schon (Argyris, 1974) and characterized more recently by Argyris, Putnam and Smith (Argyris, 1985). In their understanding of *theories of action*, practitioners design action to achieve intended consequences. They then make assessments about whether their actions have been effective.

When practitioners, such as those in this study, design action, it is assumed that they draw upon a personal set of theories that they have come to trust to achieve the consequences they desire for an intervention. Argyris, Putnam and Smith argue that these theories are not created from scratch each time they are needed, but rather individuals such as the practitioners in this study “learn a repertoire of concepts, schemas, and strategies, and they learn programs for drawing from their repertoire to design...action for unique situations” (Argyris, 1985). These programs are *theories of action*.

Espoused Theory and Theories-in-use

According to Argyris and Schon (Argyris, 1974), there are two types of theories of action: espoused theories and theories-in-use. Espoused theories are those that “an individual claims to follow”. Theories-in-use, on the other hand, are those that “can be inferred from action” (Argyris, 1985).

In this study, espoused theories are those things that a practitioner states he/she does or should do in a conflict intervention. Theories-in-use are those things that a

practitioner actually does in the intervention. Because the study relies on primary data from practitioner interviews, it has been structured to uncover evidence of theories-in-use by asking practitioners to provide textual (e.g. reports, evaluations or e-mail testimonials), audiovisual (audio or video recording) or verbal (testimony by intervention participants or colleagues) evidence.

Theories of Practice

Theories of practice in conflict intervention is a restatement of the term *theories of action* to apply specifically to theories-in-use in professional practice situations. Practitioners depend upon a variety of implicit and explicit theories of practice (Ross, 2000). This study will use *theories of practice* to describe the set of theories, concepts, tools, strategies, and beliefs about conflict that guide how conflict intervention practitioners design intervention processes (Argyris, 1974; Ross, 1999; Shapiro, 1995).

Katz suggests that this perspective is important for the professional development of practitioners in conflict intervention. He asserts that as conflict intervention practitioners practice their “craft” and *knowing in practice* becomes tacit and spontaneous, that practitioners’ reputations among peers and the public as successful professionals is enhanced, and practitioner confidence and competence grow. Katz warns, though, that on the reverse side, professionals in the field may become too comfortable with their approaches, may become less aware of surprises, and may miss opportunities to reflect on what they are doing. He says that becoming a reflective practitioner is a way of overcoming this problem (Katz, 2006).

Goals and Criteria for Success

In addition to comparing practitioner definitions of conflict resolution and conflict transformation, this study compares practitioner goals and criteria for success. D’Estree, et al, assert that the “debate between settlement, management, resolution, and transformation ...[is] a debate about the goals that govern the process and their accompanying criteria for success” (d’Estree, 2001). *Goals* are those statements of desired outcomes articulated by practitioners for an intervention or other project or program. In their handbook for designing conflict transformation action, Church and Rogers argue that a goal statement is crucial for the design of effective peacebuilding processes. They say, “The goal is the broadest change in the conflict that the program hopes to achieve” (Church, 2008).

Criteria for success, on the other hand, are standards by which practitioners (and others) judge whether the work done has met the goals of the project or intervention. Different processes have different goals and therefore distinct criteria for success. One question commonly asked of conflict intervention processes by funders, evaluators, critics, and colleagues is *Was it successful?* This question implies a judgment about whether an intervention was effective. Judgments about the effectiveness of processes in the field must necessarily assess what such processes achieve in relationship to their goals. Determining how goals match outcomes is the work of *evaluation*.

Goals

The articulation of explicit goals is the first step in evaluation. Whatever the desired outcome, it is too often the case that goals are left implicit. This creates a problem for clear assessment of goals and criteria for success and makes comparison of approaches impossible (d'Estree, 2001). The primary goal of nonviolent conflict intervention, whether practice is termed *conflict resolution*, *conflict transformation*, or any other word, is to create a change. Burton (1990b) claims that conflict resolution is a process of change in the social system. Lederach (1997) claims the same for conflict transformation. Warfield (2002) reports of a conversation at a conference in the field, “Often muted, but nonetheless heard, was an expectation that intervention outcomes ought to produce social change rather than a self-serving resolution of the conflict” (Warfield, 2002).

Whether or not there is an ultimate goal for the field, such as social change, is a question of debate. However, the establishment of clear goals is necessary for programs and practitioners in order to show that the work done has been effective and to show this success to funders.

Evaluation, or determining *success*, is dependent upon goals and criteria for success. Though not a frequent subject in the scholarly literature in the field, there is some discussion about *success* related to each of the approaches: conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

Defining Success in Conflict Resolution

A number of scholars and practitioners have noted the difficulty in the field of conflict resolution with determining what constitutes success (Ross, 2004; Rothman, 1997b). Conceptions of *success* naturally vary depending upon the values, goals and approaches of the practitioner. Two areas in use for evaluation that are documented in the literature are 1) settlements or agreements and 2) party satisfaction.

Kriesberg (1998) suggests that the problems in the field with determining effectiveness and success have led some evaluators to reduce their expectations for success. For example, Kriesberg reports that one criterion for success for a mediation was that it reached a settlement with the participation of a mediator. With that criterion, the mediation fails if the parties come to an agreement on their own, or if parties continue in their conflict.

Other evaluators in conflict resolution have used criteria for success that focus upon a settlement or agreement “including durability of agreement, fairness of the agreement, and speed of reaching an agreement” (Kriesberg, 1989). In *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Miall, 2002), the authors argue that successful settlements should do the following:

- They should include the affected parties.
- Settlements need to be well crafted and precise, especially as regards details over transitional arrangements for example.
- They should offer a balance between clear commitments and flexibility.
- They should offer incentives for parties to sustain the process and to participate in politics, for example through power sharing rather than winner-take-all elections.
- They should provide for dispute settlement, mediation and, if necessary, renegotiation in case of disagreement.

- They should deal with the core issues of the conflict and bring about a real transformation, incorporating norms and principles to which the parties subscribe, such as equity and democracy, while at the same time creating political space for further negotiations and political accommodation (Miall, 2002).

While such a listing could also be seen as a reflection of values or as a list of goals, it most clearly stands as a list of expectations for outcomes. This particular list also is suggestive of ways that each of the criteria listed could be measured.

Some theorists and practitioners argue that party satisfaction should be a key measure of success in conflict resolution. A great deal of research has been done on mediation processes and research findings indicate high rates of user satisfaction with mediation. Kressel (1989) reports that satisfaction with mediation processes is typically rated at 75 percent or higher (see Hedeon, 2004; Hermann, 2006; Wissler, 2002 for other criteria for success for mediation).

Warfield (2002) notes that the field of conflict analysis and resolution has done a poor job of evaluating the impact of intervention beyond party satisfaction and agreement-making. His challenge to the field is to put effort into conceptualizing evaluation of conflict resolution processes in a broad enough way to include the newest innovations in the field and the newest types of nontraditional or nonprofessional practitioners (Warfield, 2002).

There are a number of scholar/practitioners who have taken up Warfield's challenge to broaden evaluation and understandings of success (d'Estree, 2000a; 1999; Folger, 1999; Hedeon, 2004; Kleiboer, 1996; Ross, 2004; Rothman, 1997b). Folger and Ross have worked on evaluation of ethnic conflict resolution, and d'Estree has developed

criteria for success for environmental conflict resolution and interactive conflict resolution (see further discussion under the evaluation section that follows).

Jay Rothman (1997b), a scholar/practitioner, notes that there is a significant lack of consensus about what constitutes success in conflict resolution. He believes it “is due to lack of research on the question, which itself is probably influenced by the fact that so much different kind of work is being done in so many different settings.” Therefore, he believes, “a single definition of ‘success’ is probably impossible and irrelevant.”

Rothman also highlights what he calls the “tiresome debate” about the terminology *conflict resolution* versus *management* versus *transformation*. Rather than a broad range of criteria for success as encouraged by Warfield, Rothman calls for a range of approaches “to be applied on a contingency basis to different settings, conflict types, and intervention styles¹⁰.” This suggests that Rothman is in favor of a strategic view of the use of the various approaches available in the field. He himself has contributed to understanding criteria for success through his work with action-evaluation (Rothman, 1997b).

Defining Success in Conflict Transformation

Very little *scholarly* research or evaluation literature is available for conflict transformation as a distinct school of thought. There is a clear ideal in the literature about what conflict transformation should do, but there is a lack of evaluative and other research data on how judgments are to be made. Descriptions of goals like the following

¹⁰ For a discussion of a contingency approach to conflict resolution intervention, see Fisher and Keashly (1991).

are common, but they frequently do not include accompanying criteria for success.

Conflict Transformation theory, write the authors,

assumes that conflict is caused by real problems of inequality and injustice expressed by competing social, cultural and economic frameworks (Fisher, 2000 p. 8).

The goals of work based on conflict transformation theory are to change structures and frameworks that cause inequality and injustice, including economic redistribution, to improve longer-term relationships and attitudes among the conflict parties, and to develop processes and systems that promote empowerment, justice, peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, recognition (Fisher, 2000 p. 9).

The difficulty here is in articulating measurable criteria against which success or effectiveness can be measured. For example, how does a practitioner show that the work that has been done has changed a structure or has caused an improvement in longer-term relationships? A practitioner, Ron Kraybill, writes that,

The goal of transformation serves more as a guiding beacon than as a result that is fully attained in a mediation session. But the criterion for success is *not* whether or not “settlement” has been reached. Rather, it is whether or not people in conflict have changed and grown in ways that make them better people. More specifically, it is whether or not they have made practical choices that expand their ability to fulfill their potential as human beings and at the same time honor the worth and dignity of others (Kraybill, 2001).

This type of statement is familiar in the literature for conflict transformation. However, such a “criterion for success,” whether or not people have changed and grown, is an extremely difficult one to measure.

Despite these difficulties, there is a growing body of evaluation *practice* among peacebuilding programs and practitioners in the field (NGOs specifically) who espouse

conflict transformation theory or philosophy and are developing good tools for judging successful practice. Practitioners like Simon Fisher, et al, in the book *Working with Conflict* (Fisher, 2000) and organizations like the consortium that produced the *Resource Pack: An introduction to conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding* including the organizations Africa Peace Forum, Center for Conflict Resolution, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, International Alert, and Saferworld have included evaluation and monitoring tools in their resources for practice (Africa Peace Forum, 2004).

Search for Common Ground has shared an interest in evaluating effectiveness of “conflict transformation” processes. Its manual for designing processes begins,

This manual, written by Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers and produced by Search for Common Ground in partnership with the United States Institute for Peace and the Alliance for Peacebuilding is the first of his kind to focus on the particular needs of the conflict transformation field. It addresses the many challenges faced by conflict transformation practitioners in their attempts to measure and increase the effectiveness of their work with practical tips and examples from around the world (Church, 2008).

These practitioner-driven innovations in conflict transformation evaluation will hopefully generate additional interest in writing and research on the topic.

Evaluation

Evaluation as a field of practice has faced difficulties because evaluation is often seen as threatening due to the sense of judgment or criticism that is sometimes attributed to it. Despite fear of criticism or judgment, well designed evaluation processes can provide crucial information for practitioners. Church and Rogers write,

Evaluation is commonly thought to serve two purposes: learning and accountability. The two purposes are not separate; in fact, they overlap and reinforce each other significantly, since to be accountable implies the requirement to learn from success and failure (Church, 2008).

The learning component is often described as *formative* evaluation and the accountability component is described as *summative* evaluation (Church, 2008).

Whether formative or summative, a well planned and carried out evaluation can provide evidence to support the various claims made by practitioners about the effectiveness of a project or process (Patton, 1996). Evaluation methodology helps practitioners to document evidence of the changes that they observe taking place as a result of their intervention in a situation (d'Estree 2001). Many conflict resolution organizations have developed careful evaluation methodologies in order to formalize the knowledge of best practices in conflict resolution (Cheldelin, 2003; Church, 2008).

Evaluating Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution has taken giant steps in developing its own literature on evaluation since its inception. Although conflict interventions have a much longer history in practice than in research, in the past three decades the question of how to assess the effects and effectiveness of interventions has occupied both scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution (Bercovitch, 1986; Church, 2008; d'Estree, 2000a; 2000b; Folger, 1999; Kleiboer, 1996; Ross, 1999; 2004; Rothman, 1997b; Rouhana, 1995; 2000; Stern, 2000; Strimling, 2002; Tidwell, 2001) (see the comprehensive review by Stern and Druckman (Stern, 2000) of the history of evaluation for conflict resolution intervention).

Most writers attempting to identify criteria and frameworks for evaluation for conflict resolution focus on conflict intervention within a specific domain such as family or other types of mediation (Bercovitch, 1986; Hedeon, 2004; Kleiboer, 1996; Pruitt, 2006), ethnic conflict intervention (Folger, 1999; Ross, 1999) or environmental conflict resolution (Leach, 2003) to name a few. One such example is the guidebook for evaluating environmental conflict resolution (ECR). The guidebook accompanies the book *Braving the Currents: Evaluating Environmental Conflict Resolution in the River Basins of the American West* by Tamra Pearson d'Estree and Bonnie G. Colby (2004). In their guidebook the criteria in use for evaluating ECR¹¹ cases included the six following categories:

- I. Outcome Reached (unanimity or consensus, verifiable terms, public acknowledgement of outcome, ratification).
- II. Process Quality (procedurally just, procedurally accessible and inclusive, fair process costs).
- III. Outcome Quality (cost-effective implementation, perceived economic efficiency, financial feasibility/sustainability, cultural sustainability/community self-determination, environmental sustainability, clarity of outcome, feasibility/realism, public acceptability, efficient problem-solving).
- IV. Relationship of Parties to Outcome (Satisfaction/fairness as assessed by participants, compliance with outcome over time, flexibility, stability/durability).
- V. Relationship between Parties (Reduction in Conflict and Hostility, Improved Relations, Cognitive and Affective shift, ability to resolve subsequent disputes, transformation).
- VI. Social Capital (enhanced citizen capacity to draw on collective potential resources, increased community capacity for environmental/policy decision-making) (d'Estree, 2004).

¹¹ This framework is taken directly from d'Estree and Colby's 2004 book, *Braving the Currents: Evaluating Environmental Conflict Resolution in the River Basins of the American West*, published by Kluwer Academic Publishers, Norwell, MA. Please refer to this source for a full operationalization of each criterion and the methodology, sources and timing of assessment.

This list is a great improvement over lists of goals because it includes specific points of measurement or assessment. Though some of the measurements under the listed criteria are specific to environmental conflict resolution (Criterion III for example), which in itself is a broad category of practice, the entire list would seem to be applicable to other conflict resolution interventions as well.

A similar framework developed by d'Estree, et al, (2000a), titled *Developing Criteria and Methods for Assessing Individual Change in Intercommunal Interactive Conflict Resolution* focuses on interactive conflict resolution. There are few broad frameworks of criteria that are relevant for intervention across the field. Although the framework is designed to assess training workshops and other interactive methodologies for dealing with communities in conflict, it also seems broadly applicable to interventions in the field.

Interactive Conflict Resolution

Interactive conflict resolution is a term to describe approaches to conflict intervention that privilege participant involvement. Nadim Rouhana writes about the evaluation of interactive conflict resolution (Rouhana, 2000). His is a social scientist's approach, and his purpose is "To increase confidence in this approach to practice, establish its relevance for policy makers, and enhance its legitimacy as an academic field of study and research, international conflict resolution should be held to the same standards of scrutiny as other established fields" (Rouhana, 2000).

Hal Saunders, a veteran high-ranking U.S. State Department diplomat, asks if interactive conflict resolution will add to our overall practical capacity in making and

building peace. In his chapter on Interactive Conflict Resolution in the book *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War* published by the National Research Council, Saunders wrote of the need for evaluating interactive conflict resolution. He said,

Our understanding of interactive conflict resolution becomes more systematic if we can analyze its progression. Understanding the function of each stage also facilitates seeing its contribution to the open-ended political process that it attempts to influence (Saunders, 2000).

Both social scientists and policy makers share an interest in determining the effectiveness of approaches like interactive conflict resolution.

Though the field of nonviolent conflict intervention has not yet developed standard frameworks for determining when processes are effective, there have been some efforts (d'Estree, 2004; Rothman, 1997b; Stern, 2000), partly as a response to requests for program evaluation (d'Estree, 2001). Fisher's 1997 study on Interactive Conflict Resolution found very few examples of evaluation of conflict resolution processes in situations where practitioners claimed that they had influenced the conflict (Fisher, 1997).

Evaluating Conflict Transformation

Evaluation of conflict transformation processes is emerging. As noted earlier, Mitchell proposes a list of common criteria with which conflict transformation effectiveness can or should be evaluated. His list is based on the distinctions he makes between the conflict resolution and conflict transformation schools of thought. According to Mitchell, conflict transformation can be seen and evaluated as:

- Multi-level participation, involving elements from all social levels of all the involved parties, from top, middle, and grass roots. Including those who may normally be excluded from formal negotiations.
- Efforts to empower the 'underdogs' in the struggle so that solutions and changes can be sought between parties that are more equal.
- Efforts to ensure that those directly involved in the conflict can control the process to their own satisfaction. Outcomes are approved by those affected.
- A focus not merely on immediate issues, but also on long-standing traumas and hurts, and on deep-rooted past injustices.
- Appropriate intermediaries who understand the cultural and social structures in which the parties are embedded.
- Co-creation of a new understanding of the conflict.
- An ability to create and put in place procedures that will maintain and continue the changes found necessary to resolve the current conflict and prevent future ones from arising.
- The mutual, inter-active education of adversaries about the nature of the socio-political and economic systems from which the conflict arose and of the dynamics of that conflict; and their training in skills that will enable them to deal with that conflict and others that may arise (abridged from Mitchell, 2002).

Mitchell admits that his list may not be acceptable to all in the *transformation* school, but he emphasizes that it does help to answer the question: What is transformation to transform? He sorts these criteria into three broad categories – those dealing with personal changes, those dealing with structural changes, and those dealing with relationship changes.

As such, he nearly mirrors Lederach's framework of conflict transformation as personal, relational, structural, and cultural changes. Lederach conceptualizes assessment of conflict transformation practice within his framework for strategic and responsive peacebuilding evaluation. Evaluation itself, he contends, is like peacebuilding and the associated conflict transformation, and must also promote desired change in the society moving from conflict to peace. He writes, "Evaluation, in other words, is not a neutral,

external element. It is and should be an intrinsic aspect of peacebuilding” (Lederach, 1997).

The literature in the field, however, also points to a distinction between *conflict transformation* as a school of thought as articulated by Lederach, and *conflict transformation* as a strategy for intervention. For example, d’Estree and Colby (2004) include transformation as a sub-category under *Relationship between Parties* in their ECR guidebook for evaluating environmental conflict resolution cases. For them, transformation seems to imply a collective moral growth, a concept they take from Bush and Folger’s book *The Promise of Mediation* (Bush, 1994).

For Bush and Folger, this moral growth is toward a social vision that allows individual freedom while also including a social conscience and makes sure that concerns over justice and rights are connected to care and relationships. Their definition of transformation in this sense is that “This moral growth can occur if conflict resolution processes help people to change their old ways of operating and to achieve new understanding and new relationships through conflict” (Bush, 1994). The list of indicators of transformation of this type includes evidence of empowerment (i.e., the parties’ renewed sense of their own capacity to handle challenges) and evidence of recognition (i.e., empathy for and acknowledgement of others’ circumstances).

D’Estree and Colby include these two concepts as well as additional evidence of other major shifts in perception (e.g., of relationship context, of paradigm, of social and political context, of tools and solutions). They note that “*Perceptions* of ability to achieve results and resolve future challenges should be noted here.” They seem to be

drawing largely on Folger and Bush's understanding of conflict transformation as an approach that places individual empowerment and recognition ahead of agreement. They also include transformation of perception of the conflict and relationship (major shifts in perception of relationship, or larger (environmental, social and political) context of the conflict and the relationship and transformation of policies/procedures (doing away with past tools, frameworks and operating policies or procedures and calling for new ones) (d'Estree, 2004).

This limited characterization of "transformation" is more in line with a strategy of transformative mediation practice than with the conflict transformation school of thought in which practice encompasses all nonviolent conflict intervention.

Challenges of Evaluation in the Field

The difficulty of evaluating interventions in conflict resolution is evident in numerous sources. The most common concerns raised are related to what criteria to apply; who chooses the criteria for evaluation and for what reasons; and how the criteria vary based on context, purpose and actors (d'Estree, 2001; Stern, 2000). D'Estree, et al, identify an additional challenge, that of linking micro-level interventions to macro-level changes (d'Estree, 2001).

D'Estree, et al, also point out what may be the chief concern when attempting to evaluate conflict resolution practice. That is the problem of confidentiality. D'Estree, et al, state this problem succinctly, "The problem is how to protect participants and their contributions, while at the same time evaluating the efficacy of processes" (d'Estree, 2001).

No matter what terms are used, how the terms are defined, or whether terms represent different types of practice, it is simply difficult to determine success (when outcomes match goals for intervention) for any type of conflict intervention. Research is difficult because conflict is complex and involves multiple processes and levels of intervention. One can rarely attribute effects to a specific intervention, and in the end, the goal of conflict intervention is to keep violence from happening (how can credit be assigned for things that do not occur?) (d'Estree, 1999).

Along with these problems is a lack that, as Ross and Rothman point out, is specific to conflict resolution,

What is sorely needed is a systematic, 'user-friendly', and highly replicable research methodology which conflict resolution interveners and researchers can employ and which practitioners, foundations, and policy makers can rely on as they design, fund, and implement interventions. Without such a methodology, the field of conflict resolution continues to be one in which many assertions of positive results are made, but very little systematic or empirical data is generated to support what is often no more than poorly defined, anecdotal evidence of success (Ross, 1999).

Additionally, though a number of conflict resolution practitioners (Fisher, 1997; Rothman, 1997b; Warfield, 2002) have recognized the need for comparative analysis of interventions in order to identify strategies and develop theory, comparative studies have been done infrequently. Such comparisons are difficult because measurement of changes in individuals, groups and institutions is complex; conflicts frequently require anonymity and confidentiality; and such evaluations themselves may affect the outcome of an intervention in an undesired way.

Framework for Comparison

Interactive Conflict Resolution Framework

As introduced earlier, the comparative tool used in this study is the conceptual framework for “discussing ‘success’ in interactive conflict resolution and in conflict resolution efforts more generally” proposed by d’Estree, et al, (2001). The authors introduce the framework, discuss its construction and “how the theoretician, practitioner, and research-evaluator can use this framework for their own purposes, and how evaluating processes based upon their goals helps to improve the theory, practice and research of the field.”

