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Assessing the State-of-the-Art in Conflict Transformation

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1. Introduction

The following analysis aims to provide some direction through the jungle of conceptual and definitional imprecision that is prevalent in the overall field of conflict management and conflict transformation. At best, the following description suggests one possible, and hence tentative, interpretation of what may be regarded as the state-of-the-art. In any case, the author‘s comments remain more indicative than comprehensive.

The guiding question in this analysis is how to map out conceptually and theoretically the fields of conflict management and conflict transformation. This question will be discussed in the context of the conflict management field with reference to three possible approaches: conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation (*see* Figure 1).

Before venturing any further in the task, it is necessary to make some introductory remarks. First, despite, or perhaps even due to, its innate multidisciplinary nature, the overall field of conflict management is fraught with conceptual and definitional imprecision. In most of the academic literature, the terms *conflict management*, *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation* are often used loosely and interchangeably, in many cases referring to the same strategies. Similarly, one may also come across the term mediation to cover all different forms of third-party intervention. In short „non-uniform terminology“ (Ropers 1997; p5) 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.

The term conflict management 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.

Second, most recognised scholars bring to the field of conflict management expertise drawn both from academia and from actual conflict management practice. As a consequence, most defy easy classification and their work does not fall exclusively into one category.

Third, despite the complexity of the different approaches, the research community of conflict management has done little in the last thirty years to attempt state-of-the-art reviews or even to stress the interdisciplinary nature of the field by providing usable introductory textbooks (one of the few exceptions may be Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999).

Fourth, the research on individual and group conflict management, like community mediation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR), has had a major impact on conflict management in international relations. Moreover, given the quality of most current violent, protracted conflicts, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish conflict management in internal domestic conflict and external international conflict. These conflicts are protracted to the extent that the crisis usually patterns itself around the social and political make-up of different groups, drawing its characteristics from their language, religion, clan affiliation, political and social identity and structure. Thus, to

some extent the following analysis of protracted conflicts in the international arena may also hold true for inter-group conflict management carried out at other social levels.

To give the following analysis a useful framework, I will first focus on the research agenda and research questions, and then move forward to review the role of theory and research methods.

2. Research Agenda / Research Questions

The general field of conflict management as theory and practice is best understood as a thoroughly complex, multidisciplinary study area of a wide variety of disciplines including international law, psychology, philosophy, socio-biology, international relations, conflict/peace research, political science, economics and social anthropology. As in the case of international relations and peace research, there is no one predominant, legitimate subject matter. This should hardly be surprising given not only the broad scope of the field, but also its focus on conflict and its management as a generic social phenomenon from the inter-personal through to the international levels.

In the past, research has largely been devoted to the analysis of contextual and process variables concerning inter-personal, inter-group and international conflicts, such as the *sources* and *nature of the conflict*, as well as *third-party characteristics and strategies* that may be conducive to better conflict management. (*See*, for instance, Bercovitch and Rubin 1992, pp1-29). This can be illustrated by looking briefly at the principal debates that have taken place around these issues for the last thirty years.

2.1 Sources and Nature of Conflict

Until recently, research into the sources and nature of conflict has usually centred around two ontological strands: the *subjectivist* and the *objectivist* approach. The subjectivist approach to conflict focuses primarily on the perceived incompatibility of goals. The essential implications of this are, first, many goals are subjectively perceived as incompatible, whereas from an objective point of view they can be thoroughly compatible. This may be due to misinformation, cultural misunderstanding, or misperceptions such as stereotypes, mistrust and emotional stress. Second, structurally unfair or unjust relationships are often not recognised while at least one of the parties involved fails to perceive their own dependence and unequal treatment by the other. This can be exemplified by the phenomenon of the ‚happy slave'.

It is exactly with the latter situation that the objectivist approach is concerned. It seeks the origins of conflict in the social and political make-up and structure of society. Here, the crucial point is that conflict can exist independently of the perceptions of the parties involved. The conflict/peace researcher, Schmid, gives the example of a class conflict which „…is not a conflict because the classes have incompatible goals, fight each other, and hate each other. . . [but rather] a conflict because the social structure is such that one class loses what the other class wins" (Schmid 1968, p226).

Despite this, the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, in the end, says little of analytical value. The ‚objective' observer, in labelling the structure of a system as conflictual or violent contrary to the perception of the parties involved, is making a subjective interpretation. This is based on his or her own subjective values and criteria as to what constitutes a conflict in the first instance. Accordingly, the objectivist approach cannot be deemed value-free, as it only reflects „another subjective assessment of the situation […] by some third party rather than by the participants" (Mitchell 1991, p221).

