

RETHINKING CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND THE ROLE OF THE THIRD PARTY

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IN BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE

Protracted conflicts:

- Most of conflicts ended by third party intervention but post-conflict societies remain in between war and peace (Why?)

Intractable conflicts

- that resist all efforts of conflict resolution

Criticism toward peace building interventions

- Mechanist belief on management of complex conflicts
- Depoliticization of conflict resolution and the myth of impartiality
- Ignoring identities, memory and emotions

Need for rethinking peace-building / conflict resolution

New approaches to understanding of conflict

- Antagonistic identities and ontological security
- Radical disagreement

New Approach to Conflict Transformation

- Agonistic peace
- Dialogic transformation
- Agonistic dialogue and strategic discourses
- The role of the third party

Implications to peacemaking practice?

IDENTITIES & RADICAL DISAGREEMENT

ANTAGONISTIC IDENTITIES

“Conflict does not simply arise out of the competition of mutually exclusive goods but rather is a part of the (re)production of identities whose articulation turn produces conflict. This often expressed through myths and memories which provide the ground from which identity is drawn and which narrate the tale of the other as enemy and threat.”
(Susanne Buckley-Zistel)

Antagonistic identities are the core issue of conflict

- Identity-based conflicts draw on discourses of historical enmity, hatred and insecurity, which trigger basic existential fears of group survival.
- In post-war situations, contradicting narratives on how to remember (and forget) the past sustain the conflict.
- Emotional loaded roles of victim and perpetrator

ONTOLOGICAL (IN)SECURITY

Ontological insecurity (Critical security studies):

- Acting through a clear-cut friend–enemy distinction, while it might generate threats to physical security and economic well-being, can in certain cases offer ontological security, i.e. strengthen and reproduce group identity

RADICAL DISAGREEMENT (OLIVER RAMSBOTHAM)

Radical disagreement is the chief linguistic manifestation of intense and intractable political conflict.

Radical disagreement

- "Radical disagreement are conflicts of belief 'in its broadest sense'.
- This is not a coexistence of rival discourses, but a fight to the death to impose the one discourse.
- Not theorised enough neither notices in conflict resolution
- Crucial for changing intractable conflicts but also in conflict prevention

CRITICISM

Current conflict resolution emphasizes interests, not emotions and identities

- According to the prevailing facilitation practices antagonism is tried to solve before a true dialogue can start, and they are not seen as an issue for the dialogue. Deiniol Lloyd-Jones

The presupposition that identities exist and are meaningful mislead to suppose of uniformity of identities and hides their contingent nature. (Myth of primordial identities)

- Politics of identities is part of warfare
- Also peacebuilders use power of categorization

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

AGONISTIC PEACE

Instead of resolving conflict focus on violence

- “The normative aim of conflict resolution is not to overcome conflict. Conflict cannot be overcome – it is an unavoidable feature of social development”
Ramsbotham
- The idea of agonistic peace based an assumption that conflict is the definitive feature of politics. (Rosemary Shinko)