The ICR framework was selected as a comparative tool for this study because of its breadth and the ease with which it allows the researcher to plot and compare practitioner goals and criteria for success. The goal of the d’Estree team was to use the framework to make informed statements about the relative strength and the challenges of different approaches to intervention, thus contributing to theory development and the improvement of practice.

The ICR Framework is based upon four categories: *Changes in Thinking*, *Changes in Relations*, *Foundation for Transfer*, and *Foundation for Outcome or Implementation*. The categories were selected to reflect what type of change an intervenor is trying to promote.

ICR Framework Categories

Changes in Thinking

- New Learning
- Attitude Change
- Integrative Framing
- Problem-Solving
- Better Communication and New Language

Changes in Relations

- Empathy
- Improvements in Relational Climate
- Validation and Reconceptualization of Identity
- Security in Coexistence

Foundations for Transfer

- Artifacts
- Structures for Implementation
- Perceptions of Possibility
- Empowerment
- New Leadership
- Influential Participants

Foundations for Outcome/Implementation

- Networks
- Reforms in Political Structures
- New Political Input and Processes
- Increased Capacity for Jointly Facing Future Challenges

The first category, *Changes in Thinking*, includes criteria for new or changed knowledge that a participant in a process takes away. The developers of the ICR Framework assumed that the participant would be taking part in a workshop or similar experience. The second category, *Changes in Relations*, includes indicators that the relationship between the parties has changed in some way. The third category, *Foundations for Transfer*, includes all those things that help participants transfer any new insights or achievements to their communities and the relationships between their larger groups. The final category, *Foundation for Outcome/Implementation*, includes

achievements outside the process in which participants were involved (for the framework, this meant workshops or trainings) that could be linked back to the workshop. This category also includes any new structures that support implementation of the ideas or plans that came about as a result of the workshop.

I share d'Estree's assertion that "the framework may help to illuminate the debate about what constitutes success in conflict interventions". Comparisons across cases and types of interventions will enable the field to address the "best fit" question. Second, evaluating processes based upon intervenors' explicit goals will help increase their sense of accomplishment, increase their coordination and decrease their competition, and guard against unrealistic expectations of interventions. This will help define success and legitimize the claims of accomplishment that intervenors often make. Finally, recognizing that each intervention has its own particular strengths contributes to the potential complementarity of interventions (d'Estree, 2000a).

Conclusion

This chapter has summarized the scholarly literature related to the study of practice in the field from which this dissertation research draws. The relevant areas included practitioner roles, theories of practice, goals, criteria for success and evaluation.

The next chapter describes the research methodology chosen for this comparative study of these two approaches to practice.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This study is an exploratory qualitative comparison of two approaches to conflict intervention – conflict resolution and conflict transformation, to determine if there is congruence among practitioners who identify with each of these approaches, and to compare the approaches.

Conflict Research

One of the great challenges of research in the growing field of nonviolent conflict intervention (inclusive of conflict resolution, conflict transformation, dispute resolution, mediation, conflict management and others) is a research agenda that includes both the study of *conflict* and the study of *approaches to conflict intervention*.

There is a growing body of research to describe and explain conflict. It includes studies on specific conflicts, on social processes related to conflict (e.g. forgiveness, trauma, violence), on conflict at different levels (e.g. interpersonal, small group, international) and in different contexts (e.g. schools/bullying, psychology/aggression, international terrorism). Many of these studies are descriptive rather than explanatory.

For a sampling, one merely needs to browse the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, or the *Journal of Peace Research*, or *Peace Review*¹².

Cheldelin, et al, (2003) provide a partial review of some of the research that has been done and insights gained from research on conflict from the conflict resolution school of thought. They cite the research of Druckman, for example. Druckman (2005) himself, in the book *Doing Research*, provides more examples of research on conflict. There are also large bodies of research on conflict from other disciplinary approaches including sociology, international relations, education and law.

Conflict Intervention Research

The research on practice of nonviolent conflict intervention has further to go. Not formally connected to a traditional discipline, consensual conflict intervention has had a much shorter amount of time to develop a body of research. There are some descriptive¹³ and exploratory studies. There is also a growing number of evaluative studies as presented in Chapter Three. These studies stress research in practice, including action research approaches, participatory research (PAR), and other practical applications.

¹² For example, see the article by Inge Brees (2008), Forced displacement of Burmese people, in *Forced Migration Review*; the article by Christian Webersik (2008), Wars Over Resources?: Evidence from Somalia, in *Environment*; and Erika Forsberg's article, Polarization and Ethnic Conflict in a Widened Strategic Setting, from the *Journal of Peace Research* (2008).

¹³ For example, see the article by Desiree Nilsson, Partial Peace: Rebel Groups Inside and Outside of Civil War Settlements, in the *Journal of Peace Research*, (2008).

Explanatory studies are rare. Still, this is an area of growing interest, and research on the specific processes of mediation¹⁴ and negotiation¹⁵ has grown since the 1980s.

Comparing Conflict Resolution with Consensual Approaches

While the number of research studies examining those processes that are called conflict resolution (especially negotiation and mediation) is growing, less research has been done to compare processes with other consensual approaches to conflict intervention. This is in contrast to the body of research comparing conflict resolution with non-consensual approaches (such as adjudication, arbitration and others). Comparisons with non-consensual approaches are beyond the scope of this dissertation research.

The field of consensual approaches to conflict is a young one and the Committee on International Conflict Resolution (CICR), a group of academics, researchers, representatives from international bodies, and practitioners, point to the lack of research in the field. The Committee writes, “For most of the conflict resolution techniques that involve conflict transformation, structural prevention, and normative change, there is no systematic body of past knowledge from the previous era that is directly relevant to current needs” (Stern, 2000). The CICR also suggests that very little has been done to examine conflict resolution and conflict transformation strategies and tools, and that these have received limited attention in the past (Stern, 2000).

¹⁴ For an excellent treatment of mediation research, theory and practice, see the book edited by Margaret Hermann (2006). See also Bercovitch (1986) and Wissler (Wissler, 2002).

¹⁵ For example, see Ronald J. Fisher’s (2007) article, Assessing the Contingency Model of Third-Party Intervention in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation, in the *Journal of Peace Research*. See also Daniel Druckman’s work (2005).

There is documentation of comparisons between settlement oriented/compromise-inducing mediation and the problem-solving approach to mediation (see Chapter Two for a discussion related to conflict resolution and problem-solving). For example, the problem-solving approach usually generates better outcomes according to Kressel, Frontera, Forlenza, Butler, and Fish (1994), as cited by Druckman (2005).

For further examples and in-depth treatment of research findings comparing approaches to conflict intervention (negotiation, arbitration, mediation etc.), see Druckman (Stern, 2000) and Cheldelin, et al, (2003).

There has not been a systematic study comparing conflict resolution and conflict transformation schools of thought. There is no research addressing distinctions in practice based on practitioner identification with a school of thought. This study is designed to address these gaps in research literature.

Choosing an Exploratory, Qualitative Approach

This study is qualitative in nature using an interpretive or naturalistic approach where, as Robson, in his book *Real World Research* suggests, “theories and concepts arise from the enquiry” (Robson, 1993). The study focuses on how practitioners identify themselves and their practice, and how they define conflict resolution and conflict transformation. It also gives attention to the way practitioners construct their practice through implicit theories (goals for practice and intervention strategies for reaching goals) and self-evaluation (determining success by comparing criteria for success with goals).

Because of my desire to elicit rich data from a small group of practitioners, I chose *qualitative* methods. Because there is no similar comparative research, the study is necessarily *exploratory*. The findings revealed by the study in relation to practitioner definitions and theories of practice are also *descriptive* of current usage and practice. In this study, data was collected from a primary source of evidence (practitioner interviews). Supporting evidence came from the social science literature (described in Chapters Two and Three and used for comparative purposes in Chapter Five), and secondary sources of support for practitioner statements such as evaluation documents, testimonials, and promotional materials. Because the study was not *explanatory* or seeking causal relationships, causal inferences are not suggested.

Research Approach and Rationale

Though this study is exploratory, it is carefully structured to address the research questions. The central research question provided the foundation for a set of guiding research questions. These guiding questions, in turn, created a structure around which an interview questionnaire could be built. Practitioner responses to the interview questionnaire were then analyzed. For some of the research questions (such as definitions and intervention strategies) practitioner responses were coded into categories, and frameworks arose “from the enquiry.” For other questions (those pertaining to goals and criteria for success) practitioner responses were compared through the use of the ICR Framework.

The central question guiding the dissertation research is: Do practitioners’ definitions (self-definitions and definitions of *conflict resolution* and *conflict*

transformation) and theories of practice (goals, intervention strategies, and criteria for success) depend upon their identification with either a conflict resolution or a conflict transformation approach to conflict intervention?

This central question was re-stated as four Guiding Research Questions that were described in Chapter One. See the Data Gathering and Management section in this chapter for a description of how these research questions were directly connected to the research instrument.

Participant Selection

Subjects for interviews were selected based upon their ability to discuss their practice related to the concepts of *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*. In order to ensure that interview subjects would be able to answer specific questions about practice in detail, they were currently required to be in practice, and to have at least two years of experience in professional conflict intervention.

In selecting practitioners for interviews, I surveyed a purposive sample of six experts in the fields of conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The experts included professional contacts and experts in the fields of conflict transformation or conflict resolution as evidenced by reputation in practice, scholarship, research or publication. These experts were invited to comment on the proposed study and to provide names of potential interviewees.

These initial surveys helped tighten and focus the research questions and provide feedback on the research topic. However, few of these initial surveys provided names of

practitioners to be interviewed. The initial call for nominations resulted in a very short list that was lengthened through purposive and snowball sampling. Dissertation committee members, colleagues, other professionals in the field, as well as the first of the eventual interview participants provided referrals until the desired sample size was achieved.

Interviewees received a packet of information (either by mail or e-mail, per their request) including: informed consent materials (Instrument A); a letter of introduction with detailed project information (Instrument B); a short list of questions (abridged from Instrument C); and researcher biography (Instrument D).

When solicited interviewees agreed to participate, they were asked to sign the informed consent document and present it to the researcher at the interview. If the interview was conducted by telephone, the participant mailed or faxed the consent document to the researcher before the interview was conducted.

Participant Sampling

Twenty practitioners were selected from the pool of possible candidates to include equal numbers of conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners in current practice with at least two years of experience. The participant sample was a theoretical sampling and not representative sampling. Rather, participants were selected based on their ability to contribute their knowledge and insight on the concepts *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* which were central to the research study.

In addition to the requirements listed above, I intentionally sought a sample of practitioners with the broadest possible diversity. Within that sample, I sought a range of

years of experience in the field, equal male/female representation, and as broad a geographical representation as possible (both within the United States and with a sample of practitioners from outside the U.S for comparative purposes). Though there were no restrictions or requirements of participants regarding age or ethnic background, I deliberately included racial diversity within the U.S. sample when possible (see Figure 4 for a specific breakdown of practitioner demographics).

Data gathering and Management

Semi-Structured Interview

The primary data collected for this study was from 20 semi-structured interviews with practitioners. Interviews were conducted based on an interview schedule with a reflective approach to the knowledge sought. This approach depends on the researcher. As Kvale notes, “The outcome of an interview depends on the knowledge, sensitivity, and empathy of the interviewer” (1996). He also points out that a successful interview study also depends on the researcher’s experience with the interview method. As the direct researcher, I felt prepared for this task through significant exposure to both conflict resolution and conflict transformation schools of thought, by my many relationships with conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners, and because I had done investigative interview research in the past (Rhodes, 2001).

Practitioner Demographics	
N = 20	
Sex Sampling: 9 women/11 men	
Years working in the field of conflict intervention	
0-5 years	1
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	4
21-25 years	7
26-30 years	0
31-35 years	1
36-40 years	0
41-45 years	1
46-50 years	0
Ethnic/Racial Sampling	
14 from the US (11 white/Caucasian and 3 African-American)	
6 from outside the US	
	England
	Northern Ireland
	Kenya
	Mozambique
	South Africa
	Bosnia
Regional Sampling	
Within the US	
	Northeast 0
	Mid-Atlantic 4
	South 4
	Midwest 3
	Northwest 0
	Southwest 3

Figure 4 Practitioner Demographics

Interview Schedule Design

The interview questionnaire was constructed intentionally to elicit answers from practitioners for the research questions. All questions were open-ended to maximize flexibility and to encourage response. Rather than following a prescribed set of standardized procedures for interviewing, the interview method suggested by Kvale (1996) allows for decision making by the researcher throughout the interview. For instance, I was able to follow up on leads, change the order of questions, make clarifications, and/or summarize information to make sure that practitioner responses were clear. This flexibility of interview design allowed me, as the researcher, to begin with practitioner expressions and areas of interest and then to press further to enrich detail and probe for related concepts and ideas.

Research Question 1: What are Practitioners' Definitions?

The first question in each interview was an open one, intended to allow the practitioner to proceed in whatever direction was preferable.

1. Could you please describe the conflict intervention work that you do.

This open-ended question allowed practitioners to use their own language to describe the conflict work in which they were involved. This was an intentional strategy so that practitioners would not automatically use the terms I brought as the researcher to the interview.

This question was followed up with a number of background questions that related both to definitions and to theories of practice. These were:

2. *How long have you been doing this same type of work?*
3. *Why do you do this work?*
4. *What educational or experiential background prepared you for this work?*
5. *What notable people, personal experiences, or theories about (or beliefs about) conflict and intervention have helped shape your practice?*

After we had spent some time talking about these background questions, I followed up with question 6 below.

There are many ways of talking about the work we do:

6. *What term(s) do you use to describe the intervention work you do? (or I noticed that you used the term..... conflict transformation, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, conflict management, etc. several times. Are there other terms you use to describe your work?)*
7. *How do you define those term(s)?*
8. *How did you come to identify your work in this way?*
9. *Can you list other terms used to describe conflict intervention? If so, how do you distinguish between them? (or You mentioned several other terms [name them] How do you distinguish between them?)*
10. *Do other practitioners define the terms in the same ways you do? If not, how are their definitions different?*

Research Question 2: What are Practitioners' Theories of Practice?

This study focused on eliciting theories of practice related to goals, intervention strategies and criteria for success. These theories of practice were divided into two Guiding Research Questions (2 and 3). Research Question 2 explicitly looked for practitioners' statements related to goals and strategies for intervention. The questionnaire was constructed so that practitioners could report on a specific case they had worked on within the past two years. The related questions were:

11. *What is the most recent conflict in which you have professionally intervened (either on your own behalf or as part of your organization)?*
12. *Was the intervention within the United States or abroad? [if needed for clarification]*
13. *How much time did the intervention process take from start to finish (or until the present)?*
14. *What were your goals and expected outcomes for the intervention?*

15. *How did you go about the intervention? What specific strategies, techniques or tools did you use?*

Research Question 3: What are Practitioners' Criteria for Success?

Continuing to follow the practitioners' case, I asked the following:

16. *Would you judge the intervention to be a success? On what evidence do you base your judgment?* [probe until the practitioner has identified at least three sources of evidence]

17. *Can you identify documents (evaluations, citations, testimonies, or published reports, etc.) or other items (items you've received from participants, videotapes, etc.) that would support your judgment? Would you be willing to provide the researcher (me) with copies of the documents and other items for the research study?*

18. [If the practitioner answers "No" to either part of question 17, ask:] *Would a participant in the intervention concur with your judgment?*

a. [If yes, ask:] *Would you give me consent to contact that person for a statement?*

b. [If no, ask:] *Would someone else be able to support your statement such as a colleague, staff member, or other observer?*

i. [If yes, ask:] *Would you give me consent to contact that person for a statement?*

ii. [If no, say "That's fine" and move on to question 19].

19. *[If there is sufficient time] Think back over the past year. In what additional conflicts have you intervened? Please be as comprehensive as possible.* [Have the practitioner select 2 additional interventions which he/she remembers well. Then, ask questions 12-18 again in order as needed for each intervention listed].

20. *Are there other practitioners I should talk to?*

Research Question 4: Effectiveness of ICR Framework?

Research Question 4 is an assessment of the ICR Framework as a research tool for comparison. It was therefore not relevant for the interview questionnaire.

Pilot Testing

The practitioner interview schedule was pilot-tested with four conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners. The pilot test assessed the construction of the interview schedule (with emphasis on clarity of instructions, specific question design, sequencing of questions, and desired length and format). It also gave the researcher opportunity to practice the pacing of the interview and build rapport with the participants.

Transcription

The interviews were converted from oral speech (recorded on audiotape) to written text by a professional transcriptionist. The transcriber followed the conventions identified by Mishler in his text on research interviewing (1986). Notations were used for nonverbal expressions such as “uh huh”, “hmm”, and “ah”. Repetitions of words, false starts, etc. were preserved as recorded. In several interviews there were short areas of missing or unclear speech because of noise interruptions or flipping the audiotape. These were recorded as blanks. Questions posed by the interviewer as well as probes and any other comments from me were transcribed with my name before the text: “Gloria: [text].” Recordings will be destroyed when the dissertation study is complete.

Practitioner interviews were audio-taped, transcribed and numerically coded within NVivo 8 (NVivo, 2008), a database program for qualitative data analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

Coding

The interview data was processed through what Rudestam and Newton (Newton, 1992) call inductive analysis. I typically followed a process of *unitizing* (isolating information units in the text) and *categorizing* them (coding them into categories). The unitizing phase was done by coding into broad categories. In the categorizing phase, the units of text were further organized into categories based on similarity in meaning. Once these categories were determined, I wrote rules that defined each of the categories. This process is called the “constant comparative method” by researchers Glaser and Strauss as cited in Rudestam and Newton (1992). The constant comparative method allows all units to be placed into an appropriate category until additional units provide no new information.

To translate this directly to this study, the transcriptions were uploaded into NVivo 8.0, a sophisticated and specialized database that provided a structure for holding a vast collection of codes. The transcripts were initially coded into categories according to the Guiding Questions. A second read-through of the transcripts allowed me to apply a more rigorous coding of themes into specific categories. For two of the research questions, this inductive analysis formed the basis for descriptive frameworks (definitions of conflict resolution and conflict transformation and intervention strategies).

For two other questions, however, a deductive approach was needed. Practitioner statements and ideas about their goals and their criteria for success were unitized (typically words or parts of sentences) and then coded into categories. The coding

process utilized the data collection workbook created by Monica Jakobsen for use in evaluating Interactive Intergroup Conflict Resolution (d'Estree, 2000b) (see discussion below).

When the majority of the coding of the interviews was complete, matrices were developed to bring relevant data together to assist in the drawing of conclusions. These matrices reflected coding in relation to practitioners' definitions of conflict resolution and conflict transformation (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2), Goals (see Tables 5.3 and 5.6), Intervention Strategies (see Table 5.4) and Criteria for Success (see Tables 5.5 and 5.7). The interview data was compared among conflict transformation practitioners and among conflict resolution practitioner as well as between these two groups for each of these categories (see Chapter Five for complete details of the findings).

The ICR Framework

The framework used for comparing goals and criteria for success was developed through an extensive research project focused on identifying criteria for success in interactive conflict resolution. The research question for that study was: By what indicators are conflict resolution processes determined to be successful? The sources of evidence included an in-depth literature review and interviews with conflict intervention practitioners by d'Estree and student assistants at George Mason University. The four areas of comparison in the framework are Changes in Thinking, Changes in Relations, Foundation for Transfer, and Foundation for Outcome or Implementation.

Each of these criteria categories has been described in detail and operationalized with instructions and space for recording specific outcomes in a Data Collection Work

Book (d'Estree, 2000b). An abridged example of one of the criteria is provided in Figure 5. The criterion shown in the example is Changes in Thinking. Evidence placed in this category would show when interactive conflict resolution has been successful by creating a change in thinking of the participants in an intervention.

The ICR framework selected for this study was presented as a framework for evaluating success in interactive conflict resolution, defined by Fisher as “small-group, problem-solving discussions between unofficial representatives of identity groups or states engaged in destructive conflict that are facilitated by an impartial third party of social scientist” (Fisher, 1997).

As can be seen in Figure 5, the ICR framework included categories not only for the changes the practitioner was seeking (the four criteria and subunits), but also for the phases of impact and levels of intervention. The phases corresponded to the intentions of a workshop. They are the promotion phase (in-room assessment), the application phase (when changes have a chance to be applied “back home,” a short-term assessment) and the sustainability phase (when medium and long-term impacts are assessed). The levels of change include micro (changes at the individual), meso (changes for the individual’s organization or community), and macro (societal changes).

The breadth of the framework allowed it to be applied to the wide range of practitioner cases that are part of this study. Because of the variety of types of cases however, categorizing the data beyond the four basic criteria units and subunits into further phases and levels proved to provide too little data in each area to allow for comparison and contrast between practitioners and among practitioner groups. The findings reported in

Chapter Five show all responses for each subunit, whatever phase they might represent, and at whatever level (micro, meso, macro) the change may have been expressed.

Suitability of the ICR Framework for Case Work

As part of a study group lead by d'Estree in 2001, I participated in helping to test the framework. I applied the framework to a training component offered by Eastern Mennonite University's (EMU) Institute for Peacebuilding (IFP) in conjunction with the Mediation Network for Northern Ireland (MNNI) (Rhodes, 2000). Applying an interactive "conflict resolution" framework to what I thought of as "conflict transformation" training generated a number of questions for me. How different were the goals of conflict transformation from those of conflict resolution? What types of measurable outcomes did each achieve and how did they compare? And, finally, could this framework be applied in a more generic way to assess the effectiveness of an array of nonviolent conflict intervention approaches?

I found that many of the criteria listed for successful interactive conflict resolution related to other processes as well. The criteria on integrative framing, empathy, improved relations, etc., are shared by many nonviolent conflict intervention processes if not by all the cases in which practitioners find themselves involved.

A Framework for Evaluating Interactive Conflict Resolution

Criteria Category I: Changes in Thinking

Encompasses criteria that explore the various types of new or revised knowledge that may come out of the workshop experience. This may be cognitive representation of others, of the problem, of options for resolution, or of language to communicate.

NEW LEARNING – seeks to assess participants’ adoption and incorporation of new knowledge gained from the workshop interaction. New learning encompasses acquiring knowledge about conflict dynamics and skills, increased awareness of new and existing resources, structures and networks, and finally new information about the Other, as well as the Self, and the relationship between them. The criterion includes the participants’ theoretical knowledge, their ability to apply it to their own situation and the sustainability of this knowledge over time.

Promotion Phase

This is when the intervention attempts to promote, encourage, or catalyze certain effects.

Micro-Level

Report effects on individual participants

1. Demonstrates or shows awareness of conflict dynamics and conflict resolution skills
2. Ability to discuss the conflict in analytical terms (e.g. compare it to similar cases)
3. ... etc.