As the current realities of protracted, ethno-national conflicts are considered, it seems evident that most of these are best explained as dynamic processes involving a mixture of subjective features (such as identities, needs and interests) and – supposedly – objective, structural ones (such as unequal distribution of resources). Consequently, any exclusive reliance on either a subjectivist or objectivist framework will prove insufficient to capture the nuances of the conflict. With regard to the practice of conflict management, it appears safe to say that some conflict management approaches may, even if more implicitly than explicitly, effectively bridge the theoretical divide between subjectivity and objectivity. This is achieved through the combination of different conflict management strategies, for example, conflict settlement strategies, such as *power mediation*, and conflict resolution strategies, exemplified by facilitation or dialogue workshops. The quality and quantity of these combined methods are highly dependent on the conflict stage within which they are employed.

2.2 Third-party Characteristics

Concurrent with the recurring debate on the sources and nature of conflict, there have been extensive discussions among theoreticians and practitioners concerning the characteristics of third parties. This is especially applicable to the issue of his or her impartiality and neutrality. In the past, academics and practitioners were evenly split on the question of how far the notion of impartiality/ neutrality achieves and explains an outcome of third party intervention that is considered to be successfull (*see* contribution of Ron Fisher on the website version of this Handbook).

Given the nature of most global intra-state conflicts, it seems appropriate not to treat notions of impartiality and partiality as mutually exclusive characteristics of third parties, but rather to focus on their somewhat ambivalent and complementary nature.

On the one hand, *impartiality* of third parties seems to be essential especially when those parties lack the leverage necessary to reach a successful outcome to the dispute. An illustrative example can be the informal mediation efforts of the Quakers, private individuals and of scholars-practitioners. On the other hand, partiality of the third party may prove to be key when this leverage is present (Kleiboer 1996, p372). Here, the role of the superpower, USA, as third party in most Middle East peace talks comes immediately to mind.

Having said that, the development of procedures for conflict management should not be regarded as static or rigid, but rather as dynamic features that must be easily adapted to the changing framework conditions. As this analysis will show, it is paramount to effectively contextualise the different means of conflict intervention such as facilitation or conciliation on the one hand, and power mediation on the other. This becomes even more important and challenging when considering the multiple and diverse involvement of Track I, II and III actors in most intractable and deep-rooted conflicts. The next section will draw attention to these activities.

2.3 Third-party Strategies

What exactly do we mean by the terms *Track I*, *Track II* and the more recent addition, *Track III* (*outlined in* Box 1)? In the past attention has focused primarily on the differences in substance and emphasis between Track I as conflict settlement strategies and Track II as conflict resolution strategies. While Track I was mainly reserved for the official and formal activities of diplomatic and governmental actors, Track II referred largely to more informal and unofficial efforts by other non-governmental parties.

Track I activities range from official and non-coercive measures, such as good offices, fact-finding missions, facilitation, negotiation/mediation and peacekeeping, to more coercive

measures, such as power-mediation, sanctions, peace-enforcement and arbitration. (See Ron Fisher's article on the website version of this volume, for a good discussion of the changing nature of peacekeeping, as well as that of Hansen, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse in this volume).

In contrast to Track I, Track II refers to all non-official and non-coercive activities, illustrated by facilitation or consultation (occasionally, one comes across the more general term mediation in reference either to facilitation or to consultation). Generally, these are conducted in the form of problem-solving workshops or round table discussions.

This distinction between Tracks I and II further suggests that there will be striking differences in strategies employed. Although, the strategies are different in emphasis, it seems clear that in most third-party interventions Track I and II strategies go hand in hand and, in many instances, will be purposely combined. In practice, conflict settlement measures, such as mediation by Track I actors, may actually be mirrored with conflict resolution strategies, such as the facilitation/consultation by Track II actors. The crucial point is that some features of both Tracks may not only complement one another, but also overlap in both theory and practice. A good example of this is the conflict management effort in Northern Ireland during the early 1990s: David Bloomfield (1997) has illustrated just how far conflict settlement efforts on Track I, by the British Secretary of State of Northern Ireland, overlapped with the Track II conflict resolution work of the Community Relations Council.