FROM RESOLUTION TO TRANSFORMATION

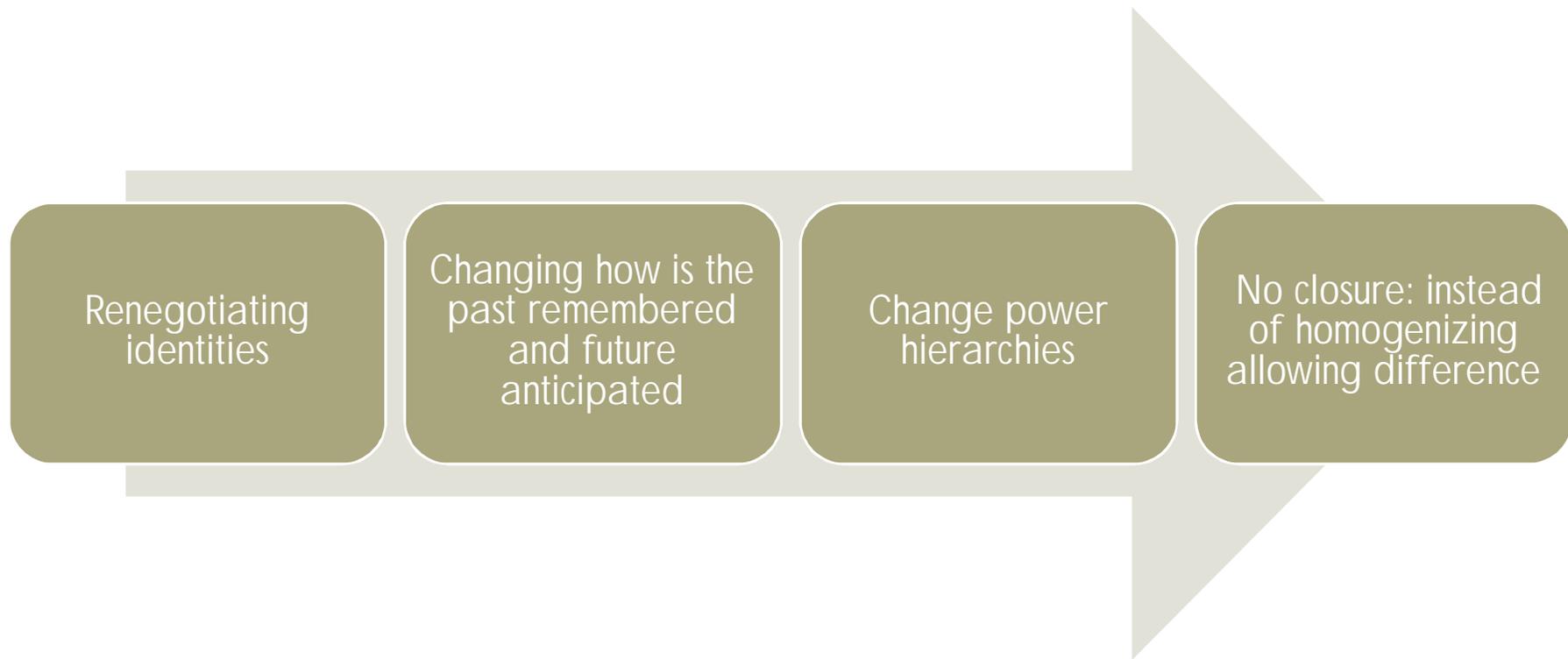
Transform violent conflict into non-violent conflict

From antagonism into agonism, from enemies to adversaries.

What delineates adversaries from enemies are the relational aspect of respect

Require mutual understanding (dialogue) but not harmony

TRANSFORMATION OF CONFLICT (BUCKLEY-ZISTEL):



TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Conflict transformation requires that we pay attention

- to the complicated history, inequitable economic conditions and complex external and internal political dynamics that have shaped the conflict.
- to how the granting and withholding of recognition and respect are embedded in those very same economic, political, and social structures.

No closure (transformation instead of solution):

- Peace is also political and vested in the outcome of the strategic interplay of relations of power.
- Compromise is always only a temporary pause.

DIALOGUE

Current models of mediation and dialogue are based on problem solving – resolution seeking workshops

- Bakhtinian dialogic theory may fit better to conflict resolution.
- Problem finding dialogue that emphasizes listening (Bakhtinian dialogue)
- It escapes the idea of closure and instead the aim is to drive conversation forward.

RADICAL DISAGREEMENT (RAMSBOTHAM)

But what if dialogue for mutual understanding is not possible: Agonistic dialogue – dialogue between enemies

Uncovering the moments of radical disagreeing:

- Ask conflict parties to explain what they are saying.
- It is gateway
- Goal: lowering agonistic dialogue

Dialogue for strategic engagement

- Resulting strategic engagement of discourses
- Intra- and inter-party
- Strategic ends and strategic means

THIRD PARTY

Need for third party – it is often only a third party that can break the deadlock

They are not neutral or impartial because there is no room for that.

- Third-party peacemakers find that they, too, are part of the struggle, seeking to transform the agonistic dialogue by substituting a third discourse of their own.
- Third-party held also power of shaping identities
- If peace is political, so it peacemaking.

UKRAINE

Overlapping conflict complexes and formations:

- Ukrainian government vs Donetsk / Luhansk rebel areas
- Ukraine – Russia
- EU/West - Russia

Identity is a core of conflict

- Need for dialogue as prevention and as transforming conflict