Figure 5 ICR Framework Sample (Part I)

Meso-Level

Report effects that are represented by participants' reference groups local institutions, and epistemic communities. This can be evidence of impact on the information, policies, and behaviors of their professional organizations, their political parties, their religious communities, their neighborhoods or villages, or their extended family networks.

1. Change in the indicators above in the participants' own communities and groups
2. ...etc.

Application Phase

Report effects that are manifested on a societal level and that can be traced back to workshop activities

Figure 6 ICR Framework Sample (Part II)

These questions have been integrated into this dissertation research as a way of testing the framework further, as a way of working toward generating a more generic framework, and as a way to compare the goals and criteria for success of the practitioners interviewed.

Strengths of the ICR Framework as a Research Tool

The case study I completed in order to test the ICR framework showed some of the strengths and weaknesses of the framework for performing these three tasks. Based on my study of the program in Northern Ireland (Rhodes 2000) using the D'Estree framework, I found that the criteria identified by the framework for interactive *conflict resolution* does provide sufficient categories of success to incorporate criteria for success articulated by both practitioners in *conflict resolution programs* as well as practitioners in

conflict transformation programs. The applicability of some of the criteria to multiple approaches is a strength for this dissertation research.

Weaknesses of the ICR Framework as a Research Tool

Since some of the practitioners interviewed for the dissertation study were not trainers for interactive conflict resolution, but were more often direct intervenors in conflict, the framework was not always suitable. As I found in my case study, “the framework, as is, is biased toward training where two sides of the conflict are brought together and expected not to have done integrative thinking or used conflict resolution skills” (Rhodes, 2000). This noted weakness translates into a weakness for the study where some practitioners work as advocates or activists on behalf of parties, or where practitioners work to empower one side or the other (e.g. through identity awareness) in a conflict situation.

Another weakness of using the ICR framework for this study is that it does not include guidelines or assistance in identifying (post-intervention) or generating (pre-intervention) measurable outcomes of the various criteria. The framework also does not provide a mechanism to verify self report.

These weaknesses were taken into account before selecting the ICR framework for this study, most notably by ensuring that there would be measurable evidence from the practitioner’s self-report to confirm the goals, or successes that the practitioner claimed.

Applying the ICR Framework to Other Cases

I chose to use the ICR Framework as an overarching comparative tool for this study despite the limitations described above, because it is one of the broadest and most inclusive of the frameworks available. It had already been applied to other conflict resolution processes, with some modification (Peterson, Wayne, and Jakobsen 2001).

The d'Estree team presented numerous ways in which the ICR framework could be adapted and expanded to allow for dialogue processes, training as intervention, trauma healing, and peacebuilding interventions. They said,

It is the overarching nature of the framework, along with flexible components, that enables theorist, researchers (evaluators), and practitioners to use it for their own purposes (d'Estree, 2000a).

I was eager to compare practitioners' goals and claims of success to this broad framework to determine what might be missing and what might overlap. For example, Fisher (Fisher, 1997) lists dialogue as a category of ICR. Fisher's dialogues are "facilitated face-to-face activities in communication." These face-to-face encounters are structured to help individuals and groups come to better understanding of each other to help build trust. While this is an outcome for ICR processes, it is also part of many other nonviolent conflict intervention strategies (see d'Estree 2000a for a comprehensive literature review).

Strengths and Limitations of the Research Methodology

The strength of the methodology utilized for this dissertation was shown primarily in the vast amount of rich data that resulted from the 1 to 1 ½ hour interviews with each

practitioner. There was a wide range of perspectives and practices represented, and the use of a case-reporting methodology worked well.

The limitations of the study included those created because of that same diversity of participants. Because of differences in approach, region, language, definitions, age, experience, etc., clear comparisons were difficult. If this study is replicated, I would recommend that practitioners be divided into fewer categories in order to focus the investigation.

Quality of Data

I worked to verify the data in a rigorous and systematic way in order to establish trustworthiness and reduce bias. These issues differ from the traditional internal and external validity concerns in quantitative studies. Rather, the criteria central to verifying qualitative validity, according to Robson, are representativeness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (1993).

Representativeness

Representativeness implies that the interviewees chosen will be representative of conflict resolution or conflict transformation approaches rather than being those easily available to the researcher. Interviewees were chosen for their ability to reflect on and discuss their practice in relation to the conflict resolution and conflict transformation schools of thought. In some cases, this was difficult to ascertain ahead of time. Fortunately, all the practitioners seemed to have some awareness of the relationship of these concepts to their own practice.

Within the representativeness of practitioners in conflict intervention was a broader representation evident in the intentional practitioner sample related to number of years in practice, geographical region of practice, sex, and length of time in the field.

Credibility

Intentional techniques were included in the research to improve credibility.

Prolonged Involvement – Credibility improves with the researcher's familiarity with the theme and context of the inquiry as well as experience with interview method (Kvale, 1996). The researcher has had 15 years of experience within conflict resolution and conflict transformation contexts. On the one hand, I worked for the National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution and studied in the Conflict Analysis and Resolution Institute at George Mason University. On the other, I worked for the Conflict Transformation Program at EMU. In addition, the actual study occurred over a 3-year period during which I was not only immersed in the questions of the study, but I was also teaching conflict resolution and conflict transformation concepts to undergraduates.

Expert Input – Experts from within the fields of conflict resolution and conflict transformation were interviewed to suggest potential hypotheses, identify interview candidates and elicit concerns and comments regarding the study. Overall, I found interview responses from these experts to be less helpful than the wise advice of my dissertation committee and chair and other colleagues in the field.

Triangulation – The strongest triangulation methods of this study were the comparison of practitioner statements with each other and the scholarly literature. Other

means of triangulation included documents supplied by the practitioner in support of interview statements.

Subject Checks – The semi-structured interview allowed me to ask the practitioners for clarification and feedback.

Debriefing – The nature of the dissertation committee provides a group of individuals knowledgeable in the field who will be able to reflect on the researcher's analysis and conclusions and provide feedback.

Transferability

Though this construct corresponds to that of external validity in conventional quantitative research, it does not make the same assumptions. Rather than providing statistical generalizations, this research can be “transferred” in two ways. First, the findings will be available to others who may want to apply them to studies similar enough to make generalizations. Second, I have attempted to create theoretical categories that are sufficiently broad to include and apply to a wide variety of practice. I have also attempted to provide “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of most components of the study so that the context within which the data must be understood is clear. I hope this type of specification will help others assess whether or not this study can be transferred to other settings.

Dependability

Dependability, which here is a concept roughly equivalent to reliability, pertains to the consistency of the research findings. The primary way in which consistency is

addressed in the study is through the use of a single researcher (me), a professional transcriber (for all but two transcripts¹⁶), and a single analyst (me). Studies of interviewer reliability in standard surveys suggest that questions asked by interviewers differ from their interview schedules¹⁷. Though this was true for me, dependability was reinforced because I constructed the interview schedule, know the overall goals of the study, and understand the aim of each specific question.

Confirmability

This research study will be confirmable because the data and materials of the study were collected and organized so that another researcher could, if necessary, follow “the trail” of the investigation. Confirmability also implies that I can justify the findings and conclusions of the study by pointing to corresponding materials and raw data if necessary.

Ethical Considerations

Many of the ethical considerations of the study have been included in the discussions above. The primary ethical concerns of Informed Consent and Confidentiality are discussed here.

¹⁶ I, as researcher, transcribed two interviews. One was of such a sensitive nature that the practitioner requested that it be for my eyes only. The second was an interviewee with a thick accent that the transcriptionist could not understand well enough to create text from speech.

¹⁷ According to Mishler, from 25-40% of questions asked by interviewers depart from the working of the questions in the interview schedule (Mishler, 1986).

Informed Consent

All practitioners interviewed were informed about the overall purpose of the study as well as the main features of the design when they were approached to schedule an interview. Participants were given an abridged version of interview questions in advance. No attempt was made to deceive participants and I stated that they could ask questions at any time. I will make the full research project available to participants when it is complete.

At the interview, practitioners were asked to agree orally on the audiotape to the issues of informed consent. They also signed a consent statement. Risks of the study to the participants were few. However, they might include the risk of potentially recognizable information identifying the practitioner or practice. Practitioners were informed of these risks. I have attempted to remove all identifying information and have taken care to report findings in a way that would not reveal the identity of the practitioners. For example, given the small sample and the small nature of the field, identifying a practitioner as male or female (He said, she said, etc.) might provide enough information for practitioners to be identified. In cases where this seemed possible, I reported by using gender-neutral language.

All research participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. No subjects were coerced to participate. No subjects withdrew from the study. I attempted to avoid any negative consequences for practitioner participation in the study. Interviews were scheduled at times and places convenient for practitioners. In cases where a face-to-face interview was impossible, interviews were done by telephone.

One practitioner contacted me several days after the interview with concerns about specific details divulged about a case. In that situation, I transcribed the interview immediately and allowed the practitioner to edit the transcript for identifying or sensitive information. I also returned the audiotape directly to the practitioner for disposal. The edited transcript was incorporated into the study with few problems.

Benefits of the study to practitioners may include the broader benefit to the field in clarifying and reporting similarities and differences to the two schools of thought of conflict intervention. The study provides a great number of questions as well as variables for future research. It also clarifies the definitions, goals, strategies and criteria of success of practitioners. Many of the practitioners interviewed also expressed appreciation to me for helping to sort out the question of definitions in the field.

The study was reviewed yearly by the Office of Human Subjects Protection at GMU to ensure that it met ethical protocols.

Confidentiality

Audiotapes of practitioner interviews were numbered and not labeled with names. Transcriptions were also numbered and the text was cleared of identifying references to the practitioner or his/her organization or clients during the process of coding. The key to the practitioner transcripts has been kept in my office and has been available only to me and my dissertation committee chair, Wallace Warfield.

Practitioners were asked to give or deny permission to list their names in the final report of this study. Ultimately, to provide protection for all interview subjects, no names were included in this dissertation document.

Practitioners also signed consent for use of transcripts and any documents or other materials supplied to be used in this research (Instrument A). All supporting text taken from materials supplied by practitioners, including any e-mail documents, were also cleared of details that would reveal practitioners' identity. These were numbered, coded and entered into NVivo, the qualitative research database used for analysis of this study.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used for the study are listed below. A sample of each instrument can be found beginning on the next page.

Informed Consent Document (Instrument A)

Introductory Letter to Practitioners (Instrument B)

The letter was constructed to provide introductory information about the research study, to introduce the informed consent form, and to ensure that any potential participants have full information before agreeing to be interviewed.

(Script) Semi-Structured Practitioner Interview Schedule (Instrument C)

The interview schedule was developed in concert with the guiding research questions. Members of the researcher's dissertation committee, pilot interviewees, and experts reviewed the schedule and made suggestions for changes. The Interview Schedule was meant to remain flexible enough to incorporate additional probes or changes to the text or questions as needed.

Biography for Gloria I. Rhodes (Instrument D)

Instrument A: Informed Consent Form

COMPARING CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION INTERVENTION: IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

INFORMED CONSENT FORM RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is being conducted to explore and compare two approaches to conflict intervention -- conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The study focuses on the differences and similarities found among practitioner definitions, theories, tools, strategies, goals, and criteria for success. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in one in-depth interview approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours in length. The interview is composed of open-ended questions. Enclosed with this form is a list of questions that you may be asked during the interview.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks, costs, or anticipated negative effects to you or any other party for participating in this study.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in the fields of conflict resolution and conflict transformation by contributing to knowledge about practice and approaches to conflict intervention.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. With your consent, the interview will be audiotaped for purposes of accuracy. Your name will not be included on collected data (audiotapes or transcripts of interviews). A code will be placed on the collected data and through the use of an identification key, the researcher will link your responses to your identity. Only the researcher will have access to the identification key. All data will be destroyed at the conclusion of this project.

Specific data from the interview will not be attributed to you, however, with your permission, your name will be included in an appended list of participants. If you decline, the interview data will be included but you will not be identified as a participant.

Though not expected, there may be a time when you will be contacted by e-mail for clarification or other purposes. While it is understood that no computer transmission can be perfectly secure, reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of your transmissions.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party. Copies of the interview transcript and the final report will be made available to you if you would like them.

CONTACT

This dissertation research is being conducted by Gloria Rhodes, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, at George Mason University. She may be reached by phone (540-432-4270) or email (grhodes@gmu.edu) with questions or to report a research-related problem. The dissertation advisor is Dr. Wallace Warfield and he may be reached at 703-993-3649 or (wwarfiel@gmu.edu). You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study

Name (please print) _____

Signature: _____ Date of signature: _____

Version Date: April 25, 2008

Please mark your response to one Identification and one Permission statement below.

Identification:

___ I prefer that my name and the name of my organization NOT appear anywhere in the research project.

___ I prefer that my name and the name of my organization appear in the appendix on a list of participants of this research.

Permission to use existing records:

___ You DO have my permission to use any documents or materials I may provide for this research study. Materials provided will support my interview, but will not contain person- or organization-identifiable data.

___ You DO NOT have my permission to use any documents or materials I may provide for this research study. Materials provided will support my interview, but will not contain person- or organization-identifiable data.

Instrument B: Introductory Letter to Practitioners

Greetings. My name is Gloria Rhodes and I am a doctoral student at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. I am conducting a research project to explore, compare, and contrast approaches to conflict intervention including conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The study focuses on practitioners and their definitions, theories, tools, strategies, goals, and criteria for success. During the initial stage of this study, a professional in the field suggested that I contact you because of your reputation as a practitioner. I hope that you will consider participating in this research project.

Participation in this study would involve meeting once with me for an interview approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours in length. In some cases, we may choose telephone or e-mail interviews, though this is not preferred. During the interview you will be asked to provide sources of evidence for some questions (documents, audiovisual materials, evaluations and/or referrals to individuals who have experienced or observed an intervention with you). This type of support for your interview will greatly enhance the value of your interview and the reliability of the research. Nevertheless, you will not be required to provide evidence or referrals.

Your participation will be confidential. Your name will not be included and no information that you give me will be attached to you or your organization. You may review a transcript of your interview before it is included in the study. If you would like a copy of the study, I will provide one when the study is complete. The information collected will be used as part of my doctoral dissertation at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University and resulting publications.

Your participation in this study is important both to this project and to the field at large. The field has evolved significantly in the past decade, and the ways that practitioners construct their practice are diverse. This study attempts to help sort out some of the nuances of practice and to clarify emerging themes in the field, including similarities and differences between conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

As a student and practitioner, I have been exposed to both conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches and have become interested in comparing practitioner experiences in these two areas. I have enclosed a brief biography with further information about my interests and background.

Enclosed are questions you may be asked during the interview. There is also an informed consent form to sign and return to me in the enclosed envelope if you choose to participate.

If I don't hear from you, I will call later this month to follow up and I look forward to speaking with you then. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me by phone at 540-879-3576 or e-mail grhodes@gmu.edu

Yours truly,
Gloria Rhodes

Instrument C: Tentative Semi-Structured Practitioner Interview Schedule

The semi-structured nature of the interview will allow for the possibility of altering the question sequence, following up unanticipated leads and asking questions not prepared in advance. However, the researcher will ensure that each of the following areas is covered. Research script appears in *italics*.

Briefing (opening comments)

Interview participants will receive or will have received an informed consent form including permission to audio-record (see Instrument A) by mail or in-person at the interview. The researcher will collect the signed form before beginning the interview.

Proposed text for the briefing:

“Do you understand that you are being audio-recorded? Is that ok with you?”

[BEGIN RECORDING]

“Thank you for being willing to participate in this interview which is part of a research study looking at conflict intervention practice, intervention strategies and expected outcomes (or criteria for success). The information from this interview will be used by the researcher (myself) for a doctoral dissertation and may also be used for future publications.

Your name will not be connected to your individual responses in any way. Reporting from the interviews will be done collectively; however, individual responses may be used to provide supporting evidence or examples in published reports. Any remarks you make that identify yourself, your practice, or your clients or participants will be removed and not included in published materials. All records, notes and recordings of this meeting will be destroyed at the end of the study.

The research study is designed to probe trends in current practice, not to evaluate you or your practice. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may skip any questions with which you are uncomfortable. You may quit the interview at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?”

Theories of practice

- 1. Could you please describe the conflict intervention work that you do?*
- 2. How long have you been doing this same type of work?*
- 3. Why do you do this work?*
- 4. What educational or experiential background prepared you for this work?*

5. *What notable people, personal experiences, or theories about (or beliefs about) conflict and intervention have helped shaped your practice?*

Definitions

There are many ways of talking about the work we do:

6. *What term(s) do you use to describe the intervention work you do? (or I noticed that you used the term..... conflict transformation, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, conflict management, etc. several times, are their other terms you use to describe your work?)*
7. *How do you define those term(s)?*
8. *How did you come to identify your work in this way?*
9. *Can you list other terms used to describe conflict intervention? If so, how do you distinguish between them? (or You mentioned several other terms [name them] how do you distinguish between them?)*
10. *Do other practitioners define the terms in the same ways you do? If not, how are their definitions different?*

Intervention Tools, Goals and Expected Outcomes, Criteria for Success, and Evaluation

11. *What is the most recent conflict in which you have professionally intervened (either on your own behalf or as part of your organization)?*
12. *Was the intervention within the United States or abroad? [if needed for clarification]*
13. *How much time did the intervention process take from start to finish (or until the present)?*
14. *What were your goals and expected outcomes for the intervention?*
15. *How did you go about the intervention? What specific strategies, techniques or tools did you use?*
16. *Would you judge the intervention to be a success? On what evidence do you base your judgment? [probe until the practitioner has identified at least three sources of evidence]*
17. *Can you identify documents (evaluations, citations, testimonies, or published reports etc.) or other items (items you've received from participants, videotapes, etc.) that*

would support your judgment? Would you be willing to provide the researcher (me) copies of the documents and other items for the research study?

18. [If the practitioner answers “No” to either part of question 17, ask:] *Would a participant in the intervention concur with your judgment?*
- c. [If yes, ask:] *Would you give me consent to contact that person for a statement?*
 - d. [If no, ask:] *Would someone else be able to support your statement such as a colleague, staff member, or other observer?*
 - i. [If yes, ask:] *Would you give me consent to contact that person for a statement?*
 - ii. [If no, say “That’s fine” and move on to question 19]
19. [If there is sufficient time] *Think back over the past year. In what additional conflicts have you intervened? Please be as comprehensive as possible.* [Have the practitioner select 2 additional interventions which he/she remembers well. Then, ask questions 12-18 again in order as needed for each intervention listed.]
20. *Are there other practitioners I should talk to?*

Debriefing (closing comments)

“That concludes my questions. Is there anything you’d like to clarify or to add? Do you have anything more you’d like to ask about before we finish the interview.” If the interviewee has questions about the purpose or design of the study, the researcher will answer more fully after the tape recorder is turned off.

“*Thank you very much for your time and participation.*” The researcher will leave a business card/e-mail address with the interviewee should he/she wish to submit further comments or questions.

Possible Probes (to be used as necessary to encourage or clarify response)

Anything more?

Could you go over that again?

What is your own personal view on this?

A period of silence

“uh huh or mmhmm”

Repeating back or summarizing what the interviewee has said.

Instrument D: Biography for Gloria I. Rhodes

Included with all initial correspondence to practitioners, and those referred by practitioners.

Gloria Rhodes

Gloria Rhodes is currently a Ph.D. candidate at George Mason University in the Institution for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. She is also an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Conflict Studies at Eastern Mennonite University and Coordinator of the Justice, Peace, and Conflict Studies program, an undergraduate major.

Rhodes has taught and held various administrative positions at Eastern Mennonite University since 1988. She has led two undergraduate cross cultural study semesters to Ireland and Northern Ireland. She currently teaches introductory and advanced peace and conflict studies theory courses, mediation, and group dynamics and facilitation.

She has also served as Administrative Director of the Summer Peacebuilding Institute where she held primary responsibility for admissions, student advising and placement and instructor needs, and participated in curriculum planning, budgeting and managing resources. She worked as Resources and Communication Coordinator for the Conflict Transformation Program with responsibilities for public relations, program publications and resources. She has worked for the National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution and as an intern for National Public Radio.

Rhodes has served as a researcher for the project to Evaluate International Conflict Resolution Training at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University and has completed interview research for the Five-Areas Project of the Mediation Network for Northern Ireland.

Her dissertation research focuses upon the comparison of conflict transformation and conflict resolution practice. Additional research interests include evaluation and assessment in conflict transformation/resolution; group and congregation conflict intervention; conflict and culture on the internet; peace and conflict studies pedagogy and distance learning, and cross-cultural education.

Chapter Five: Findings

Introduction

The preceding chapters of this dissertation provide rationale, a review of the scholarly literature, and the methodology used for this study. Chapter One detailed the rationale, motivation and guiding questions. Chapter Two reviewed the scholarly literature on conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches to conflict intervention and provided evidence of two emerging schools of thought. Chapter Three presented the literature related to research and practice in the field. Chapter Four described the methodology of the study.

Chapter Five provides a detailed summary of the findings. As noted in Chapter One, this study was structured to answer a central question and associated “guiding research questions.” The *central question* of the research is: Do practitioners’ definitions and theories of practice (goals, intervention strategies, and criteria for success) depend upon their identification with either a conflict resolution or a conflict transformation approach to conflict intervention?

Findings are reported for each of the guiding research questions within the following four categories:

- Research Question 1: What are Practitioners' Definitions?
- Research Question 2: What are Practitioners' Theories of Practice?
- Research Question 3: What are Practitioners' Criteria for Success?
- Research Question 4: Effectiveness of ICR Framework?

For each of the four questions (and their associated guiding questions), as proposed, findings are compared and contrasted between and among practitioners who used the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* exclusively to identify their approach to practice in conflict intervention. In addition, as a result of interview findings, another category of practitioners, those who use terms such as *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* contextually, has been added for comparison.

Research Question 1: What are Practitioners' Definitions?

Practitioners' Self-definitions

The interview questionnaire was structured to elicit practitioners' self-definitions, statements of how they identify themselves and their practice, and how they define *conflict resolution* (CR) and *conflict transformation* (CT).

In the research interview, practitioners were first asked to "talk about the work that you do." There was often some discussion back and forth until the practitioners were satisfied that they understood what was being requested. Most practitioners then made opening statements. These statements frequently revealed practitioners' passion for their work, sometimes their prepared marketing text, occasionally their pride in their accomplishments and their chosen profession, and often, their self-definitions, or how they categorized themselves in relation to others in the field.

It was clear that practitioners were, for the most part, intentional about how they described their practice and the terms they used. There were 4 practitioners who categorized their work exclusively as conflict resolution, and 5 who consistently chose the term conflict transformation. For the remaining 11 interviewees, the terms used to describe and categorize their practice were dependent upon the context in which they were used.