Conflict settlement should not be understood as a necessary pre-condition for conflict resolution. Experience has shown, for example, that, if negotiations on Track I become embroiled in a deadlock, unofficial and informal fora in the form of facilitation and problem-solving workshops (Track II) may not only be initiated or continued, but also helpful in producing a breakthrough.

This can be illustrated by the back-channel, conflict resolution process in Norway that eventually led to a framework for conflict settlement and subsequently a negotiated agreement between the Israeli government and the PLO in 1993 (*see* Lederach 1997, pp32-34; Corbin 1994). In this process, a Norwegian scholar and his wife hosted and facilitated these secret talks in 1992 between Israeli and Palestinian officials, each of whom enjoyed top-level access while maintaining their independence. The attainment of a reasonably cooperative relationship between these two adversarial parties, before the actual start of the formal negotiations, proved to be not only crucial to the success of the negotiation process itself, but also clearly illustrated the rather limited potential of conflict settlement strategies such as power mediation/bargaining, when they are attempted in isolation. The underlying assumption lurking behind this analysis is that very few conflict management strategies will be fully effective by an exclusive reliance on either a Track I or Track II framework.

Since the early 1990s an appropriate analytical focus on inter-relatedness and interdependence has emerged and is now occupying the middle ground in this field. By the mid-1990s it has been possible to see a shift in the literature that stresses an integrative and complementary approach to conflict management. It emphasises further the need to combine conflict settlement strategies, such as mediation and negotiation, with conflict resolution strategies, such as facilitation/consultation (some good examples of this can be found in the work of Glasl 1982; Fisher and Keashley 1991; Prein 1994).

These complementary and integrative approaches not only shed a different light on the dichotomy between Track I and Track II strategies, but also provide orientation and new insights into the various complexities of contemporary violent conflict situations and peacebuilding activities. It is crucial to make a more conscious combination of different actors with conflict management activities and strategies. These must be properly matched with the political and social priorities, which will arise at the different stages of conflict escalation and de-escalation.

According to the most popular and widely discussed ‚contingency model' put forward by Fisher and Keashley (1991), the greater the level of conflict escalation, the more directive the intervention must be in order to be effective. These models have two implications: first, that some peacebuilding activities will be more critical at some stages rather than at others; and second, that practitioners may need to return to an earlier stage of conflict management strategies as they gauge the progress of their peacebuilding activities. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the different contingency models in depth, or even to review the critiques of the common assumption of homogeneity between parties or of the rigid chronological phases of conflict escalation (for a more in-depth discussion, see Webb, Koutrakou and Walters 1996, pp171-189).

The key point to be raised from these complementary and integrative approaches is that the synthesis of different models and concepts, in the light of complex conflict interests and needs, can bring great value and insight to analysis. Indeed, some scholar/practitioners have taken the complementary and integrative approaches a step further by introducing the concept of further tracks, which has now been dubbed the ‚multi-track approach'. The most recent conceptual development is the creation of an addition specific track – Track III. This is taken to refer to all process and structure oriented initiatives undertaken by actors involved in grassroots training, capacity building and empowerment, trauma work, human rights and development work and humanitarian assistance (Günter Baechler's article, in this volume, offers a particularly insightful discussion of structure oriented initiatives, such as state reform). In the past, the simple distinction between Tracks I and II has failed to adequately capture the richness of peacebuilding activities and efforts typical of Track III and, as a result, all that did not fall into this dichotomy was excluded.

Box 1: Track I, II and III Actors and their Strategies

	Track I	Track II	Track III
actors involved	Political and military leaders as mediators and/or representatives of conflict parties	From private individuals, academics, professionals, ‚civil mediation', ‚citizens diplomacy' to international and local non-governmental organisations involved in conflict resolution	From local grassroots organisations to local and international development agencies, human rights organisations and humanitarian assistance
strategies taken	Outcome-oriented: From official and coercive measures like sanctions, arbitration, power mediation to non-coercive measures like facilitation, negotiation, mediation, fact-finding missions and ‚good offices'	Process-oriented: Non-official and non-coercive measures mainly facilitation, consultation in the form of problem-solving workshops and round tables	Process- and/or structure-oriented: Capacity building, trauma work, grassroots training, development and human rights work

3. Approaches to Conflict Management

In the context of the above analytical background, this section will provide an examination of the three distinctive but related approaches to conflict management: conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. For a proper understanding of these three approaches, it is crucial to realise that they should not be viewed as distinct, single and all-comprehensive theoretical systems. It is dubious whether such isolated systems would even be attainable given the multidisciplinary and heterogeneous underpinning of all three approaches. Rather, they are more fruitfully understood as a variation on Weber's ‚ideal types'. To give the following analysis some shape, this section will concentrate on the various understandings of:

- underlying theory;
- origin of protracted violent conflict and core concepts;
- conflict;
- actors involved;
- strategies taken;
- criteria for successful outcome and the nature of peace.