Conflict Resolution Practitioners

The four practitioners who chose *conflict resolution* exclusively as a term to describe their practice tended to treat it as an umbrella term for the field. Under this umbrella, three described their work in terms of the processes they employ: One used *mediation*, another used *collaborative community problem-solving*, and a third spoke of a variety of third-party processes and roles. The practitioner said,

I find myself often having to say, well, I see it is as conflict resolution is this whole umbrella and there are various things, kind of like a mobile, if you will, [uh huh] and the top side is called resolution and then there's all these different types of services and activities that you do, mediation being one of them. And so that's how I've always envisioned what I do.

The fourth person talked about the work broadly and described it as *dispute resolution*.

This practitioner used this term interchangeably with *conflict resolution*.

All practitioners in this category tended to be pragmatic in their selection of the term *conflict resolution*, choosing to use that term because it was the easiest broad category to choose from, because it most clearly conveyed the general field to clients, or because they believed it was broadly understood or that it helped to avoid confusion.

One interviewee expressed exasperation with having to name the field at all. The person said, *“I’ve been too busy doing it uh to worry about what techniques or what approach or what philosophy I’m using right this minute. I know what works.”* This practitioner referred to her work as mediation, under the overarching category of conflict resolution. The practitioner who classified her work as *collaborative community problem-solving* said,

And so funders are using that language these days. They they like the idea of collaboration and community problem-solving and partnership and all that kind of thing, you know ... what conflict resolution ideally is to me you know, it’s we’re all working together to try to solve this problem.

All four people in this category are female.

Conflict Transformation Practitioners

Five practitioners exclusively identified their conflict intervention practice as *conflict transformation*. For example, one said, *“I never use conflict resolution or conflict management in terms to describe the work that we do. I always talk about conflict transformation.”* The other said, *“We want to say that we are working on field of conflict transformation and we insist on on on that.”*

Three of these practitioners placed *conflict transformation* in the field of *peacebuilding* which they broadly defined as wider civil society initiatives. One of these used *conflict transformation* and *peacebuilding* interchangeably.

Two of the practitioners in this category stressed that they chose the term *conflict transformation* intentionally to describe their practice. One of those practitioners said,

I think the conflict transformation is something that we adopted because we felt, and I guess is seven years ago, or eight years ago, in terms of the terminology, we

felt like that conveyed to us the most appropriate meaning for what we hoped we were doing.

There were four men and one woman in this category.

Contextual Usage of Terms by Practitioners

The eleven practitioners that I placed into the contextual category used various terms, including *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*, to identify their work depending upon the context in which they practiced, the context in which they used the terms, and whether or not they were speaking to clients (outsiders to the field) or colleagues (field insiders). Through the process of coding, a pattern of identification emerged in which it became clear that practitioners chose terms contextually based on specific reasons. These practitioners typically chose their terms in one of three ways, either for pragmatic reasons, for strategic reasons or for philosophic reasons.

Pragmatic Use of Terms

The group of four practitioners categorized as pragmatic in their usage of terms included those who explained that they used terms to describe their work that were easiest, least confusing for the client or intended audience, or that connected best to colleagues.

The idea that any term might be used depending upon the situation was described carefully by one practitioner,

I think the terms are difficult and you know, (self-identifying information deleted) [In our work] we talked about this quite a lot, we talked about at that stage the terms of where they well, conflict transformation wasn't really around then. And we talked about conflict resolution and conflict management and conflict handling and we decided none of the wording worked. We talked about mediation

and facilitation, we decided they didn't work particularly well either for what we were trying to do. And so we decided to try to disregard those and just do to the work and to use whatever term sort of popped up at the moment, because it was too it was it felt too academic beside the reality of what we did in day by day by day, out there in the midst of the turmoil of our transition. So with that background, um we do need to use words, and their words are very important because we in terms of communication. I'm reasonably instrumental in using them because I don't have any strong belief in any one. So if I'm talking to a funder that uses conflict prevention, I'll use conflict prevention. It doesn't matter to me. And I feel perfectly authentic doing that, because it it doesn't it hasn't got it doesn't carry charge of meaning for me particularly.

Later the practitioner said,

Well, I like the word transformation, because to me, it's all about transformation.... I would talk about them I if I depending on who I'm talking to, I might, you know, as I say, might prefer it if I have to choose a term is conflict transformation, but I use the others as I need to.....because there are transformations implied in all of those.

Other practitioners typically use one term over another, but will change the term

depending upon the situation. This practitioner tended to use the term conflict resolution:

I do, I mean, conflict resolution uh there there are different ways that one of the problems with this field is that the the terminology doesn't work very well, and so I use different ways of talking about the same thing.

Later the practitioner said,

Yeah, I I I tend to change the phrase. I tend sometimes I'll talk about mediation, sometimes I'll talk about conflict management, I mean it's it's I don't think any of them really have a meaning a very precise meaning and I kind of am comfortable with all of them.

It's important to notice that two of the practitioners who used terms pragmatically preferred to use the term *conflict transformation* to describe their work some of the time.

The distinction between practitioners using this term in four different ways (exclusively, pragmatically, strategically and philosophically) helps explain some of the tension in the

field (see the discussion on self-categorization and identity at the end of this section and in the concluding chapter of this dissertation).

Strategic Use of Terms

The second group of practitioners using terms contextually were *strategic* in the use of their terms. These five practitioners viewed the different terms (such as conflict resolution, conflict transformation, dispute resolution, conflict management, etc.) as distinctive approaches to conflict intervention, appropriate for specific types of intervention or desired outcomes in conflict. They marketed, promoted their work, and described their practice with specific terms in order to appeal to specific audiences or clients. This use of terms seemed to reflect a contingency-type approach whereby practitioners would select a term because it represented a specific approach to conflict intervention based on the assessed need in that setting.

For example, one practitioner who was referred for the study because he was known to use the term *conflict transformation* surprised me when he said,

Um, transformation I use a lot for the work that I do, conflict transformation. Sometimes resolution, if it's particularly if it's just a legal kind of dispute, it's a dispute framed in kind of that legal term where there are where there is an end to this, then it's about resolution, we're just getting a solution to this particular event. But if it's systemic, if it's community, if it's congregational, if it's cultural, we're talking about transformation um and so that's it.

Another practitioner put it this way,

So, to come back to your question of conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Resolution, we try to solve -- that problem doesn't escape we try to help it finish there. How do we find a solution to that. But transformation let's look at the longer term, relationships and the root causes of this. Maybe that's what we look at.

One practitioner was able to articulate an entire schema for how the various terms strategically fit together in his mind,

I'm an integrator in my work, I try to sorta pull various strands together and see how they can create some synergy. So, the word that I've used is conflict engagement and that basically I'm interested in helping people engage conflict constructively and learning from it. Umm. I'm interested in them engaging conflict in terms of underlying core needs and values that are at stake, threatened and frustrated. So that would put me in the Burtonian conflict resolution camp. On the other hand, I don't particularly believe that we can resolve conflict that are that deep. I think we can engage them. I think we can transform it from destructive to constructive. I don't think we get rid of it. So that then puts me in the transformation camp. On the other hand, now, to make it even more complicated, on the other hand, umm if we don't somehow symbolically, no, no, not symbolically, if we don't somehow very practically and concretely give something for people to hold in their hands and walk away with, then I'm afraid it evaporates like smoke in the air. And therefore, I believe in settlement, so that puts me in the settlement camp. So, I think it's, in many ways, it's contingent on the type of conflict but in the most generic theoretical sense, I think we begin with engagement, uh we move to some kind of analytical resolution where needs and values are seen as ultimately non-limited -- that it's possible for my need for identity to coexist with your need for identity. And then from that kind of resolution approach to have a transformation which says not only is it possible for me to have my identity and for you to have yours, but in our identity we change each other.

Philosophic Use of Terms

The third group of practitioners who used terms describing their work contextually seemed to be philosophic in the way they approached the use of language. Practitioners in this category also changed their terms depending upon client or audience, but they did so because of an underlying philosophy about terms and conflict intervention. There were two practitioners in this category, and one of them said it this way,

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, we will change our language to suit the audience, so um there are situations we're going through where we won't uh we won't use the term

conflict, or may not even use the term dispute. We may only talk about difficulties, difficulties you're experiencing, you know.

I think it is important to us an organization that that we don't box ourselves in so much to a specific definition that it begins to limit how we do our work or uh becomes a boundary that isn't helpful. As I was indicating earlier, sometimes there's a lack of boundaries in terms of work load and that kind of thing, but those aren't helpful. Um, philosophically, uh I think that uh the organization and all of the people in it, most of the people tend to want to allow themselves that freedom to tweak, change, you know to suit the intervention and the situation.

The second practitioner in this category described *transformation* conceptually as a change happening in all processes at all times in a spiritual sense. This practitioner supported the ideas of conflict transformation, but rarely used that term. Instead this person used any term that communicated with the audience, including *conflict resolution* and *peacebuilding* in the discussion with me, but with the assumption that the practice involved helping people toward personal, spiritual and relational transformation. This practitioner referred to *transformation* frequently, but did use the term *conflict transformation*.

Summary of Practitioners' Self-Definitions

For purposes of this study, the 20 practitioners interviewed were divided into five categories based upon the terms they use to describe their practice. Two of the categories are practitioners who use the terms *conflict resolution* (4 practitioners) and *conflict transformation* (5 practitioners) exclusively as expected. Practitioners placed in these two categories specifically identified themselves in this way, or spoke of practicing one of those two approaches to conflict intervention.

However, precise coding of the ways in which individual practitioners described their work revealed a more subtle contextual use of terms. I have divided these practitioners into a *contextual* category with subcategories because practitioners who used terms contextually seemed to do so for pragmatic (4), strategic (5), and philosophic reasons (2). In discussing further findings, practitioners who use *conflict resolution* or *conflict transformation* exclusively will sometimes be compared and contrasted with the broad contextual category, and sometimes they will be compared with the subcategories.

Discussion

Initially, as practitioners revealed their self-definitions, I was intent on selecting a strong sample for comparison of the two approaches to conflict intervention with which this study is concerned. My planned study called for interviews of 10 practitioners who used the term *conflict resolution* exclusively and 10 who used the term *conflict transformation* exclusively. The sampling methodology and the practitioner interview invitations requested that practitioners recommended for the study represent either a conflict resolution or conflict transformation approach to conflict intervention. As the interviews progressed, however, it was clear that practitioners self-identified in ways that people who gave me referrals could not have predicted. As interviews and coding progressed, I couldn't ignore the fact that while practitioners did use the terms *conflict resolution* or *conflict transformation*, the ways they used these words varied greatly.

While I was not surprised that some practitioners used whatever term was most easily and widely understood (contextually *pragmatic*), I was surprised to find a clear distinction between strategic use of terms (such as conflict transformation) for specific

processes or ways of engaging versus dedicated use of the same term (conflict transformation) for an exclusive depiction of practice in the field. Of the 10 practitioners I had selected to represent *conflict transformation*, only five used *conflict transformation* in an exclusive way. The remaining five practitioners used other terms to describe their practice, and several of them used *conflict transformation* in a strategic way. This seemed an interesting and important finding. Rather than remove data from the study, I chose to incorporate the five practitioners who used the term *conflict transformation*, pragmatically, strategically, or philosophically into the comparative framework of the study. This also allowed for a more subtle understanding to emerge of how other practitioners used terms to describe and define their practice.

The self-definitions articulated by practitioners were also necessarily related to how they saw themselves and their practice in relation to the other approaches/terms in use in the field. The following two sections reveal the definitions and descriptions used by all 20 practitioners for *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*.

Practitioners' Definitions of Conflict Resolution (CR)

All twenty practitioners interviewed were familiar with the term *conflict resolution*. After coding all statements by practitioners that related to defining or describing the concept of *conflict resolution*, I separated concepts into 15 categories. Twelve of the categories are direct definitions, and three categories collected practitioner comments about conflict resolution. The categories are listed here in random order. Practitioners defined conflict resolution as:

- A third-party approach
- An end to the conflict
- Solving a problem or resolving issues
- A set of theories and practices
- Focused on relationships
- A process or An analysis process
- Planning
- Part of conflict transformation
- Related to the legal system
- Not dealing with causes
- An umbrella term for the field

Practitioners also made comments about *conflict resolution* as a term:

- Not much difference (between terms)
- The terms are confusing
- Doesn't do it for me

In addition to the conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners' definitions of *conflict resolution*, Table 5.1 gives a complete breakdown of how practitioners within each category of approaches defined conflict resolution.

Definitions of CR by Conflict Resolution Practitioners

Of the four practitioners identifying with a conflict resolution approach (see Table 5.1), all four defined conflict resolution as solving a problem or resolving issues. Three practitioners in this category also saw conflict resolution as a “process” while one also described conflict resolution as a set of theories and practices. Two of the practitioners in this category explicitly used conflict resolution as an umbrella term for the field while the other two implied this.

Two practitioners claimed that conflict resolution was about dealing with relationships. For example, for one of these practitioners, the intervention involved

Table 5.1 Conflict Resolution Definitions

	Conflict Resolution (4)	Conflict Transformation (5)	Contextual – pragmatic (4)	Contextual – strategic (5)	Contextual – philosophic (2)
1 : A Third-party approach (1)	0	1	0	0	0
2 : An end to the conflict (9)	0	3	2	3	1
3 : Solving a problem or resolving issues (14)	4	4	1	4	1
4 : A Set of theories and practices (3)	1	1	0	1	0
5 : Focused on Relationship (2)	2	0	0	0	0
6 : Process (5)	3	2	0	0	0
7 : Planning (1)	0	0	0	0	1
8 : Part of conflict transformation (2)	0	1	0	0	1
9 : Not much difference (3)	1	1	1	0	0
10 : Legal (1)	0	0	0	1	0
11 : Doesn't do it for me (6)	0	3	3	0	0
12 : Doesn't deal with causes (1)	0	1	0	0	0
13 : Confusing (6)	2	1	3	0	0
14 : Umbrella term (2)	2	0	0	0	0
15 : Analysis process (1)	0	0	0	1	0

helping parties, “*get to know each other, as opposed to -- this is a problem, how do we solve it?*” The other practitioner in this category stated it clearly, “*Um, conflict resolution I think is a process of changing the relationship between the parties.*” Of the 20 practitioners interviewed, only these two included change in relationships as part of the definition of *conflict resolution*. This understanding of conflict resolution was also incongruent with the scholarly literature.

As mentioned earlier, two of the practitioners in this category found the terms in the field confusing and tended to focus on the processes they utilized in their practice (such as mediation and collaborative problem-solving).

Definitions of CR by Conflict Transformation and Contextual Practitioners

Like the *conflict resolution* practitioners themselves, for 9 of the practitioners not exclusively identifying themselves with the term *conflict resolution*, the definition of *conflict resolution* included the idea of problem-solving or resolving issues.

Conflict Transformation Practitioners overall aligned with conflict resolution practitioners in their understanding of conflict resolution as problem-solving. Two also noted that they thought of *conflict resolution* as a process. One of these practitioners commented that “*I think conflict resolution even still today just some people use it as a catch-all term to refer to everything in this field.*”

One remarkable difference between conflict transformation practitioners and conflict resolution practitioners was the concept of ending. Three of the conflict transformation practitioners described *conflict resolution* as an ending to conflict. Six contextual practitioners also suggested that *conflict resolution* implies an ending. It is notable, therefore, that no one within the conflict resolution category described conflict resolution in this way.

Practitioners' Definitions of Conflict Transformation (CT)

Of the 20 practitioners interviewed, all but three were able to offer some description of *conflict transformation*. The 17 remaining practitioners offered varying descriptions of *conflict transformation* that were categorized into the following 18 units:

- An umbrella for the field
- Change in people
- Change process
- Dealing with root causes
- Dealing with the past
- Destructive vs. constructive
- Forgiveness
- Transformation is byproduct of problem-solving
- Long-term
- An opportunity
- Outcomes other than agreement
- Relationships
- Systems
- The practitioners related to it
- Transformative mediation
- Win-win

Practitioners also made the following comments about *conflict transformation* as a term:

- Don't know what that means
- Works for me

Table 5.2 gives a complete tabulation of all definitions and descriptions of conflict transformation given by practitioners.

Definitions by Conflict Transformation Practitioners

Practitioners who placed themselves in this category tended to focus on broad societal purpose for their work (social change) and ideals for practice (win-win, transformation, etc.). Four of five in this category defined conflict transformation as a

Table 5.2 Conflict Transformation Definitions

	Conflict Resolution (4)	Conflict Transformation (5)	Contextual – pragmatic (4)	Contextual – strategic (5)	Contextual – philosophic (2)
1 : Umbrella (2)	0	0	1	0	1
2 : Change in people (6)	0	2	0	2	2
3 : Change process (5)	0	4	0	1	0
4 : Dealing with root causes (2)	0	1	0	1	0
5 : Dealing with the past (1)	0	1	0	0	0
6 : Destructive vs. constructive (1)	0	0	0	1	0
7 : Don't know what that means (3)	2	0	1	0	0
8 : Forgiveness (1)	0	0	0	0	1
9 : Transformation is byproduct of problem-solving (2)	1	0	1	0	0
10 : Long-term (4)	0	2	0	1	1
11 : Opportunity (1)	0	1	0	0	0
12 : Outcomes other than agreement (4)	1	2	1	0	0
13 : About change in relationships (7)	0	2	0	4	1
14 : Systems change (3)	0	2	0	1	0
15 : The practitioners related to it (3)	1	1	0	0	1
16 : Transformative mediation (2)	1	1	0	0	0
17 : Win-win (1)	1	0	0	0	0
18 : Works for me (2)	0	0	2	0	0

change process, and all five talked about either personal change, change in relationships, or structural/systems change. Three practitioners in this category connected conflict transformation to changes in relationships. One said, for example,

But I I I think it's still a pretty broad term in terms of fostering relationship building, institutional change, and social change.

Relationships are never resolved, they're always ongoing, or even if they separate, that's it's that's that's uh that's a transformation that has happened in the relationship, but it's not and it's more a question about on what basis does

that separation happen? Um and so people are able to separate with a greater level of understanding and mutual respect, then I would view that as potentially as a successful conflict transformation, um but I wouldn't view that as a resolution of the conflict.

Two practitioners talked explicitly about conflict transformation as a long-term process.

I think the other thing about um conflict transformation is I see it as very much a long-term project and and I I see our intervention work in that context.

Two of these practitioners defined *conflict transformation* as “outcomes other than agreement” that come from conflict intervention processes. One of these even suggested that an agreement might not be necessary. He said,

I don't necessarily see that if we don't get a negotiated agreement, um or particular negotiated agreement, that that somehow this this is not been has not worked, has not been effective, because uh you know, I'm aware of that you have to take the long view, and that sometimes what happens is that things fall into place for people over time, not within the mediation or consultancy session.

Another practitioner said,

To me the the unifying theme ... was that it refers to the outcomes other than agreement that people are bringing to the conflict intervention processes that they have. And that some of us were saying these are really significant and that if they are in fact part of what our disputes are saying they value, then we ought to be taking these into consideration and planning for them and making them you know, more overt as part of our practice.

One practitioner in this category described conflict transformation explicitly as the overarching term for the field, with conflict resolution methodologies as part of conflict transformation. This practitioner called conflict transformation “a broader paradigm,” and this person didn't see conflict resolution as a paradigm.

One practitioner in this category connected conflict transformation practice with names of other practitioners in the field including Baruch Bush, John Paul Lederach, Ed Schwerin, and Mark Chupp.

Though not all the practitioners in this category shared common definitions of conflict transformation, all of the definitions included the idea of social change processes. This was in stark contrast to conflict resolution practitioners' definitions both of conflict resolution and conflict transformation. In neither of these cases did conflict resolution practitioners use social change or change process as part of their definitions.

Conflict Resolution Practitioners' Definitions of CT

All four conflict resolution practitioners had trouble defining conflict transformation, and two of them said that they did not know what that term meant.

Two of the conflict resolution practitioners identified practitioner/scholars with whom they associated the ideas of conflict transformation or transformative mediation. One of the practitioners equated conflict transformation with transformative mediation and its founders, Baruch Bush and Joe Folger. Another of the conflict resolution practitioners talked about John Paul Lederach and Ken Cloke and said,

I really admire, John Paul Lederach is certainly one of the people that I particularly respect. Uh, Ken Cloke out in L.A. uh is another person uh, you know those are two names that come.

Another conflict resolution practitioner reported that she didn't really understand all the different terms in the field, and that anything that had broader goals than problem-solving seemed like something that she "*could not legitimately charge people for.*" She went on to say, "*Conflict transformation sounds like it's something that has a larger, maybe a bigger agenda or a different slant on what it wants to do.*"

Definitions of CT by Contextual Practitioners

The contextual practitioners, as might be expected, were mixed in their responses. Of the four pragmatic users of terms, one used *conflict transformation* as an umbrella term for the field, one didn't know what it meant, one saw *conflict transformation* as a byproduct that wasn't the primary goal of intervention, and one saw *conflict transformation* as outcomes other than agreement. Of these four, two use *conflict transformation* often to describe their work.

Interesting findings emerged when comparing both the strategic and philosophic practitioners' definitions of conflict transformation with the definitions of conflict transformation practitioners. Four of the five strategic contextual practitioners and one of the philosophic practitioners defined *conflict transformation* as transformation in relationships or relationship-building. They seemed to choose that term strategically when engaging in relationship building work. For example, one said,

I have a personal bias um that it is possible in in almost every case to work through conflict without breaking relationship. And when people break relationships, I tend to see that as a failure of a conflict transformation process. But in these three cases, in all three cases, there were significant departure, even after an attempt at conflict transformation. So using my definition, which is that I think in life it is it should almost always be possible to work through even significant conflict without breaking relationship, uh I they failed using that screen, because relationships were broken. People simply went to different churches.

Additionally, two of the strategic and both of the philosophic practitioners talked of changes in people as part of their definition of conflict transformation. One of the philosophic contextual practitioners used *conflict transformation* as an umbrella term for the field.

None of the pragmatic users of the term *conflict transformation* defined it as a change process or as related to relationships or changes in people.

Summary of Definitions of CR and CT in use by Practitioners

Practitioners who identified themselves as part of the conflict resolution field, or as doing conflict resolution, defined *conflict resolution* as a process of problem-solving or resolving issues. Three of them included process as part of their definition. Two explicitly used the term as an umbrella for the field. Two of these practitioners stated that the terms in the field were confusing to them.

Practitioners who identified themselves as part of the conflict transformation field, or as doing conflict transformation, defined *conflict transformation* as a social change process. All five practitioners in this category talked about either personal change, change in relationships, or structural/systems change. Three of the five said that conflict transformation was to be seen as long-term involvement.

Four of the strategic and one of the philosophic users of terms used *conflict transformation* specifically to mean changes in relationships. Two of the strategic and both of the philosophic practitioners also saw *transformation* as change in people.

Overall, pragmatic practitioners did not appear to assign a strong sense of specific meaning to the words *conflict resolution* or *conflict transformation*. However, though there was no congruence among pragmatic practitioners, two of the four in this category frequently use *conflict transformation* to describe their work.

Comparison of CR and CT Definitions to Scholarly Literature

The definitions offered by practitioners for both conflict resolution and conflict transformation echoed many of the definitions found in the scholarly literature. For *conflict resolution*, it was clear that many practitioners (regardless of how they identified themselves) saw conflict resolution as having a problem-solving focus, as being a process for dealing with conflict, and often in use as an umbrella for the field.

The largest contrast between those who used conflict resolution to identify their practice and other practitioners was the idea of *conflict resolution* implying an end to the conflict. None of the conflict resolution practitioners used this as part of their definition for conflict resolution. However, three of the five conflict transformation practitioners and six of the eleven contextual practitioners thought of conflict resolution as an ending to conflict. This seems to reflect a pattern in the scholarly literature as well.

As seen in the thorough review of scholarly literature relating to conflict resolution definitions, among the scholars oriented toward conflict resolution, only John Burton talked about *conflict resolution* as a way of “terminating” conflict or “eliminating the source of conflict,” thereby preventing it from recurring (Burton, 1990b).

The findings in this study also seem congruent with the literature written from the conflict transformation perspective, whose authors take a critical view of conflict resolution because of an assumption that conflict resolution seeks an *ending* to conflict. As discussed in Chapter Two, some scholars (especially those connected to conflict transformation) write that *conflict resolution* implies that conflict is a short-term, undesirable event that can be ended permanently through intervention processes

(University of Colorado, 1999-2008). Vayrynen (1991) argues that conflict *resolution* implies the understanding that *all* conflicts should be resolved or ended.

For *conflict transformation*, this study shows clearly that for many practitioners, conflict transformation is equated with individual, relational, or systemic social change, and for some, conflict transformation can be associated with relationship building or relationship work related to an intervention. A few described conflict transformation as the “outcomes other than agreement” that come from an intervention process. The definition of conflict transformation as relationship focused, or concerned with relationship change, is certainly supported in the conflict transformation literature (Diamond, 1994; Francis, 2002; Kraybill, 2001; Kriesberg, 1989; Lederach, 1995b; 1997; 2003).

One of the few practitioner-offered definitions of *conflict transformation* that did not seem to be congruent with the scholarly literature was the idea that conflict transformation could be defined as “outcomes other than agreement”. Evidence from both conflict resolution and conflict transformation schools of thought does not support this idea. In fact, the evaluation literature shows that in much conflict resolution practice, there are many outcomes other than agreement sought by practitioners. The ICR framework presented in Chapter Four provides an example of a broad spectrum of outcomes that conflict resolution practitioners seek.

Furthermore, none of the conflict transformation literature supports the idea that *conflict transformation* encompasses only non-agreement outcomes. Practitioner/scholars like Lederach and others write that conflict transformation incorporates all of the conflict

resolution practices including strategies for reaching agreement (Clements, 2002; Lederach, 1997; Rasmussen, 1997; Tidwell, 2001).

Comparing Contextual Self-definitions to the Scholarly Literature

The three categories in which I placed practitioners reflect the reasons they use the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* contextually. Contextual use of terms is also evident in the scholarly literature.

Pragmatic use of terms in the field is demonstrated by the many references in the scholarly literature about confusion related to the use of terms (Clements, 2002; Fast, 2002). The competing definitions of terms in the literature also suggest a pragmatic orientation (see Chapter Two for further discussion). For example, Reimann defined conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict tra processes in ways that were very confusing and counter to typical understandings. She also used Ropers' (1997) words 'non-uniform terminology' to describe what she said "is now more the norm than the exception in the overall field" (Reimann, 2004).

The finding of a strategic use of terms is supported by several references in the scholarly literature. As noted in Chapter Two, the scholars writing in the book *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War* described *conflict transformation* as a strategy that includes a variety of processes, methods and other techniques including dialogue, facilitated meetings, and truth-telling commissions (Stern, 2000). One writer, scholar/practitioner, Jay Rothman, called for a range of approaches "to be applied on a contingency basis to different settings, conflict types, and intervention styles" (1997b).

These ideas confirm that *conflict transformation* is thought and written about in a strategic sense at least by some scholars.

Both practitioners in the present study who use contextual terms from a philosophic perspective chose to do so because they believe that terms should be used differently depending upon the situation. I found no evidence of a similar perspective within the scholarly literature in the field related to definitions of terms. For that reason, it could be argued that these two practitioners could simply be included in the *pragmatic* category.

Discussion of Findings Related to Research Question 1

The findings that relate to *Research Question 1: What are Practitioners' Definitions?* include self-definitions/self-categorization and definitions of the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*.

The findings of this study reveal that some practitioners define and categorize everything that they do as either conflict resolution or conflict transformation, taking those terms exclusively as overarching or umbrella terms within which to contain their practice. At the same time, other practitioners use the same terms pragmatically, strategically or philosophically. The findings seem to support the idea that while pragmatic users of these terms will choose whichever is convenient or most meaningful for audiences, strategic users of these terms are dividing out problem-solving and agreement seeking strategies [termed *conflict resolution*] from relationship building and social change (personal, relational or structural change) strategies [termed *conflict*

transformation]. See the Intervention Strategies section under Research Question 2: Theories of Practice, for further exploration of congruence with this concept. Also, see Chapter Six of this dissertation for concluding discussion about self-identity, profession and implications for practice.

Research Question 2: What are Practitioners' Theories of Practice?

As noted in Chapter Three, when practitioners, such as those in this study, design action, it is assumed that they draw upon a personal set of theories that they have come to trust to achieve the consequences they desire for an intervention. Then, they make assessments about whether their actions have been effective (Argyris, 1985). Argyris, Putnam and Smith argue that these theories are not created from scratch each time they are needed; rather, individuals such as the practitioners in this study “learn a repertoire of concepts, schemas, and strategies, and they learn programs for drawing from their repertoire to design...action for unique situations” (Argyris, 1985). These “programs” are *theories of action*. This definition of *theories of action* can be re-stated as a definition of *theories of practice*.

Theories of practice require a complex interaction between 1) goals (*consequences they* [in this case, practitioners] *desire*); 2) strategies and tools (*repertoire of concepts, schemas, and strategies for achieving the consequences*); and 3) criteria for success (*assessments about whether their actions have been effective*). Two of these three categories, goals and intervention strategies, are the key focal points of Research Question 2: What are Practitioners' Theories of Practice? The Criteria for success will be addressed under Research Question 3: What are Practitioners' Criteria for Success?

Describing Goals Articulated by Practitioners

Goals are those statements of desired outcomes articulated by practitioners for an intervention, other project or program. In their handbook for designing conflict transformation action, Church and Rogers argue that a goal statement is crucial for the design of effective peacebuilding processes. “The goal,” they say, “is the broadest change in the conflict that the program hopes to achieve” (Church, 2008).

Theories of practice are implicit in the goals that practitioners have for their work. Practitioners in this study were asked to reflect upon a recent case (within the past two years). Then, they were asked to identify their personal goals (or goals articulated by their organization) for the intervention. Practitioner goals were charted on the framework of criteria for assessing success of interactive conflict resolution (ICR framework). Figure 7 shows a complete listing of subcategories under each four main categories.

Practitioner statements and ideas were unitized (typically words or parts of sentences) and then coded into categories. The coding process utilized the ICR data collection workbook created by Monica Jacobsen (d'Estree, 2000b). The workbook provided criteria for inclusion into the various categories within the framework.

Goals are reported here by approach (conflict transformation, conflict resolution, pragmatic, strategic, and philosophic) according to the self-definitions of practitioners discussed under Research Question 1. See Table 5.3 for a complete breakdown of practitioner goals. Findings related to goals are compared and contrasted within and between categories.

Framework for Evaluating Interactive Conflict Resolution

Criteria Category I: Changes in Thinking¹⁸

Encompasses criteria that explore new or revised knowledge. This may be cognitive representation of others, of the problem, of options for resolution, or of language to communicate.

- A. New Learning
- B. Attitude Change
- C. Integrative Framing
- D. Problem-Solving

Criteria Category II: Changes in Relations

Includes the varying criteria for knowing that the relationship between parties has changed.

- A. Empathy
- B. Improvements in Relational Climate
- C. Better Communication and New Language
- D. Validation and Reconceptualization of Identity
- E. Security in Coexistence

Criteria Category III: Foundation for Transfer

Refers to criteria for success that focus on taking new discoveries out of the intervention and into communities and the larger intergroup relationship.

- A. Artifacts
- B. Structures for Implementation
- C. Perceptions of Possibility
- D. Empowerment
- E. New Leadership
- F. Influential Participants

Criteria Category IV: Foundation for Outcome or Implementation

Assesses achievements outside the intervention that can be linked back to intervention events. These criteria include more large-scale societal changes that are more difficult to trace back to workshop activities, such as reforms in political structures and increased capacity for jointly facing future challenges.

- A. Networks
- B. Reforms in Political Structures
- C. Increased Capacity for Jointly Facing Future Challenges
- D. New Political Input and Processes

Figure 7 ICR Framework with Subcategories

¹⁸ Criteria Structure adapted from d'Estree, Tamra Pearson and Monica Jakobsen, 2000b, *A Framework for Evaluating Intergroup Interactive Conflict Resolution: Data Collection Workbook*. The Workbook is drawn from USIP Grant #144-97S Final Report, submitted to United States Institute of Peace. Washington, D.C.

Goals of Conflict Resolution Practitioners

Three out of four practitioners in this category had explicit goals for problem-solving, better communication, and empowerment. Regarding problem-solving, for example, one reflected,

When somebody contacts me with a case, it's kind of like a puzzle, it's like you're on the crossword puzzle _____. You're like hmmmm . . . hope I can put these you know, pieces together, hope I can get this figure out what this puzzle is.

Three of the four practitioners in this category also had explicit goals for better communication. One person said,

This really was an example of where the biggest issues was just we need to get these folks together to talk with each other.

Finally, three of four practitioners spoke of empowerment of participants. One practitioner named goals not only for the case she was discussing, but for her organization in general. She said,

That people would be uh become more empowered. Our organization is a rural empowerment association.

Two conflict resolution practitioners sought changes in the relational climate, and two were hoping for new learning.

Overall, within the goal categories, the four conflict resolution practitioners had seven specific goals for “Changes in Thinking” and seven for “Changes in Relations”. They had fewer goals for “Transfer” outside the intervention setting (only the three in empowerment), and even fewer goals for “Outcomes and Implementation” (only three overall).

Goals of Conflict Transformation Practitioners

Four out of five practitioners in this category shared the goal of new learning for their clients, three had goals of security in coexistence, and three listed the goal of empowerment.

The goal shared by most of the conflict transformation practitioners was “New Learning”. Each of the four practitioners who spoke of this goal described new skills, new ways of looking at a situation, or new ways of applying learning. One reported,

I mean, I think our personal goal was to work with these student educators so that they would be equipped or help help them develop the skills to I mean to kind of better understand conflict. And then try to apply that to understanding and exploring their conflict.

So the idea was to that they would get generic skills to apply and understand their own situation which we hoped there would be some type of action.

Three of the practitioners in this category spoke of goals that seemed to relate to establishing security in coexistence. These three spoke of bringing groups together and establishing safety, or a space to work through issues and problems. One said,

[Our country] is full of different conflicts. And what what we are doing is that we we want to to create a place for for transforming that conflict, which means that we work with people from [each part], and we gather together a group of about 20 people and then we work with them on on on on this conflict. And uh so we we we we work on on that level.

Three conflict transformation practitioners shared hopes for empowerment. This practitioner had three goals for her process, one of which was empowerment. She said,

Second one is to to to to sensi sensibilize people or that issue to to raising awareness on those issue, and to empower them to work something and to to do an sorts of informal networking or or whatever.

Only one of the conflict transformation practitioners listed problem-solving as a goal. None of these practitioners had goals of integrative framing or attitude change within the Changes in Thinking category.

Within the overall categories, for the five conflict transformation practitioners, there were seven specific instances of goals for Changes in Relations, five for Changes in Thinking, three for Transfer (all three were empowerment), and three in Outcome/Implementation.

Goals of Contextual Practitioners

Goals listed by the 11 practitioners in the contextual categories included at least a few citations in each of the four broad categories. Most goals were clustered in the Changes in Thinking and Changes in Relations categories. Five of the 11 practitioners had goals for problem-solving (two pragmatic and three strategic) and four of the 11 had goals for integrative framing (two pragmatic and two strategic). Three had goals for “an agreement” which is categorized in the grid as an Artifact.

This statement by a contextual practitioner gives clear evidence of his strategic thinking and use of terms, even when discussing goals for problem-solving (conflict resolution) versus broadening the scope (transformation). He said,

As opposed to goals, I think I would be more comfortable saying like the the primary scope in in a what I would consider to be a conflict resolution situation, the primary scope of consideration are the legal issues, like we're resolving this fairly narrow scope, and the scope might be broadened in a way that transformation like occurs.

The following statement from a contextual-pragmatic practitioner shows her goals of integrative framing of goals. She said,

Oh yeah. Um, you know, getting everyone to the table, getting buy into the process, uh getting a willingness to commit to uh a period of time where they were going to try to work out um the issues of of I mean, the laws, all of it worked within the law and working within the needs from water management. Um, but in terms of how I began that process, I mean, the overall goal was to, and this was something that we actually had to draft together in a in a uh program paper, you know, so we actually drafted, we carved out the goals from the group.

The following statement from a strategic practitioner supported both the goal of Security in Coexistence, and the goal of Facing a Joint Future. The practitioner said,

Um. I think my goals were to be able to have some transformation about the issues of race and racism where those who had been hurt found some acknowledgement and those who had been either directly or part of those who hurt had given some acceptance, had accepted um some of their responsibility. So that was in terms of the antagonism and the pain from the past. In terms of the possibility of a constructive future, I think that's, that's a good summary basically, to try to convert the negative and destructive cycle into a positive, constructive cycle.

The two philosophic practitioners had two goals each. They shared goals for security in coexistence, then one had a goal of New Learning, and the other had a goal of Improvements in Relational Climate. They did not have goals for problem-solving.

Table 5.3 Practitioner Goals

	Conflict Resolution (4)	Conflict Transformation (5)	Contextual – Pragmatic (4)	Contextual – Strategic (5)	Contextual – Philosophic (2)
Changes in Thinking					
Problem-Solving (9)	3	1	2	3	0
New Learning (10)	2	4	2	1	1
Integrative Framing (5)	1	0	2	2	0
Attitude Change (3)	1	0	1	1	0
Changes in Relations					
Validation and Reconceptualization of Identity (1)	0	0	0	1	0
Security in Coexistence (8)	1	3	0	2	2
Improvements in Relational Climate (9)	2	2	2	2	1
Empathy (1)	1	0	0	0	0
Better Communication and New Language (8)	3	2	2	1	0
Foundation for Transfer					
Structures for Implementation (2)	0	0	2	0	0
Perceptions of Possibility (2)	0	0	1	1	0
New Leadership (0)	0	0	0	0	0
Influential Participants (0)	0	0	0	0	0
Empowerment (6)	3	3	0	0	0
Artifacts (3)	0	0	1	2	0
Foundation for Outcome/Implementation					
Reforms in Political Structures (1)	1	0	0	0	0
New Political Input and Processes (1)	0	1	0	0	0
Networks (0)	0	0	0	0	0
Increased Capacity for Jointly Facing Future Challenges (6)	1	2	0	3	0

Unlike three of the conflict resolution practitioners and three of the conflict transformation practitioners, none of the 11 contextual practitioners had goals of Empowerment. Across the four categories of analysis, goals of the 11 contextual practitioners were concentrated in the Changes in Thinking (15 responses) and Changes in Relations (13) areas with only four responses in the Transfer category and six responses in the Outcomes/Implementation category.

Comparing Practitioner Goals

Conflict transformation and conflict resolution practitioners, within the four categories of analysis, were fairly uniform in the types of goals they were seeking. A goal of Empowerment of parties was shared by three each of the conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners. None of the contextual practitioners cited empowerment as a goal.

No one in either the conflict resolution or conflict transformation category listed “an agreement” as a goal (categorized under artifacts).

Regarding problem-solving, more conflict resolution practitioners cited problem-solving as a goal (three out of four). Of the conflict transformation practitioners, only one out of five listed problem-solving as a goal.

Discussion

The most interesting finding related to practitioner goals was the large number of goals shared by practitioners across schools of thought and contextual approaches. Nine of the 20 practitioners shared goals for Problem-Solving, ten shared New Learning as a

goal, and nine shared a goal for Improvements in Relational Climate. These practitioner goals appear across the various types, even with some conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners sharing goals of Problem-Solving (problem focused), and some sharing goals of Improvements in Relational Climate (relationship focused). Though these two ideas are identified by the practitioners as belonging to separate schools of thought, they seem to be widely shared as goals.

Because this was an exploratory study with a fairly low number of participants and because it focused only on goals related to one (sometimes two) specific case(s), the results should not be generalized broadly. We cannot, for example, conclude that conflict resolution practitioners do not share a goal of Problem-solving simply because one of the four did not state that explicitly as a goal related to one specific case.

However, one stark finding deserves further research and study. This study found that three conflict resolution practitioners and three conflict transformation practitioners share Empowerment as a goal, but none of the contextual practitioners do.

Describing Processes in Use

“Processes in use” refers to the terms that practitioners use to identify the processes they use within their practice. These include mediation, facilitation, dialog processes, and many others. Though it was not supported by a direct research question, I was eager to compare the process terms from each category of practice that practitioners used during their interviews. The following page lists all terms used by practitioners to identify processes.

Processes in Use (Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation)

Conflict Resolution (4)

- Mediation (3)
- Facilitation (2)
- Problem-solving including collaborative problem-solving (2),
- Training (2)
- Dispute resolution
- Peaceful Resolution
- Joint planning
- Conflict coaching
- Education

Conflict Transformation (5)

- Training (4)
- Mediation (2)
- Facilitation (2)
- Peacebuilding (2)
- Strategic planning (2)
- Community dialogue (2)
- Accompaniment
- Peace education
- Collaborative group processes
- Research
- Intervention work
- Dealing with the past
- Design
- Support
- Conciliation
- Shuttle work
- Informal consultation.

Processes in Use by Practitioners of Conflict Resolution (4 practitioners)

All four practitioners in this category used the term *conflict resolution* to describe their practice. Of these, one also used *peaceful resolution* interchangeably and another used *dispute resolution* interchangeably. Three of the four practitioners said that they practiced mediation.

One of these practitioners conceptualized conflict resolution as a mobile. With some prompting, she gave a list of the processes that she offers as part of her conflict resolution mobile,

I just told if someone asked me and what do you do, conflict resolution, you know, what's that? And I just tell them some of the things that I do. Uh, some of those sort of you know, what's hanging down from that hook, you know, all of the services I can provide. Um,

Gloria: So give me a sampling.

Of some of the ...

Gloria: What do you include as conflict resolution?

Well, I can mediate interpersonal and group disputes, facilitate uh large group meetings or discussion, uh providing training, teaching people skills, uh and the one more recently, for example, is doing the conflict coaching, when you're sitting with someone and helping them think through how they might move forward to work with somebody, or you know, helping them, coach them through what their next steps are gonna be....

And then actually problem-solving. ...

Um, uh other kinds of things, doing uh workshops and consensus building and teaching people some of the the activities and and tools that we use to solve conflict,...

Negotiation skills, um actually um I've also incorporated under that, though I don't it's really a side thing, but I've also worked in uh the Myers-Briggs type inventory, I got certified in that to help help me work with some groups....

Practitioners in this category identified facilitation (2), problem-solving including collaborative problem-solving (2), and training (2) as aspects of their work. Other processes identified by these practitioners also included joint planning (1), conflict coaching (1), and education (1).

Processes In Use by Practitioners of Conflict Transformation (5 practitioners)

All five practitioners in this category used the term *conflict transformation* to describe their practice. Of these, four talked about their practice in conflict intervention as including training. One practitioner said,

It's training, but it's also intervention in some ways.

Another was not entirely comfortable with the concept of training to describe the practice work done. This practitioner chose another term to describe the variety of roles and processes needed. The practitioner said,

*A couple places that I talk about it, but I've been pushing out a bit more that I'm hearing this term being used in different circles and I I think it describes more accurately some of what I do than the existing categories of things like training or mediation or other things. Any one of those areas, like if you took training as an idea, doesn't fully comprehend a kind of an uh an accompaniment of how this is then implemented, how people work with it. So like but the [a country] situation and/or with the [another country] one, it is is more of an ongoing relationship and the commitment to a context and a set of people that may have a variety of specific roles that are played at some points, but is uh uh an **accompaniment** [emphasis mine] of a process of trying to work through changes that people are are interested in.*

Practitioners in this category also talked about the processes that they used such as facilitation (2), peacebuilding (2), mediation (2), strategic planning (2), and community dialogue (2). Individual practitioners identified numerous other processes they used as part of their practice that were not shared among practitioners in this category. These processes identified (1 each) were accompaniment (see the quotation above), peace education, acting as third party, collaborative group processes, research, intervention work, dealing with the past, design, support, conciliation, shuttle work, and informal consultation.

Process Terms in use by Practitioners using Words Contextually (11 practitioners)

The practitioners using terms contextually were important to include in this study, to provide a needed comparison of the ways different people use definitions and terms. Following is a list of the terms contextual practitioners used to describe processes.

Processes in Use (Contextual Practitioners)

Pragmatic (4)

- Facilitation (3)
- Conflict Transformation (2)
- Conflict Resolution (2)
- Mediation (2)
- Training (2)
- Conflict prevention (2)
- Labor arbitration
- Settlement
- Media production,
- Community organizing
- Convening
- Build capacity
- Multi-stakeholder processes
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Public involvement processes
- Peace education.

Strategic (5)

- Mediation (4)
- Conflict resolution (3)
- Peacebuilding (2)
- Facilitation (2)
- Peace education (2)
- Consulting (2)
- Interventions (2)
- Conflict Transformation
- Conflict Management
- Peace negotiations
- Capacity building
- Visioning
- Framing
- Reconciliation
- Community building
- Development
- Crisis intervention
- Conflict engagement
- Training
- Strategic planning
- Organizational development
- Conflict assessment

Philosophic (2)

- Mediation (2)
- Dispute intervention
- Conflict Management
- Reconciliation work
- Facilitation
- Conciliation
- Development work
- Consulting
- Education
- Conflict Resolution
- Building capacity
- Transformation

Pragmatic (4)

The contextually pragmatic practitioners used many of the same words as those in the conflict resolution and conflict transformation categories to describe their practice.