The discussion of theory raises the underlying, implicit, theoretical assumptions of the three approaches. As each attempts to analyse the origins of protracted violent conflicts, they will in turn produce very different understandings of the root causes of conflict.

In order to propose an analytic approach to this issue that manages to avoid the rather problematic subjective/objective dichotomy, three distinctive but not necessarily exclusive understandings of conflict are helpful:

- as a problem of political order/status quo;
- as a catalyst for social change;
- as a non-violent struggle for social justice.

This three-fold understanding of conflict is largely inspired by the comparative in-depth study of conflict theories put forward in social theory by Weber (1948), Dahrendorf (1957 and 1994), Coser (1956) and Simmel (1955). It has been further stimulated by recent debates in social theory primarily revolving around Critical Theory (*see*, for instance; Featherstone and Parkin, 1997; Featherstone 2000) and Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory (*see,* for instance, Jabri 1996).

As the following analysis aims to illustrate, the central question seems to be under which particular understanding of conflict do the different conflict management approaches work. The underlying assumption is that any particular understanding of conflict will necessarily have both direct and indirect repercussions on the self-understanding, including the ideology, of conflict management scholars. Understanding conflict as primarily a problem of political order remains a rather conservative, status quo oriented and, at best, a therapeutic approach to conflict management. By contrast, conflict management approaches that view conflict as a catalyst for social change or as a non-violent struggle for social justice constitute a more radical, transformation oriented approach.

This does not presume that one approach is necessarily better than the other; rather, all three understandings of conflict set worthwhile aims for conflict management efforts in their own terms. Nevertheless, I would further argue that all three understandings must be held in tension if we are to engage in any form of transformative, sustainable peacebuilding process. A conflict management approach that is, for example, oriented to the *status quo* without taking into account the ways dysfunctional relationships might be fundamentally changed will run the risk of an implicit fostering of oppressive and unequal social conditions (*see* Clements 1998, p138). An approach, on the other hand, which instead aims to foster the radical transformation of a given society without, at

the same time, maintaining some sense of how to uphold social order and continuity, is likely to lead to anarchy.

It can be seen that the received analysis concerning the actors and strategies distinguishes between, not only Track I, II and III actors and their distinctive qualities, but also similar strategies. In addition, the underlying interpretations of success imply very different assumed evaluation criteria and raises the question of just when are we justified in deeming the different conflict management approaches successful?

In the end, the analysis of the three approaches turns out to be less straightforward and a rather tricky task. This results from the assumptions about these issues that are held by most scholars in the field, though more implicit than explicit, and particularly in terms of the underlying theory they employ.

3.1 The Case of Conflict Settlement

Conflict settlement shall refer to all outcome oriented strategies for achieving sustainable win-win solutions and/or putting an end to direct violence, without necessarily addressing the underlying conflict causes. Illustrative examples of research along these lines may be found, for instance, in the work of Bercovitch (1984 and 1996), I. William Zartman (1985 and 1995) and Fisher and Ury (1981) at Harvard University's Programme on Negotiation.

Based on the ‚ideology of management', most research in the sense of conflict settlement defines conflict as a problem of political order and of the *status quo*: violent protracted conflict is thus deemed the result of incompatible interests and/or competition for scarce power resources, especially territory.

While such a definition indeed implies that conflict is a zero-sum game, conflict settlement need not necessarily follow this same line of thinking. Depending on the particular interests of the actors involved and the stage of escalation, conflict settlement may easily transcend the zero-sum game, and lead instead to a non zero-sum if not to a positive-sum outcome. This point is clearly illustrated in the research into realist rational actor models on which Bercovitch and Zartman base their work and game theory which has influenced the work of Ury and Fisher (*see also* Brams 1990).

As both rational choice and game theory are applied to the practice of conflict settlement, political and military leaders who function as primary actors with high visibility are viewed above all as rational actors. They will calculate their interests and will in the end work together towards a rational and mutually profitable goal. Both theories then aim to delineate an optimal strategy for use by players interacting under conditions of uncertainty.