Three of the four in this category spoke of facilitation. Others used the following terms also depending upon context: conflict transformation (2), conflict resolution (2), mediation (2), training (2), and conflict prevention (2). Individuals in this category also used the following terms (one each) for processes they employ within their practice:

labor arbitration, settlement, TV production, community organizing, convening, third

party, build capacity, multi-stakeholder processes, collaborative problem-solving, public involvement processes, and peace education.

Strategic (5)

Four of the five practitioners in this category described mediation as a process they offer in their practice. Three of the five use the term *conflict resolution*, and two each use the following terms: peacebuilding, facilitation, peace education, consulting, and interventions.

Individuals also used the following terms to describe their practice: conflict transformation, conflict management, peace negotiations, capacity building, visioning, framing, reconciliation, community building, development, crisis intervention, conflict engagement, training, strategic planning, organizational development, process planning, and conflict assessment.

Philosophic (2)

Both contextual – philosophic practitioners used the term *mediation* to describe a process that they use in their practice. They also used the following terms individually (one each): dispute intervention, conflict management, reconciliation work, facilitation, conciliation, development work, consulting, education, conflict resolution, building capacity, and transformation.

Discussion

Analysis of the process terms used by practitioners, regardless of their self-classification in relation to conflict resolution or conflict transformation, proved only that many of the processes described are in use across categories. People in each category talked of mediation and facilitation. All categories of practitioners included some reference to training, education, or capacity building. Only conflict resolution and contextually pragmatic practitioners used the terms *problem-solving* or *collaborative problem-solving* to describe processes. Only conflict transformation and contextually strategic and philosophic practitioners used the term *peacebuilding*. Not surprisingly, the pragmatic practitioners had the widest range of terms reflecting the various schools of thought. For example, two each used conflict transformation and conflict resolution, and the processes listed by these practitioners included everything from labor arbitration to community organizing and peace education.

Describing Intervention Strategies Used by Practitioners

Practitioners were asked about a recent professional case (within the past two years) in which they intervened in conflict. Some practitioners responded with a single story, while others gave two or more examples of projects they had worked on recently. After explaining their goals for the case (reported previously), I asked them how they went about their work (*What were the strategies and tools you used?*). In response to that

question, the twenty practitioners reported a total of 613¹⁹ strategies and tools. I divided these strategies and tools into 17 categories. Some categories include specific strategies (e.g. Strategies for Facilitating a Meeting or Selecting Participants), while others are broader and more general strategies for engagement (e.g. Dealing with Violence/Destructive Conflict or Improving Communication). All twenty practitioners reported face-to-face meetings or trainings where participants met in person those with whom they were in conflict. Fifteen of the twenty practitioners also explicitly noted that they *provided process* as a strategy for intervening in conflict.

The categories of strategies are listed in Figure 8. Though these could be organized in a variety of ways, they are listed to suggest a hierarchy. For example, Strategies for Encouraging Participation is listed below Strategies for Facilitating Meetings. The hierarchy suggested is for illustrative purposes only. Within Table 5.4 and subsequent discussion, the categories of strategies are listed alphabetically. Table 5.4 also includes subcategories for each category of strategies. Within subcategories, each practitioner is included only once, even if he/she spoke of a number of strategies that would fit within that subcategory. To see specific strategies listed within each of these categories (listed alphabetically), see Table 5.4.

¹⁹ Every reference by a practitioner to a specific tool or strategy is included in this number. However, some practitioners referred to a specific tool several times. In discussing findings as listed in Table 5.4, the data for each of the 17 categories include only one reference to a strategy or tool per practitioner.

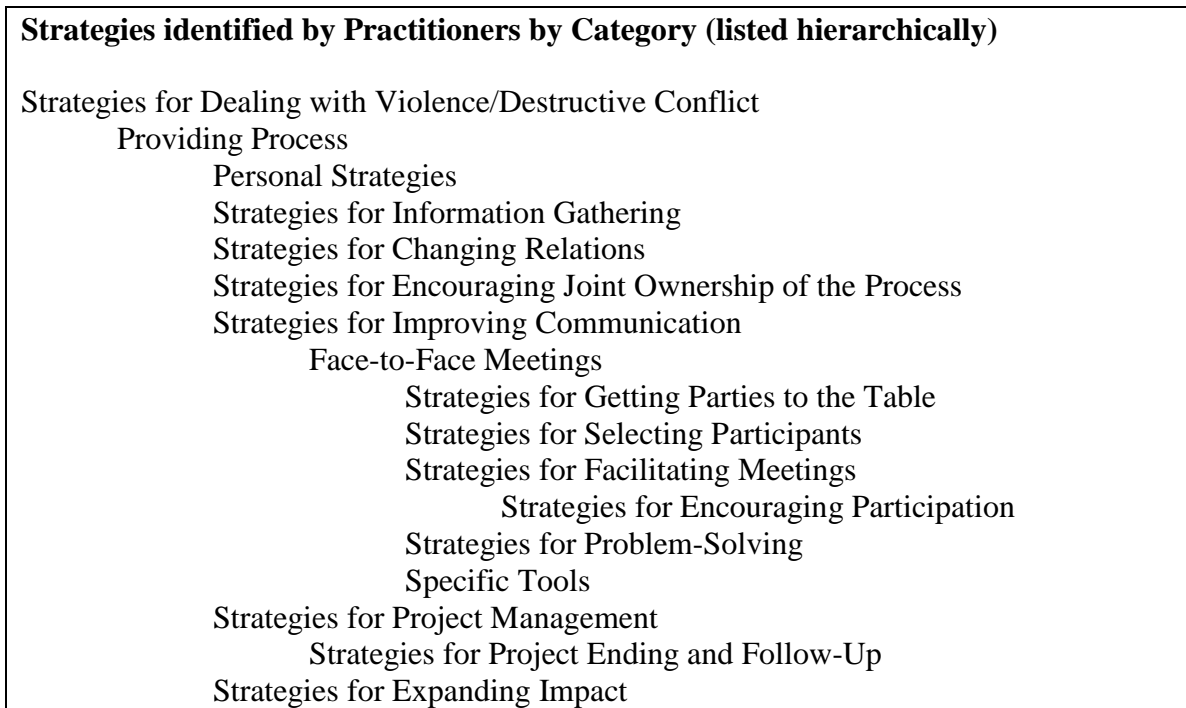


Figure 8 Intervention Strategies

Intervention Strategies for Conflict Resolution Practitioners

Strategies used by conflict resolution practitioners fell across the categories. The only strategy mentioned by all four practitioners in this category was face-to-face meetings. Three of these practitioners said they “provided process.” The categories where most strategies accumulated were:

- Strategies for Improving Communication
- Strategies for Encouraging Joint Ownership of the Process
- Strategies for Problem-solving
- Tools

Three of the four practitioners spoke of improving communication (a category defined as two sides talking together). One of these practitioners identified a process for

improving communication when she talked about bringing two sides together to talk. She said,

And the people had never come together to talk about race, so we um we had we had um an initiative, I guess you'd call it. We had town hall meetings and we did interviewing and focus groups.

Strategies for Joint Ownership of the Process included any occasion when practitioners were talking about helping participants craft joint steps. For example, here is one practitioner's statement about jointly facing the future (creating joint next steps). She said,

Okay. And once we agreed on the principles of what the good education should look like and provide, then we started talking about how do we make that happen? Uh but if we had started about specific education policies and and just the procedures of policy, we'd never have gotten anywhere. Uh, so I think that always you want to find out where is the level of which they do agree, pinpoint that so that both see, we agree on this, and then begin to work at okay, so if we agree on this, how do we make that happen jointly?

As might be expected, all four conflict resolution practitioners identified problem-solving strategies. These included identifying issues, interests and needs, and finding solutions. One said,

Uh, if a certain problem comes to us in our role at [organization], we can just go and some of them we can just go and solve.

The conflict resolution practitioners identified a larger number of specific tools (such as role plays, simulations, anecdotes, theories, style indicators, models, etc.) than any other group. One practitioner made me smile when she shared this strategy for working with a group in conflict. She said,

I use the old orange story, and I always think well everybody's heard this, I'm always amazed at how many haven't. But I always say now a good mediator can figure out that one wants the peel, the other one wants the juice, and can have

make that happen. A great mediator can throw the orange away, because they realize that one wants the seasoning and decides orange peel you could have vanilla or almond or rum or maple, and besides orange juice you could have apple juice or water, or my personal preference, beer, or milk or tea or whatever.

None of these practitioners viewed the length of intervention as long-term, and none talked of conflict analysis or assessment. See Table 5.4 beginning on the next page for a complete list of intervention strategies by categories of practitioners.

Intervention Strategies for Conflict Transformation Practitioners

As mentioned earlier, all five conflict transformation practitioners talked of training as a ***process*** of intervention. Training as a way of intervening was also mentioned by each of the five practitioners as a ***strategy*** for conflict transformation. Training was seen both as capacity building for the individuals involved in the training and as a way of expanding the intervention work beyond the training/workshop site. Training was categorized as one component of Expanding Impact of Intervention. About Training, one practitioner, for example, reported,

No, maybe just one observation about training as approach. Training is our basic approach.

Gloria: To?

To the peacebuilding, conflict transformation and everything.

Another practitioner explained how education and training is an intentional part of conflict transformation. He said,

Um, um, because I mean, yes, training is always intervention because if you train people, you change the way they engage with the system, and that is an intervention into the system.

Gloria: ...say a church that has a conflict happening. But you wouldn't would you call that training, then, or do you have that?

Um, yeah, well, the intervention model we use has an educational uh stage as part of that of part of that process, so we do the education as an element that's normally needed in certainly a large group intervention.

Finally, one practitioner articulated a training model that assumes social transformation and expanded reach by putting into place strategy development within the organizations of the participants involved in the training. He said,

Well, the the other pieces would be that the training was conceptualized sort of had a combination of input, and each time that we met, there would be some identification of what would be especially helpful to receive. But the groups also worked, especially in the [organization] in reference to their various departments, with how they would take those into strategies that they would begin to work on and implement in the areas that they were working with. And a number of those began to spin out, especially in at level of some of the some of the regions. So they were it was a training modality that is not exclusively about um education on a substantive level, with input, but that the workshop seminars were actually used in the point of strategy development for their for their ongoing um activities.

Four of the five conflict transformation practitioners identified process as an explicit strategy of their intervention practice. Strategies of conflict transformation practitioners also accumulated in the categories of Improving Communication and Expanding the Impact (of intervention). Under Improving Communication, three of five practitioners talked of dialogue processes as components of their interventions.

In the category of Expanding Impact, which includes Training and the categories listed below, practitioners in this category identified seventeen strategies, notably Viewing Involvement as Long-Term, and Partnership with Local and Other Organizations.

Table 5.4 Intervention Strategies by Category

	Conflict Resolution (4)	Conflict Transformation (5)	Pragmatic (4)	Strategic (5)	Philosophic (2)
Strategies	4	5	4	5	2
Face-to-Face meetings (or training)	4	5	4	5	2
Personal Intervenor Strategies					
Flexibility (2)	0	2	0	0	0
Modelling (1)	0	0	0	0	1
Rapport (4)	1	1	1	1	0
Schmoozing (1)	1	0	0	0	0
Providing Process					
Explain the process (2)	1	0	0	1	0
Process planning (1)	0	0	0	1	0
Provide process (15)	3	4	3	4	1
Step by step process (3)	0	1	0	1	1
Strategies for Improving Communication					
Dialogue as a strategy (12)	2	3	2	3	2
Generic dialogue (10)	0	5	2	1	2
Improving communication (talking) (9)	3	2	0	3	1
Shuttle diplomacy (1)	0	0	0	0	1
Storytelling (4)	1	2	0	1	0
Strategies for Changing Relationships					
Exchanges (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Finding common ground (2)	1	0	1	0	0
Focus on improving and changing relationships (4)	2	0	0	1	1
Improving understanding (6)	1	1	1	2	1

Strategies for Dealing with Violence/Destructive Conflict					
Advocacy and activism (1)	1	0	0	0	0
Crisis intervention and stabilization (2)	0	0	0	1	1
Demobilization (1)	0	0	0	1	0
Focus on structure (1)	0	1	0	0	0
Healing and dealing with feelings (6)	0	2	0	3	1
Meeting needs (3)	1	0	0	1	1
Monitoring (2)	0	0	0	1	1
Strategies for Encouraging Joint Ownership of the Process					
Establishing commitment level or stake in process (10)	1	3	2	3	1
Joint agenda setting (11)	2	1	3	3	2
Jointly facing the future (next steps) (7)	3	1	1	1	1
Strategies for encouraging joint decision making (6)	1	0	2	2	1
Strategies for Encouraging Participation					
Face saving (3)	0	0	1	1	1
Safe space (6)	1	1	1	2	1
Strategies for Expanding Impact					
Education (9)	1	3	2	2	1
Generate resources and materials (5)	1	1	2	1	0
Involving students and mentees (2)	1	1	0	0	0
Media (2)	0	0	2	0	0
Partnership with local and other orgs (5)	1	2	2	0	0
Strategy development (2)	0	1	0	1	0
Supporting local initiatives (1)	0	1	0	0	0
Training (9)	2	5	1	0	1
Viewing involvement as long-term (6)	0	3	2	1	0

Strategies for Facilitating Meetings					
Balance power (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Bring in experts (3)	0	0	2	1	0
Caucus (2)	0	0	1	1	0
Encouraging agreement (2)	1	0	1	0	0
Facilitating meetings (6)	1	1	3	0	1
Framing and reframing (1)	1	0	0	0	0
Ground rules (3)	1	1	0	0	1
Mediate conflicts that arise (4)	0	2	0	1	1
Naming (3)	1	0	0	1	1
Preset agenda (1)	1	0	0	0	0
Taking breaks (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Strategies for Getting Parties to the Table					
Contracting (2)	0	1	0	1	0
Get them to the table (5)	2	0	1	2	0
Providing carrots (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Trustbuilding (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Strategies for Information Gathering					
Conflict analysis or assessment (6)	0	3	0	2	1
Groundwork (5)	1	1	1	1	1
Information Gathering (10)	3	2	3	2	0
Interviewing (8)	2	2	2	1	1
Piloting (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Strategies for Problem-solving					
Finding Solutions (8)	3	2	1	2	0
Helping parties identify needs (5)	2	2	0	1	0
Identifying interests vs. positions (3)	1	1	0	1	0

Identifying the issues (5)	2	1	0	2	0
Strategies for Project Ending and Follow Up					
An agreement (3)	1	0	0	2	0
Evaluation (3)	0	1	1	1	0
Identifying next steps (2)	1	0	1	0	0
Ongoing contact and support (9)	1	2	1	3	2
Reporting (3)	0	1	1	1	0
Strategies for Project Management					
Advisory group (3)	1	1	0	1	0
Coordination of project (1)	0	1	0	0	0
Funding (3)	0	1	2	0	0
Motto for the project (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Strategies for Selecting Participants					
Ages and youth (2)	0	2	0	0	0
Number of participants (1)	0	1	0	0	0
Specifically targeted participants (7)	2	3	1	1	0
Stakeholders (4)	1	1	1	1	0
Volunteer versus required (1)	0	1	0	0	0
Tools					
Input (Knowledge, skills, ideas, theory) (3)	1	1	0	1	0
Using ritual or visual or performing arts (4)	0	0	2	2	0
Role play, simulation and activities (8)	3	2	1	1	1
Using models (4)	2	0	0	1	1

Strategies for Expanding the Impact:

- Education
- Generate resources and materials
- Involving students and mentees
- Media
- Partnership with local and other organizations
- Strategy development
- Supporting local initiatives
- Training
- Viewing involvement as long-term

Conflict analysis was listed as a strategy by three of the five practitioners in this category. One said,

It depends on the age of the group, but in general it's like looking at doing conflict analysis, you know, just kind of doing ground rules and working with groups to do basic analysis of what are the components of conflict in terms of parties, dynamics, sources, and that type of stuff.

Surprisingly, given that conflict transformation is connected to ideas of relationship change, there was only one instance of a conflict transformation practitioner listing explicit strategies for changing relationships. See Table 5.4 for a complete list of practitioner intervention strategies.

Intervention Strategies for Practitioner using Terms Contextually

Of the 11 practitioners who use the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* contextually, each identified either face-to-face meetings or trainings as strategies for their practice in conflict intervention.

Contextually Pragmatic Practitioners

Three of the four contextually pragmatic practitioners identified strategies of providing process, information gathering, facilitating meetings, and joint agenda setting.

More responses accumulated in the categories of Strategies for Improving Communication, Strategies for Encouraging Joint Ownership of the Process and Strategies for Expanding Impact than elsewhere.

Contextually Strategic Practitioners

Four of five practitioners in this category identified process as a strategy for their practice. Responses of strategic practitioners accumulated in the categories of Strategies for Improving Communication (especially Dialogue and Talking) and Strategies for Encouraging Joint Ownership of the Process. Practitioners in this category also referred to more Strategies for Project Ending and Follow Up than practitioners in any other category. For example, this practitioner described following up with a reference committee,

So I started using reference committees about ten years ago and I can show you some things I've written on that, because the implementation rate uh doubled. I do follow-up phone calls and and it just made a huge difference having a group of four or five people who had been involved in it and now they say hey, we really want this change to take place.

Three out of five strategic practitioners also talked of Healing and Dealing with Feelings (3 of 5) which was categorized under Dealing with Violent/Destructive Conflict.

An interesting finding, in contrast to conflict transformation practitioners (five of five), was that no strategic practitioners listed training as a strategy for their practice.

Contextually Philosophic Practitioners

Both of these practitioners utilized face-to-face encounters between clients, both highlighted Improving Communication through dialogue processes and both referred to Joint Agenda Setting and Ongoing Contact and Support.

Discussion of Intervention Strategies

All practitioners, regardless of how they defined themselves in relation to the field, spoke of Improving Communication, and many strategies (44) accumulated there. Twenty of twenty practitioners spoke of face-to-face meetings, and fifteen of twenty referred to providing process as an intervention strategy. Twelve of the twenty practitioners interviewed talked about encouraging dialogue, dialogue processes, or helping dialogue to happen.

Findings related to Intervention Strategies cannot be considered conclusive because, among other reasons, practitioners were speaking largely about their strategies for one case. If they were to report all strategies in use, it's likely that their repertoire of strategies would be expanded considerably. Still, the findings do help to support some broad conclusions and help to generate several questions for further inquiry.

That practitioners across the various categories shared basic processes (such as mediation and facilitation), and strategies for improving communication in face-to-face meetings, may seem to be common sense. In a field that stresses good communication, it is confirming and reassuring that most practitioners use strategies toward that end.

Findings also confirmed that conflict resolution practitioners are focused on problem-solving (eight instances). In comparison, the conflict transformation and

strategic practitioners had less focus on problem-solving strategies (for Conflict Transformation - six instances and Strategic - six instances). However, in comparison to the other two categories of practitioners (Pragmatic – one and Philosophic – zero), conflict transformation and contextually strategic practitioners also relied on problem-solving strategies.

Another example to consider here is that of relationship-focused strategies for intervention. Two of the conflict resolution practitioners mentioned explicit strategies for relationship change, while only one conflict transformation practitioner did so.

Similarities like this, across a set of practitioners, support the idea of umbrella terms for the field. If, for example, conflict transformation practitioners define the field as broadly inclusive of all nonviolent intervention practices, then they would naturally share some strategies (such as problem-solving) with practitioners who classified themselves within the conflict resolution school of thought.

I am hesitant to draw many conclusions about strategies in use, based only on this small sample of very diverse practitioners discussing, in most interviews, a single case. However, it is clear that at the broadest levels, intervention strategies appear to be shared across schools of thought and practice.

Though training appears to be a strategy more in use by conflict transformation practitioners than others interviewed, overall there is little other distinction between intervention strategies of conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches. It does seem clear that for both conflict transformation practitioners and strategic/philosophic practitioners, though they define conflict transformation as personal

change, or change in relationships, their intervention strategies did not explicitly focus on relationship change. This may have been a hoped-for consequence of improved communication or other strategies, and therefore may not have been mentioned explicitly. This would be an interesting area for further research.

In addition, though the scholarly literature and thirteen of the twenty practitioners in this study classify problem-solving as a conflict resolution strategy, every one of the conflict transformation practitioners included problem-solving strategies. Conflict transformation practitioners and scholars who do not include problem-solving in their self-definitions are clearly using tools for problem-solving in their interventions. In a similar example, though many practitioners defined relational change as part of conflict transformation, conflict resolution practitioners also used strategies for relationship change.

Research Question 3: What are Practitioners' Criteria for Success?

Criteria for success, as stated in earlier in this work, are standards by which practitioners (and others) judge whether the work done has met the goals of the project or intervention. Different processes have different goals and therefore distinct criteria for success. One question commonly asked of conflict intervention processes by funders, evaluators, critics, and colleagues is *Was it successful?* This question implies a judgment about whether an intervention was effective. Judgments about the effectiveness, or evaluation, of processes in the field generally assess what processes achieve in relationship to their goals.

In order to compare goals with criteria for success, this study relies on the framework identified by d'Estree and colleagues (See Chapters Three and Four). The criteria for success they identified were set into a framework meant to be “exhaustive and descriptive, rather than prescriptive” (d'Estree, 2001). The authors acknowledge that the categories are not discrete and that sometimes evidence can be placed into multiple categories (see Figure 7 for a complete list of categories and subcategories).

Learning from Success AND Failure

There is learning in success and failure. The following statement from one of the practitioners was a response to the question “Would you judge the intervention to be a success?” The practitioner said,

Yeah, and we made a difference, and you know, you with with this work, the other thing we've got to be so careful about is not to judge um ourselves and the work we we need to we need to learn the lessons that are there to learn, but not to judge often whether things worked or hasn't because we we often have no idea of the impact. And we need to be able to learn the lessons where that might be negative, but in other places we need to just let it go and you know, let it go. Let God and let go of it, because really, the the impact uh I mean, if we look at our own lives and see the impact that others have had on us, um we can have an inkling or sense of the impact that our work has on other people, that they may that we may never know about.

And I believe that I I often don't know the impact that I have. And when it's a negative impact, I hope that I can discover it, learn from it. And if it's a positive effect, I don't need to know. If it's coming back to me, it's very nice because we like to believe we'd all like to hear the acknowledge. But I don't need to know that.

Criteria for success in this study include both positive (“the intervention was successful”) and negative (“the intervention failed”) assessments by practitioners. The criteria against which practitioners measure their success or failure remain the same. If,

for example, a practitioner suggests that an intervention failed because the parties did not reach an agreement, it is categorized in the same way that an agreement is categorized if the practitioner felt that the intervention was successful for that reason.

Therefore, criteria in each category (see Table 5.5 for detail) include practitioners' assessments of whether or not they felt the intervention was a success. In fact, though many practitioners highlighted the success of their interventions, most of them offered nuanced assessments, including components that may have not succeeded in their opinion. For example, one practitioner reported,

So, I kind of feel, one of your questions, I think, was did you think it was successful?

Gloria: Uh huh.

You know, the ones that stick in your mind are usually the ones that aren't. Um, so I would say half, I'd say he's got as the initial contact person, uh that was put in touch with [the client's] gotta feel better about the paperwork thing moved on, you know, because he said he wanted that.

Um, whether he feels like whether the ADR office you know, made my whole work life better? I doubt it, because there's just not that much more we could do for him.

This brief example also points to the fact that criteria for success depend upon practitioners' and clients' goals. Comparisons between goals and criteria for success are the work of evaluation. Again, because this is not an evaluative study, I was able to treat assessments of success or failure similarly.

Conflict Resolution Practitioners Criteria for Success

There were no criteria shared by all four conflict resolution practitioners.

However, three of four practitioners in this category identified Problem-Solving, New Learning, Changes in Relational Climate, and Artifacts (agreements) as criteria for success.

Three practitioners talked about problem-solving in the context of evaluating the specific case they were describing. One of these shared about a case where the goals had been unclear at the start. She said,

So I sort of if just sort of became a a problem-solving thing. Um, it's not my place to say that the guy did it because of some form of discrimination or on purpose, or he's just incompetent, you know, I don't get to decide why they didn't get forward, just that the headquarters doesn't have these apps from these names, if you get them to me, I will forward them and they'll be entered into the system, all together, as soon as possible, and you're get the paperwork back.

So um that was one of the things that happened as result of this.

An example of successful new learning was offered by one conflict resolution practitioner/trainer. She said,

I would say I felt really that it was a great success um in getting those managers trained, in getting the higher up supervisor to agree to get these guys some training, and the fact that they came into it thinking oh, this is just gonna be an opportunity to come in in the air conditioning and sleep.

And you really got something back from it, you know, and they really got some tools and some ideas and some information and some research that they can use.

Indicators for conflict resolution practitioners of Improvements in Relational Climate included statements like the following,

It was successful because as a result of this mediation process, the entire relationship between the two parties changed.

Another practitioner said,

People are are really building strong relationships with each other. And these are people who didn't have any relationship with each other before.

Three of the four practitioners in this category identified artifacts (in this case, agreements) as criteria for success, saying things like, “*It was successful because they signed an agreement.*”

See Table 5.5 for a complete list of practitioner responses to criteria for success questions.

Conflict Transformation Practitioners Criteria for Success

Four of the five conflict transformation practitioners cited New Learning, Better Communication and Empowerment as criteria for success in their interventions. New Learning was illustrated by one practitioner with the following statement,

I think that the successes if you would think about them, were in the range of that people were much more familiar with a sense of what conflict transformation and peace building involved, included and (2) with ways that they could be engaged with it and roles that they could take. (3) I think a greater clarity around uh especially areas of working with the communities that were affected by the conflicts where they were located.

The Better Communication category included the following example. The practitioner said,

Another one would be that um there was a sense that people really had been heard and had been able to uh address the hurts that they were carrying somewhat, and uh you know, with this with this particular group, that just really didn't happen in a significant or profound way.

The Empowerment category had both negative and positive assessments by practitioners. One of the positive assessments came from this practitioner. He said,

They came out of they they were able to spend a month with each other and are building relationships. They got to interact with American teenagers, you know, saw the U.S. and they learn English, first time English, and they went back kind of feeling very empowered.

Then later,

and then they did a lot of because of because it was part of a much bigger project, they did amazing things back home, once they went back.

Another practitioner shared,

Yeah, yeah, yeah. If they and and what sorts of activities they they want to do after after the training. That level of motivation and empowering people, it's very important criteria for me. If people are empowered to do something, then I think that the training was was good.

One of the negative assessments of Empowerment shows both conflicting goals between the practitioner and the participants, and competing assessments based on those goals.

The practitioner said,

And so the residents, while they've been participating, and if you talk to them and they will just praise this up and down you know as being how wonderful the process has been. But they haven't had as much say. People haven't paid as much attention.

It's not gonna be the viable community that it once was. The church can remain as a hub and people can drive to the church and so forth, there are, you know, a few neighbors. There are several dozen homes, but it's not...

Later,

In terms of the community goals that I had, I'd say my perspective is much less than what I had, again, even though the community members control this and they've done presentations with this they say I want more of this there's not what I had hoped.

Table 5.5 Criteria for Success Identified by Practitioners

	Conflict Resolution (4)	Conflict Transformation (5)	Contextual – Pragmatic (4)	Contextual – Strategic (5)	Contextual – Philosophic (2)
Changes in Thinking					
Problem-solving	3	2	1	4	1
New Learning	3	4	1	0	2
Integrative Framing	2	3	2	2	2
Attitude Change	2	2	0	2	0
Changes in Relations					
Validation and Reconceptualization of Identity	2	2	0	3	0
Security in Coexistence	1	0	0	1	2
Improvements in Relational Climate	3	3	3	5	1
Empathy	1	2	1	1	0
Better Communication and New Language	2	4	1	2	1
Foundation for Transfer					
Structures for Implementation	1	2	3	2	2
Perceptions of Possibility	2	2	2	3	1
New Leadership	1	1	1	1	0
Influential Participants	1	2	1	0	1
Empowerment	2	4	0	2	2
Artifacts	3	1	2	4	1
Foundation for Outcome/Implementation					
Reforms in Political Structures	0	0	1	0	0
New Political Input and Processes	1	2	3	2	1
Networks	1	2	1	2	0
Increased Capacity for Jointly Facing Future Challenges	1	1	2	3	0

Three of the five conflict transformation practitioners noted Changes in the Relational Climate as indicators of success. Two of the five in this category mentioned Problem-solving as a criterion for success. Only one of the five practitioners in this category identified Artifacts (in this case, agreements) as criteria for success. The practitioner said,

Um, I would say it's always mixed, so I would never say unqualified success. Um, also I think we have to look at ten years, twenty years, you know, we'll see where we impacted it, so um uh it terms of getting a diverse group of people to become educated and agree on what this project is and yes, it was a large goal.

Pragmatic Practitioners' Criteria for Success

Interestingly, the pragmatic practitioners had fewer criteria for success within the Changes in Thinking and Changes in Relations categories than the conflict resolution, conflict transformation or strategic practitioners. Still, three of these four practitioners did highlight Improvements in Relational Climate as indicators of success in their interventions. These practitioners also highlighted Structures for Implementation (3), New Political Input and Processes (3) and Artifacts (2).

Strategic Practitioners' Criteria for Success

All five of the strategic practitioners included criteria for Improvements in Relational Climate. Four of the five also pointed to “an agreement” (Artifact) as a measure of success. Four of the five gave examples of problem-solving as a criterion for success.

These contextually strategic practitioners seem to have goals, strategies and criteria for success for doing it all. That is, in discussing a specific case, they include

problem-solving, getting agreements, relationship change and many others. Rather than limiting themselves to a set of assumptions connected to one school of thought or another, they draw on all.

One surprise here was that none of the five practitioners in this category, explicitly or otherwise, identified New Learning as one of their criteria for success.

Philosophic Practitioners' Criteria for Success

The philosophic practitioners shared criteria for success in many categories including New Learning, Integrative Framing, Security in Coexistence, Structures for Implementation, and Empowerment. Beyond this, because of the small sample, very little can be concluded.

Comparing Criteria for Success across Approaches

Many of the criteria for success identified by practitioners clustered in the categories of Changes in Thinking, Changes in Relations, and Foundation for Transfer. Total responses are listed below. Total number of responses are listed for each Criterion for Success out of a total of twenty practitioners:

Changes in Thinking

- Problem-solving (11)
- New Learning (10)
- Integrative Framing (11)
- Attitude Change (6)

Changes in Relations

- Validation and Reconceptualization of Identity (7)
- Security in Coexistence (4)
- Improvements in Relational Climate (15)
- Empathy (5)
- Better Communication and New Language (10)

Foundation for Transfer

- Structures for Implementation (10)
- Perceptions of Possibility (10)
- New Leadership (4)
- Influential Participants (5)
- Empowerment (10)
- Artifacts (10)

Foundation for Outcome/Implementation

- Reforms in Political Structures (1)
- New Political Input and Processes (9)
- Networks (6)
- Increased Capacity for Jointly Facing Future Challenges (7)

Not many practitioners, across the board, identified criteria for success at the level of implementation. This suggests that most practitioners interviewed were involved in interpersonal or intergroup conflict settings, and fewer practitioners were involved in community-wide or societal conflict intervention processes. The categories of transfer and implementation typically reflect criteria for impact beyond the face-to-face intervention.

The clear stand-out from the categories of criteria is Improvements in Relational Climate. Of the 20 practitioners, 15 noted that their intervention was successful because of improvements in clients' relationships. These findings confirm that practitioners across approaches share criteria for success related to relationship change. In addition, for nine of the Criteria for Success categories, approximately half of the practitioners (9, 10, or 11 each) referred to evidence to support those criteria. That large number of categories, shared by half of all practitioners interviewed, supports practitioner similarity in criteria for success.

Comparing Practitioners' Espoused Theories and Theories-in-Use

According to Argyris and Schon (Argyris, 1974), there are two types of theories of action: espoused theories and theories-in-use. Espoused theories are those that “an individual claims to follow”. Theories-in-use, on the other hand, are those that “can be inferred from action” (Argyris, 1985).

In this study, espoused theories are those things that a practitioner states he/she does or should do in a conflict intervention. Theories-in-use are those things that a practitioner actually does in the intervention. Because the study relies on primary data from practitioner interviews, it has been structured to uncover evidence of theories-in-use by asking practitioners to provide textual (e.g. reports, evaluations or e-mail testimonials), audiovisual (audio or video recording) or verbal (testimony by intervention participants or colleagues) evidence.

Espoused theory tends to be evident in self-report, which is a characteristic of all direct interviews. In this study, though it does rely heavily on interviews, several methodologies were used to lessen the impact of self-report.

First, the study was set up to disarm the practitioners by having them talk about a specific case. In each interview, practitioners were able to identify and talk about (in great detail) a case that they had recently worked on. The goals stated by practitioners for the case were espoused theories, although in all cases, practitioners had the benefit of time and reflection between the case and the sharing of the goals. The practitioners' stories of their interventions (from which the strategies were taken) came closer to theories of action or theories-in-use, because they were remembered cases with specific

outcomes. The fact that most practitioners were able to identify positive and negative outcomes from their interventions strengthens the evidence that the practitioners were in fact sharing their theories-in-use rather than espoused theories. In contrast, it is conventional wisdom that espoused theories put interviewees in a good light vis-à-vis the interviewer.

Another characteristic of this study that intentionally checks on practitioners' espoused theories versus their theories-in-use is a systematic comparison of goals with criteria for success.

Comparing Goals (espoused theories) and Criteria for Success (theories-in-use)

One way of conceptualizing congruence between practitioners' espoused theories and their theories-in-use is to compare their stated goals for an intervention to the criteria by which they judge the success or failure of the intervention. The results of the comparison of practitioner goals and criteria for success do show some misalignment. While this may be a result of the typical lack of a perfect alignment between espoused theory and theory-in-use, in this study, it may be due to other factors as well. For example, such a misalignment could be caused by the length of time between the establishment of goals and the self-report, or it could simply have to do with how difficult it is to remember exact goals (especially implicit ones) after an intervention has already been deemed a success or failure. Either way, the data collected here does show a large gap between stated goals and expressed criteria for success (or failure). See Table 5.6 and Table 5.7 for comparative data by individual practitioners for both goals and criteria for success.

A “misalignment” of goals and criteria for success shows up in a comparison of the data as a difference between no statement of a goal or criterion for a category (the data field has a “0”) and a practitioners’ stated goals or criteria (signified by a numeral “1” in the data field). A quick scan of the tables shows, as should be expected, a larger number of statements identifying criteria for success than statements identifying goals. Areas of interest are noted under each category of practice in the following discussion.

Tables 5.6 and 5.7 show rows for each of the ICR Framework Criteria and a column for each of the twenty practitioners (labeled 1-20). In both tables, individual practitioners are additionally grouped into approaches (distinguished by gray or white columns) as follows:

- Conflict Resolution practitioners (numbers 8,10, 17, and 19).
- Conflict Transformation practitioners (numbers 3, 6, 12, 16, and 20).
- Contextual – Pragmatic practitioners (13, 14, 15, and 18).
- Contextual – Strategic practitioners (1, 4, 7, 9, 11).
- Contextual – Philosophic practitioners (2, 5).

Table 5.6 Goals by Individual Practitioner Organized by Approach

Practitioner Number	8	10	17	19	3	6	12	16	20	13	14	15	18	1	4	7	9	11	2	5
Not included	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Changes in Thinking																				
Problem-solving	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
New Learning	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Integrative Framing	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Attitude Change	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Changes in Relations																				
Validation and Reconceptualization of Identity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Security in Coexistence	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Improvements in Relational Climate	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Empathy	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Better Communication and New Language	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foundation for Transfer																				
Structures for Implementation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perceptions of Possibility	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
New Leadership	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Influential Participants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Empowerment	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Artifacts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Foundation for Outcome or Implementation																				
Reforms in Political Structures	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Political Input and Processes	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Networks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increased Capacity for Jointly Facing Future Challenges	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0

Table 5.7 Criteria for Success by Individual Practitioner Organized by Approach

Practitioner Number	8	10	17	19	3	6	12	16	20	13	14	15	18	1	4	7	9	11	2	5
Not included	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
Changes in Thinking																				
Problem-solving	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
New Learning	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Integrative Framing	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
Attitude Change	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Changes in Relations																				
Validation and Reconceptualization of Identity	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Security in Coexistence	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Improvements in Relational Climate	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Empathy	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Better Communication and New Language	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Foundation for Transfer																				
Structures for Implementation	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
Perceptions of Possibility	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
New Leadership	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Influential Participants	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Empowerment	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Artifacts	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Foundation for Outcome or Implementation																				
Reforms in Political Structures	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Political Input and Processes	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Networks	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Increased Capacity for Jointly Facing Future Challenges	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0

Conflict Resolution Practitioners

Comparison of individual conflict resolution practitioners' goals and criteria for success yields several interesting results. None of these practitioners explicitly revealed a goal of "an agreement" when discussing her case. Yet, three of the four in this category pointed to an agreement as evidence of success.

Two of the four conflict resolution practitioners had large misalignments between goals and criteria for success. In one case, for example, of the practitioner's initial six goals, only three were among the criteria for success. And, more noticeably, she articulated 10 additional criteria for success that were not encompassed by any of her original goals.

Most noticeably, two of the practitioners had very nearly aligned goals and criteria for success. In both cases, each had only two criteria for success that had not been previously articulated as goals. Of the same two practitioners, one had only one instance where an articulated goal was not matched to a criterion for success (it was Better Communication and New Language). The other practitioner had only four instances of goals that did not match a criterion for success.

Also, two practitioners had only one misaligned goal each (all but one goal matched a criterion for success).

Conflict Transformation Practitioners

A comparison of the goals and criteria for success of the five conflict transformation practitioners was also very interesting. In two cases, there were no misaligned goals with criteria for success (no examples of criteria that had not already

been articulated as goals), and in the other three cases, one had one misaligned goal, one had two misaligned goals, and one had four misaligned goals.

One practitioner in this category had a very large misalignment between criteria for success and goals, with 10 criteria being highlighted that did not have matching goals.

Three of the five practitioners had goals of Security in Coexistence, but did not discuss criteria for success related to this goal.

Contextual Practitioners

Overall, contextual practitioners were mixed. The pragmatic practitioners had reasonable congruence between goals and criteria for success. All of them had 1-3 instances where goals were not articulated as criteria for success. And there were 2-7 instances for each where criteria for success were not previously articulated as goals.

The strategic group of contextual practitioners also had a relatively small misalignment between goals and criteria for success. This group had one practitioner whose goals were all matched by stated criteria for success. In the other direction, however, his goals did not include four additional criteria for success. Two of the five strategic practitioners varied from their goals by only one criterion for success. However, two of the practitioners stated 9 and 10 more criteria for success than they had stated among their goals.

The criteria for success of the practitioners who were philosophically contextual aligned perfectly with stated goals. They were able to list 6 and 7 additional criteria for success beyond those goals, however.

Summary

Conflict resolution practitioners' statements of success were very well aligned with their goals and vice versa. The conflict transformation practitioners were also very well aligned.

Contextual practitioners' statements of criteria for success were reasonably aligned with their goals, varying only by small number (in most cases, one to four citations). As seemed congruent with the other two categories, they varied from three to ten criteria for success that had not previously been stated as goals.

The most surprising findings in this comparison were the four practitioners whose stated goals each matched a criterion for success. Of these four, two were conflict transformation practitioners. The other two practitioners were the philosophical practitioners whose stated goals for a case each matched a criterion for success articulated by the practitioner.

Discussion

How does this comparison of goals and criteria for success enhance our understanding of espoused theories and theories-in-use? In some ways, it doesn't help us very much. After all, there are many ways of explaining why congruences and incongruities might appear in a comparison of practitioner statements. Beyond the basic problems of short memory and desire to make a good impression, and the fact that the practitioners were talking about a specific case, it is truly difficult to draw conclusions from such a diverse yet small set of practitioners and interventions. On the surface, it is reassuring to see that most practitioners point to evidence of success in interventions that

match or nearly match the goals they articulated for the intervention. At a deeper level, this comparison again provides evidence that practitioners look far beyond the limited definitions of the various schools of thought for evidence of success.

To improve the helpfulness of this framework as an evaluative tool that compares goals and criteria for success, it should be part of the discussion when goals are set and when measurable criteria are selected for meeting goals.

Supporting Practitioners' Testimony

All practitioners interviewed were asked to identify at least three sources of evidence that supported their determination of success or failure in their specific intervention. Each practitioner was able to identify such evidence.

Describing Evidence Provided by Practitioners

The following list shows the types of evidence provided by each individual practitioner.

Organizational Promotional Documents

- #1
- #14
- #15
- #20

Organizational Reports (written and/or web-published)

- #2 (unavailable)
- #3
- #6
- #8 (funder report – no specific mention of intervenor)
- #12 (Web-published PDF of complete project – no specific mention of intervenor)
- #14 (technical report, no specific mention of intervenor)

Evaluation Documents

- #16 (not available)
- #17 (performance appraisal)

Private Conversations

- #2
- #10
- #19

Email or other Written Testimonials (including pictures)

- #6
- #9
- #11
- #16

Audiovisual or Print Media Accounts

- #4 (promotional video of intervention, after the fact)
- #5 (newspaper account -- this could not be found)
- #7 (newspaper account – no specifics of the intervention or intervenor)
- #13 (protected legal document)
- #14 (promotional video)
- #15 (radio story – no specific mention of intervenor)
- #18 (print news story – no specific mention of intervenor)

Organizational Promotional Documents or Organizational Reports

Some practitioners identified websites and other promotional materials that showed evidence of their work, that described or promoted their practice, or that documented organizational espoused theory (first two categories listed above). While many practitioners had this type of textual “corroboration”, very few of these sources provided direct evidence about the cases the practitioners described. In only one of the official reports, published on the web, was the individual practitioner named. In the other interviews listed in this category, the specific intervention discussed in the interview was not explicitly included in the publication.

Evaluations

Two practitioners identified evaluations to support their accounts of success. One did not. He said,

not in this case, no, uh in terms of supporting it wasn't successful. There's others where things that would have been more success where a, that comes through in evaluations. We always do evaluations. And b, would come through things like you know, a letter saying you know, expressing thanks for what we did, kind of that appreciation.

Gloria: So in this case, did you do an evaluation?

Interestingly, no. That's an interesting question. No, I haven't done an evaluation, partly because there was the possibility that I might get re-engaged and so in a sense it wasn't necessarily completed. But it's actually probably one of the things I should do when we get back, is go and get an evaluation, send out evaluations to the group.

Private Conversations, Email or other Written Testimonials

The nature of some of the practice of interviewees was private or confidential.

Direct information confirming success for four practitioners was not possible. For example, when I asked for evidence to support the practitioner's conclusion that the intervention had not succeeded, a practitioner stated,

Um, yeah. In some private conversations with leadership, they have said that we know what has what's needed here, uh it's just this is not the right time.

Another practitioner who ultimately did not provide supporting materials said,

Um, I got a few notes and letters and e-mails from from the county manager, um you know,

Gloria : And would those be something that you'd be willing to share with me, without names attached?

Um, if I find them, I mean, cause it's for me it's just it's like great, thanks, you're welcome.

Gloria: Right.

And you know, I don't print them, I don't save them. They don't do a whole lot, they don't, they don't do a whole lot for me.

Audiovisual or Print Media Accounts

Seven practitioners pointed to media accounts or publications that discussed their interventions. While these all provided evidence of organizational espoused theory, none of them was able to support judgments about specific interventions.

Failure

Three practitioners judged their interventions to be failures. Very few examples of failures were documented by further evidence. In other words, when a practitioner said, "This intervention was not a success," even though the practitioner could identify three sources of evidence to prove that it was not successful according to espoused theories or goals, there was very little hard evidence to support this.

Discussion

The documents provided did give evidence of organizational- and practitioner-espoused theory congruity. Several times, a practitioner pointed to lines on the promotional literature while explaining a certain idea or concept. However, not all promotional materials included all terms in use by practitioners. For example, one conflict transformation practitioner provided me with his organization's promotional document that did not include the term *conflict transformation*. It spoke of mediation and other intervention processes.

I also did careful web and library searches for evidence relating to each practitioner I interviewed. Many of these practitioners were not only practitioners, but scholars as well. Several had published books and articles, some had web-published articles and interviews, and several had blogs. All citations seemed to support practitioner claims. In only one case did a web search reveal a discrepancy between a practitioners' stated self-definition as part of the interview and a self-definition that appeared online.

Initially, I had high hopes for this type of secondary evidence to provide support of practitioner statements, and especially to help with the tricky task of comparing practitioners' espoused theories to their theories-in-use. In reality, practitioners rarely had documents or evidence at hand (even though they were informed of this request beforehand). Additionally, because practitioners could not be coerced to provide the evidence, few actually provided the requested evidence beyond their statements in the interview, and I did not press them.

Research Question 4: Effectiveness of ICR Framework?

This research question focused on whether or not the d'Estree, et al, framework for evaluating interactive conflict resolution could be useful as a comparative tool for research, comparing goals and criteria for success among practitioners. Overall, the framework was able to accommodate vast differences in outcome expectations (goals) and criteria for success (satisfactory outcomes).