Game theory modelling based on this rational actor assumption then shows how the mutual satisfaction or the optimal accommodation of differing, selfish interests are the natural results of egoistic (realist) power politics. In other words, conflict settlement can be conceptualised as a non-zero sum game in which a gain for one party need not necessarily be at the expense of the other. Integrative and distributive bargaining based on rational choice models of behaviour will, thus, prove to be cost-beneficial to decision makers on both sides (*see also* Bennett 1996, pp157-184). While the distributive approach is traditionally associated with zero-sum bargaining, the integrative approach considers bargaining to be a shared problem between the negotiation partners and seeks to identify and capture a non-zero sum or positive-sum result.

It is also essential, under the conflict settlement approach, that both parties adequately clarify contextual conditions, focusing especially on the difference between positions and interests: while positions define a rather superficial, short-term standpoint, interests reflect more the fundamental and long-term stakes which each party has in the negotiation.

In conflict settlement situations, positions are generally assumed as non-negotiable, while there is more possibility that the interests of each party can be accommodated to each other. The more psychological aspects of each party's point of view will be strongly influenced and determined by the degree of compatibility between their real interests.

Much of the research in the area of conflict settlement has been devoted primarily to third-party characteristics and strategies that help transform a zero-sum into a non-zero sum conflict management process and, thus, to end the violence and enable some form of political agreement.

The principal actors in this field are the military, political and religious leaders, and decision-makers at Track I level. Most strategies employed range from official and non-coercive measures such as good offices, fact-finding missions, facilitation, negotiation and mediation, to more coercive processes such as power mediation, sanctions and arbitration (*see* above). While the more coercive strategies of conflict settlement are usually evidence of a rather short-term involvement of third parties, the non-coercive measures such as facilitation, fact-finding missions and good offices are undertaken from a longer-term perspective.

The focus on direct violence and on its negative and destructive consequences is clearly outcome oriented. In one way or another, all strategies that aim to end violent conflict through a cease-fire or cessation of hostilities may hopefully, in turn, lead to a more permanent political agreement. Conflict settlement strategies, thus, work from a relatively limited concept of success and peace: success is defined as a sustained win-win solution. Moreover, peace is seen in purely negative terms, with no set objective of longer-term positive peace or social justice.

3.2 The Case of Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution refers to all process oriented activities that aim to address the underlying causes of direct, cultural and structural violence. Structural violence defines the social, political and economic structure of a conflict situation when unequal power, domination and dependency are perpetuated, while cultural violence refers to the social and cultural legitimisation of direct and structural violence. As Burton has very much left his mark on the conflict resolution approach, both as an academic and a practitioner, his work will be taken as an illustrative example. Other scholar-practitioners working in the field of conflict resolution are Herb Kelman, Ron Fisher and Louis Kriesberg.

Conflict resolution attempts to use game theory in order to overcome the self-defeating dynamics of the zero-sum conflict management approaches and, thus, to reframe the conflict as a shared problem with mutually acceptable solutions. Burton has used models of game theory, cybernetics, and system theory, for instance, in *Systems, States, Diplomacy and Rules*, in order to make it clear that most inter-state conflicts are the result of dysfunctional decision-making (*see* Burton 1968). In contrast to the conflict settlement approach, conflict resolution begins by defining protracted conflict as a natural result of unmet human needs. Consequently, the origin of protracted conflict can be found in the underlying needs of its participants.

This interpretation of conflict has been greatly influenced by Burton's ‚world society approach', and in his work on human needs theory. The latter points to the universal drive to satisfy basic and ontological needs, such as security, identity, recognition, food, shelter, safety, participation, distributive justice and development (*see* Burton 1990). Conflict resolution then aims not to eliminate the conflict as such; rather, it is held that conflict expressed in a non-violent manner is an essential catalyst for social change. The aim then becomes to eliminate the violent and destructive manifestations of conflict that can be traced back to the unmet needs and fears of the conflict parties. The key is to make the parties aware of these underlying needs for identity, security

and participation, and then use them to redefine both interests and positions.