Was the model successful in differentiating and comparing conflict resolution and conflict transformation? By providing a comprehensive framework for considering goals

and criteria for success, it did help in differentiating and comparing conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Because of its breadth, however, for it to be truly helpful, research and evaluation would need to be limited to a narrower range of intervention types.

There were several important areas not included in the criteria structure. In order for practitioners' ideas to fit fully within the framework, several categories or subcategories would need to be included. Ideas expressed but not covered by the framework came from practitioners in all categories (from conflict resolution, conflict transformation and contextual practitioners). There was no discernible pattern in the number or type of goals or criteria identified by practitioners that did not fit within the framework as presented.

Goals Not Included in the ICR Framework

The following goals articulated by practitioners could not be placed within any of the criteria provided by the ICR framework:

- Goal to be effective.
- Goal to satisfy the client or funder.
- Meet personal needs (including physical and practical).
- Flexibility of process to incorporate views of clients.
- To learn and understand the process model of the client.
- Testing own frameworks and processes for intervention.

Criteria for Success (or Desired Outcomes) not Included in the ICR Framework

The following criteria for success (or desired outcomes) expressed by practitioners from all categories could not be put into the ICR framework:

- Practitioner goals for testing own frameworks or procedures and processes (including practitioner goals of training new people, mentoring students, etc.).

- Getting to the table (getting the parties to come together, to meet face-to-face and other pre-negotiation activities).
- The parties “kicked out” the mediators, but they reached an agreement anyway.
- Personal reasons (feeling of personal effectiveness, satisfaction or pride, feelings about how the intervention went based on personal observation).
- Referrals to the practitioner of other clients seeking services.
- Requests for speaking or presentations based on the intervention.
- Getting funding.
- De-escalated a violent, destructive situation.
- That people felt good about or liked, or were satisfied with the workshop, the process, the intervention, etc.
- The client was happy (even if the client was not a conflicting party, the client was a stakeholder).
- The agreement was sound in terms of the general public, in the public interest, and for the greater public good.
- Giving up other adversarial methods of handling conflict (dropping lawsuits, etc.). While this was implicit in some of the options (like changes in relations), there was not an actual category where this fit well. But, this was a key criterion of success (no matter what else happened) for many of the practitioners interviewed.
- My personal favorite: *“They were all very awake and animated for the session.”* I didn’t have a category called The Participants Stayed Awake.

Despite the fact that some ideas were not represented within the ICR Framework, the framework did provide a way of comparing a lot of data on goals and criteria for success from conflict resolution and the conflict transformation practitioners.

Does this framework allow for comparisons across interventions and across fields of endeavor? Though this question was part of the guiding questions, it seems to go beyond the scope of this study. There was simply not a large enough sample to compare practitioners from different practice areas and levels for this to have a discernible conclusion.

One overarching point from this research is clear, if researchers and practitioners are to use the ICR framework as an evaluative tool, then it should be accompanied by a

goal setting process that not only specifies goals, but also establishes the methods for measuring the criteria selected to determine “success.”

Conclusion

The findings described in this chapter were derived from practitioners’ statements and descriptions of their practice. The findings were organized into responses to the guiding research questions on Practitioners’ Definitions, Practitioners’ theories of practice (Goals and Intervention Strategies), and Practitioners’ Criteria for Success. The chapter also considered several additional questions embedded in practitioners’ theories of practice. The chapter ended with a discussion of effectiveness of the Interactive Conflict Resolution Evaluation framework as a research tool.

The concluding chapter of this work will restate the key findings of this chapter, along with considerations for theory and practice as well as future research.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Introduction

The preceding five chapters of this dissertation provided background and scholarly literature for comparison, methodology, interview findings, and discussion of the key question guiding the research: Do practitioners' definitions, theories of practice (goals, intervention strategies, and criteria for success) depend upon their identification with either a conflict resolution or a conflict transformation approach to conflict intervention? This final chapter has four areas: summary of key findings, limitations of the study, implications for theory and practice, and future research.

Summary of Key Findings

Two Schools of Thought

Chapter Two provides an overview of the body of scholarly literature that supports the field of conflict resolution as a distinct approach to conflict intervention. The overview includes some issues in dispute and areas where there is continuing debate. Despite confusing and competing definitions and claims, there also appears to be an emerging and growing body of literature that supports a conflict transformation school of thought.

Practitioner Self-Categorization

Findings related to practitioner self-categorization are based on practitioners' use of the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* to describe their practice during the research interview. Practitioners can be clearly separated into two distinct categories of practice called conflict resolution and conflict transformation, as defined by the practitioners themselves using those terms discretely and exclusively. Of these practitioners, those who used *conflict resolution* exclusively typically described their work as problem-solving and providing a process for handling conflict. Practitioners who used the term conflict transformation exclusively to describe their practice talked of social change at personal, relational, structural or societal levels.

Other practitioners not in these two groups identified themselves differently depending upon the context in which they are using the terms. In this study, these “contextual” practitioners used the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* in three distinct ways: pragmatically, strategically, and philosophically.

There was a clear group of practitioners who used both terms pragmatically. These practitioners chose terms depending upon the context of their use (rather than for some ideological, theoretical, or philosophical) reason. Typically, they chose words they knew to be understandable to their clients or colleagues, or words that seemed fashionable or applicable, inclusive, or attractive to funders.

To my mind, the most significant finding of this study is the clear differentiation between practitioners who used the two terms strategically and those who used the same

terms exclusively. These two groups also tended to define the terms differently (see discussion below).

Practitioner Definitions of Terms

Practitioner definitions of conflict resolution and conflict transformation featured interesting common traits and negative comparisons. Practitioners self-identifying with conflict resolution defined that term as problem-solving. However, the strategic practitioners defined conflict resolution as ending something. Some of these practitioners used *conflict resolution* or *dispute resolution* to describe problem-solving and agreement seeking strategies. None of the practitioners who used conflict resolution exclusively spoke of conflict resolution as ending something.

In the same way, the strategic practitioners defined conflict transformation as an approach for working toward changes in relationships or people. Philosophical practitioners also defined conflict transformation in this way. Practitioners who used the term *conflict transformation* exclusively to describe their practice, however, did not focus solely on relational aspects of conflict intervention. These practitioners included problem-solving in their practice.

It's important to notice that two of the practitioners who used terms pragmatically used the term *conflict transformation* to describe their work some of the time. The distinction between practitioners using this term in four different ways (exclusively, pragmatically, strategically and philosophically) helps explain some of the tension in the field (see the discussion on self-categorization and identity later in this chapter).

Theories of Practice (Goals, Intervention Strategies, and Criteria for Success)

Goals of practice seemed to be shared across practitioner distinctions. The most interesting finding related to practitioner goals was the large number of goals shared by practitioners across schools of thought and contextual approaches. Nine of the practitioners interviewed shared goals for problem-solving, half shared New Learning as a goal, and nine shared a goal for Improvements in Relational Climate. These practitioner goals appear across the various types, even with some conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners sharing goals of Problem-solving (problem focused), and some sharing goals of Improvements in Relational Climate (relationship focused). Though these two ideas are identified by the practitioners as belonging to separate schools of thought, they seem to be widely shared as goals.

Practitioners in all categories seemed to see the same basic processes and intervention strategies. Practitioners across categories shared the use of basic processes of nonviolent conflict intervention (notably mediation, facilitation, and training). All practitioners interviewed shared the basic strategies of helping conflict parties to engage each other face-to-face. Other intervention strategies differed, but each of the five groups of practitioners identified in this study shared strategies for problem-solving, changing relationships, and encouraging ownership and participation. All practitioners, regardless of how they defined themselves in relation to the field, spoke of Improving Communication. Fifteen of twenty practitioners referred to providing process as an intervention strategy. Twelve of the twenty practitioners interviewed talked about encouraging dialogue, dialogue processes, or helping dialogue to happen. Overall, there

was little distinction in processes and intervention strategies among conflict resolution practitioners or among those who used conflict transformation to describe their practice.

For both conflict transformation practitioners and strategic/philosophic practitioners, though they define conflict transformation as personal change, or change in relationships, their intervention strategies did not explicitly focus on relationship change. And though problem-solving was included in the definition of conflict resolution by most practitioners, every one of the conflict transformation practitioners also included problem-solving strategies.

Criteria for success reflect practitioner goals and are also shared across categories. Of the twenty practitioners, fifteen noted that their intervention was successful because of improvements in clients' relationships (or Improvements in Relational Climate). These findings confirm that practitioners across approaches share criteria for success related to relationship change. In addition, for nine of the Criteria for Success categories, approximately half of the practitioners (9, 10, or 11 each) referred to evidence to support those criteria. That large number of categories, shared by half of all practitioners interviewed, supports practitioner similarity across criteria for success.

It is important to highlight here that in all three areas -- goals, intervention strategies and criteria for success -- conflict resolution practitioners included or incorporated relationship issues along with problem-solving in their practice. And in all three areas, some of the conflict transformation practitioners included problem-solving as goals, had intervention strategies that included problem-solving, or had problem-solving as one criterion for success.

Evaluating the ICR Framework as a Research Tool

The ICR framework did easily allow me to plot and compare practitioner goals and criteria for success. It also provided a broad but precise conceptual framework within which to fit data. The breadth of this framework; however, while inclusive of most of the generated data, made comparisons very difficult beyond a direct comparison of one practitioner to another.

The goal of the d'Estree team was to use the framework to make informed statements about the relative strengths and challenges of different approaches to intervention, thus contributing to theory development and the improvement of practice (d'Estree, 2001). With a greater amount of resources, such a goal might be achievable; however, that was beyond the scope of this study.

Limitations of Study

Before considering the application implications of this study for theory and practice, as well as future research, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The clarity provided of definitions held by practitioners as well as the articulation of theories of practice as a clear path from goals, through intervention strategies to criteria for success must be weighed against the following limitations of the study.

As an exploratory/descriptive study, this study was very broad and generated diverse data because of the broad sample and diversity of practitioners. Though additional data was generated by the interviews, and though there are other questions of

interest, this study was intentionally limited to specific research questions to keep the amount of data manageable.

In addition, though there are other terms used to describe the field of nonviolent conflict intervention, this study was intentionally limited to comparisons between conflict resolution and conflict transformation. It should be noted that this study did not attempt to compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of these two schools of thought in conflict intervention, but rather to provide descriptive data.

One potential weakness that may also be a strength is the heavy reliance on interviews for data collection. Though the research design included options for data triangulation through text documents and secondary interviews, these were not required; and though practitioners could identify sources of evidence to support their statements, in the end, very few followed through with requests for those documents. Where participants provided documents, or documents were available through the internet, triangulation of data did strengthen results in some areas (such as practitioner claims of success supported by others).

Another limitation of the research that may prohibit generalized application of the findings is the construction of the interview to generate practitioners' discussion on one or two specific cases. This gave depth and richness to the specific details practitioners were able to recall and share. It also allowed them to move away from espoused theories (what their goals would/should be) to theories-in-use (what their strategies and criteria for success were). However, the actual goals, strategies and criteria for success that each

practitioner might draw from, for example, might include a greater range than was shared for one specific case.

Ultimately, the dissertation research was constrained by the researcher's available time and ability to travel. Participant observation or field studies of actual practitioner behavior might have yielded stronger results related to comparisons of espoused theories versus theories-in-use, but such a study was outside the constraints of time and money available.

Implications for Theory and Practice

As an exploratory study, this project scratched the surface of an area in which I am deeply interested -- that of identity formation in relation to profession and the specific theories of practice of practitioners in the field.

My strong desire in doing this research was not to draw lines, to say that one way was better than another, or to evaluate individuals' practice. But rather, my goal has been to uncover areas of complementarity²⁰, areas of contrast, and to work to clarify terms. I have been concerned with the pejorative use of terms or simply denigration of practitioners or certain types of practice based on judgments of others' goals and criteria for success.

This research study showed a surprising similarity of processes and intervention strategies in use among practitioners from across the field, regardless of how they defined their practice in relation to the terms *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*. This

²⁰ For other discussions of complementarity, see Allen Nan (1999) and Barkat (2002).

similarity of practice, but differentiation in terminology, forces us to look at the question of identity as it relates to our own profession.

Self-Identity and Profession

This study was intended to elicit the words and descriptions that practitioners use to talk about themselves and their practice. In the scholarly literature, this type of self-definition is explored within the body of social identity theories of social psychology and the subcategory of self-categorization theory.

Whatever the exact nature of the use of terms, some of the wrangling and conflict in the field among both practitioners and scholars about what terms should be used and how precisely they should be defined reflects the great importance that words and their definitions have for expressions of self and group identity. Someone choosing a term to describe him/herself based on deeply held values about how intervention should be done can have this identity threatened by others who choose the same term to describe a very different or specific set of processes or goals for a strategic purpose.

Someone who views her practice broadly as *conflict resolution* may not like that others define *conflict resolution* as ending a conflict. Those motivated to use the term *conflict transformation* by an ideal of broad social change, for example, might be offended by someone choosing the same term to describe a more limited strategic process of relationship work or someone using the term pragmatically with little specific meaning.

This concept of identity and social change in relation to our field of nonviolent conflict intervention was discussed by Scimecca (1991) in his contribution to *Conflict Resolution: Cross Cultural Perspectives*. He wrote,

The more our devotion to our work is based on our beliefs that we are part of a force for social change, the harder it is to look at the limitations of what we offer. Criticisms of our field and its relationship to social change can threaten our sense of identity, and therefore we have an urge to discount these.”

Here Scimecca was writing about how our identities might be threatened because of criticism of our work. I also believe, and this study seems to confirm, that some of the angst that conflict resolution and conflict transformation practitioners may feel in relation to how the field is defined may be a result of identity threat.

The initial findings about practitioners and their self-identified led me back to a review of the relevant literature in social psychology dealing with self-identification, self-categorization and social identity theory. With the great interest in social identity theory and its relationship to conflict in the last decades, I thought it appropriate to apply the theory to the field of practice of nonviolent conflict intervention. It helps to explain the strong feelings that practitioners experience when they are forced to define themselves and their practice in relationship to others.

Social Identity Theory

An accepted definition of social identity theory “is the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership” (Tajfel, 1972). Abrams and Hogg put this another way, “Social identity is self-conception as a group member ” (Abrams, 1990).

The difference between personal and social identity can be determined by assessing personal and social traits. Tajfel described personal traits to include such things as psychological qualities, body features, intelligence, personal preferences, and feelings about oneself. These personal traits are typically part of self-identity as individual cognitive constructs. Social identity on the other hand, is composed of characteristics that confirm an individual's connection to a formal or informal group (See Hogg, 2006, for example). These can include characteristics such as sex, race, nationality, and religion for example (Tajfel, 1972). Kelly's "core constructs" of the self are more than cognitive self-perception, they represent all aspects of human experience (1955). These core constructs claims Northrup (1989), are "of particular import for organizing a person's approach to life and to the roles he or she plays (the sense of self)." Northrup claims that these core constructs cannot be changed without disturbing our central sense of self.

These definitions of social identity help us understand why it is important for individuals to belong to groups with which they share a collective identity and purpose.

Theories of Identity and Conflict within the Field

Northrup argues that self-identity,

... is not static. Rather, it is in constant relationship with the world – with people, things, time, and space. Some aspects of identity may change as experience is gained, but the core sense of self is relatively stable, as the individual attempts to maintain it in order to retain a sense of the world as a predictable place. If the events of one's life in relationship to the world invalidate, or threaten to invalidate, the core sense of identity, then the individual or group will respond energetically to attempt to maintain the identity (1989).

Most of us are familiar with this argument in relationship to groups in conflict. I put forward that in perhaps a less violent (less destructive) way, self-categorization is happening within our field of conflict intervention as different actors define and re-define terms used to describe the field in ways that do not “invalidate, or threaten to invalidate, the core sense of identity.” Depending upon one’s definition of *energetically*, I believe it can be argued that the fight over definitions in our field are attempts by practitioners and scholars to maintain identity in relation to social change, and maintain personal values and beliefs about that.

It is this idea that helps me understand why some of the practitioners in this study needed to re-define terms or choose new terms (*peaceful resolution, accompaniment, conflict engagement*) with which to describe their personal practice in the field in order to help them feel secure in their identity (as a conflict resolvers, problem-solvers, peacebuilders, conflict transformers or what-have-you).

Identity and Profession

In the same way that the broad field of nonviolent conflict intervention looks to identity theories to help describe and explain conflict (Kriesberg, 1989; Northrup, 1989), theories of self- identity can also be applied to the field of professional conflict intervention practice to help us understand how practitioners and organizations identify themselves within the field and why²¹.

Whereas in conflict analysis, group identity constructs typically assume that a group has a common sense of identity, and that the identity is being threatened in some

²¹ For a discussion of professional identity formation in the legal field, see Sommerlad (2007).

way; this is not necessarily the case when people are joining a group that is forming. The field of nonviolent conflict intervention is a professional social group that encompasses a wide variety of individuals, philosophies and approaches.

Bourdieu's theoretical model of professional work shows the division of society into semi-autonomous social “fields”. “Conceived of as a social space with distinct, objective properties, a field is organized around behaviors and practices which are strongly patterned by traditions” (Bourdieu, 1990).

For Bourdieu, these traditions,

form part of a field’s *doxa*, that is, the tacit, unexamined, taken-for-granted pre-suppositions which produce the field’s *habitus* and determine its cultural practice. An internalized scheme, *habitus* is the habitual, patterned and thus pre-reflexive way of understanding and enacting the social field (1990).

Thus, self-identity as part of a professional field, in which one is trained and developed, involves ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu would say “habitation to a discursive and symbolic field”), or embodying the field’s culture and recognizing and complying with the demands of that discipline (or institution). In a broad professional field without specific membership or certification regulations, such as the field of nonviolent conflict intervention, this compliance with tacit membership rules may be enforced only by the rigors of *reputation*.

Professional identities become important to people, and are most likely to be claimed or expressed in contexts where they are known and personally identifiable. Interpersonal comparison then happens within a network of professional acquaintances. A person cannot have a *reputation* (professional or otherwise) unless he or she is a

participant in a community of people who share expectations of practice. Emler (1990) says that,

If reputations have no existence outside of communities, they also have no meaning except in relation to social identities. Many, if not most, significant social identities reflect moral traditions and social practices (MacIntyre, 1985) which extend beyond particular communities; they are properties and products of cultures. The culture is always present in the reputational community, most obviously in a shared language which provides categories and associated meanings. But these cannot be reduced to the actions and experiences of any single community's current members (Emler, 1990).

Abbott, in *The System of Professions*, defines professional arenas as systems with jurisdiction. He says,

New professions start by external force opening or closing areas for jurisdiction and by existing or new professions seeking new ground. Whether begun by vacancies or bumps, the changes lead to chains of disturbances that propagate through the system until absorbed either by the professionalization or deprofessionalization of some group or by absorption within the internal structure of one or more existing professions (1988).

I thought this discussion interesting, especially because the field of nonviolent conflict intervention is not very old. I offer his comments here as a way of helping us think about the “bumps” that we in conflict resolution/transformation are encountering in this emerging field of practice, as we move toward the professionalization of our group. The jockeying for terms and definitions that clearly define our practice is but one of those bumps along the way.

I hope that practitioners will recognize that we share strategies, goals and criteria for success. Other practitioners can be our closest allies in our work. Therefore practitioners as well as academics, trainers, and researchers should be cautious about language which privileges certain ideas over others.

Implications for Future Research

The clearest avenue of future research demanded by this study is exploratory, descriptive and explanatory inquiry into strategic uses of terms in the field. As this study is concluding, I am already working with students on a quantitative inquiry into conflict transformation practice to confirm (or disconfirm) these findings. The study underway is expected to reveal clearer distinctions between conflict transformation as an overarching school of thought and conflict transformation as a strategic approach to practice. I am eager to distinguish definitions, goals, strategies and criteria for success for the population of practitioners who use the term *conflict transformation* in any way to describe their practice.

I am also very interested in developing more research to consider professional identity in our field as it relates to goals, intervention strategies and criteria for success, as well as digging more deeply into the espoused theory versus theories-in-use of these various schools of thought. I hope to do research on practitioner motivations for their work, including the ways in which faith or religious identification inform practice.

This study collected a huge range of variables that might affect *why* a practitioner might self-identify with one of the approaches in the field, including personal factors such as education, connection to schools of thought or practitioners or scholars, personal motivation for the work (faith-based vs. income generating, etc.). Though it was not the purpose of this study to provide clarification of these types of variables, there are interesting distinctions and descriptions to be found in future research. I also echo Christopher Mitchell's call for future research to clarify variables. In his essay on

resolution and transformation (2002), Mitchell argues that the idea of “relationship” is ambiguous so that a real scholarly effort needs to be made to clarify what that term means and how intervention might cause it to change or affect its characteristics.

Finally, I share the argument that the d’Estree framework may help to illuminate the debate about evaluation of success in conflict interventions. Comparisons between practitioners and across types of interventions will help us to continue developing the “best fit” for every contingency. Continued research on goals and criteria for success is needed to help practitioners increase their “sense of accomplishment, increase their coordination and decrease their competition, and guard against unrealistic expectations of interventions.” D’Estree continues that “This will help define success and legitimize the claims of accomplishment that intervenors often make. Finally, recognizing that each intervention has its own particular strengths contributes to the potential complementarity of interventions” (2001).

Conclusion

In the same way that this study began, I conclude with a smattering of questions I’m still pondering. Do differences in terminology matter? -- Even when they reflect identity concerns? In leading an introductory training on conflict transformation at the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University in 2007, I was reminded of the real problems that theoretical and philosophical differences cause. One of my participants, with obvious emotion, shared about a conflict that was happening in his organization over what its name would be.

There was a great deal of tension, he reported, between those who wanted to keep *conflict resolution* as part of the name, and those who wanted to change it to *conflict transformation*. He was deeply pained to have to make this decision. To me, at the time, this was no less an identity conflict than those in Iraq, Kosovo, and the former Yugoslavia that we had been discussing that week. I remember saying that our colleagues in this field (of consensual nonviolent approaches to conflict), regardless of what they call themselves, should be our strongest allies.

For me, this brings up a serious question of how we, the field, might envision an umbrella (be it peacebuilding or some other term) that could encompass all our work in a way that respects the various motivations for our work. Could we develop a framework in which the work of conflict managers, dispute resolvers, conflict transformers, and peacebuilders co-exist in a complex web of integrated action? An attempt at such an umbrella has been articulated by Lisa Schirch in her *Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding* (2004) and others (Reychler, 2001). Could the field expand its own circle of influence by expanding its self-definition?

Though I fear that I have only contributed to the debate, I hope that this work will also contribute to rapprochement (or renewal of friendly relations) between people who seem to be gathering as a larger family under some, as yet, unnamed umbrella in the field.

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