While Burton does not spell out under what conditions all needs might be satisfied at the same time, he does urge practitioners to deepen and broaden the analysis of conflict to better clarify both needs and relations. Two consequences emerge from this kind of analysis. First, a broadened analysis of the conflict, with its emphasis on needs, will call for strategies that go far beyond the outcome oriented conflict settlement strategies with their focus on negotiable interests. This has resulted from needs and fears being – contrary to interests – non-negotiable, but on the other hand it is possible to deal with each parties needs and fears in a synergetic way. Burton, among others, has proposed more process oriented and relationship oriented strategies, approaches that are non-coercive and unofficial (Track II) activities such as facilitation or consultation in the form of controlled communication, problem-solving workshops or round-tables. Facilitation and consultation, pursued in this way, constitutes an effective third party attempt to facilitate creative problem solving through direct communication and in-depth conflict analysis.

Second, the deepening of conflict analysis and the widening of strategies will also require that a greater number of actors become involved in the process. These can be drawn from the civil society groups, from academic institutions and from all forms of civil mediation or citizen diplomacy groups, including local and international conflict resolution NGOs operating at Track II level.

While most of the strategies, such as a series of problem-solving workshops, take the form of medium-term involvement, the very process of sustaining and developing a dialogue should be best understood as short-term involvement. In fact, a deeper common interest and shared needs through increased cooperation and improved communication between parties may constitute a form of successful outcome of conflict management. Along the lines of Burton‘s human needs approach, any form of successful outcome must be based on the minimum requirement of the satisfaction of the needs of both parties.

3.3 The Case of Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation refers to outcome, process and structure oriented long-term peacebuilding efforts, which aim to truly overcome revealed forms of direct, cultural and structural violence. The most significant scholar/practitioners working in this field are Lederach (1995 and 1997), Curle (1971) and the conflict/peace researcher Galtung (1996).

Conflict transformation moves beyond the aims of both the previous approaches, while at the same time taking up many of the ideas of conflict resolution, and particularly of John Burton‘s notion of ‚conflict provention‘. „Conflict provention means 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 and Dukes 1990, p2).

What Burton had in mind were primarily horizontal relationships, i.e. the dialogue and cooperation of actors or conflicting parties of relatively equal status in the context of, for example, Track II problem-solving workshops (*see* Lederach 1999, p29-30). The conflict resolution approach, however, missed an important opportunity to further develop and build vertical relationships that develop dialogue and cooperation between actors of unequal status, as is often the case with decision-makers on Track I and the grassroots leaders of Track III. This opportunity has now been taken up by the conflict transformation approach (ibid, pp30-31). Especially as put forward by Lederach, conflict transformation puts central emphasis on this question. This analytical and practical shift in focus is based on several assumptions.

First, 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 (*see* Lederach 1995 and 1997). The lack of fulfilment of their basic needs gives rise to deep-rooted violence and hatred in the first instance.

Second, the inclusion of Track III actors and strategies is a far cry from the ‚logic of management‘ predominant in the conflict settlement approach. In fact, Track III strategies such as capacity building and empowerment workshops reflect the ‚logic of (local) empowerment‘. Moreover, bottom-up Track III strategies aim to support or even generate local struggles for social justice and hence for radical, structural change.

The underlying assumption is that the potential for peacebuilding already exists in the particular region or community and is rooted in its traditional culture. Conflict management techniques thus cannot, and should not, be simply transferred across cultures with little or no understanding of the cultural knowledge and resources at work in the particular conflict setting (Lederach 1995). To build on local struggles means to be aware of the pre-existing traditional ways in which that society handles conflict. A good example of this is the system of the elders in Somalia, who, as clan members, can exert their traditional authority to coerce the conflict parties into settling a conflict and accepting an agreement.

Track III activities are, in general, best situated and understood in the context of the theoretical framework of non-violent action put forward by Sharp (1973), Gandhi (1938 and 1950) and King (1963). While these three activists/scholars were influenced by very different religious convictions and ideologies, they all shared a notion of conflict as a non-violent struggle for social justice. „Non-violent action brings tensions and contradictions to the surface that already exist but are denied and covered up.“ (McCarthy and Sharp 1997, xvi). It is primarily through the employment of „constructive non-violent tension“ (Ibid.) in the form of people‘s power that latent conflict becomes manifest. Thus, socially or politically deprived groups can mobilise in this way to free themselves from the constraints of exploitative and suppressive relationships. Such people‘s power can manifest itself in different forms of non-violent struggle, ranging from demonstrations, strikes and non-cooperation to (economic) boycotts.

Viewed this way, protracted violent conflicts turn out to be primarily the result of unequal and suppressive social and political structures. Dealing effectively with them, therefore, will call for the empowerment and recognition of marginalised groups in the form of non-violent struggle. Only in this way will it be possible to deal with issues of immediate concern at the local level, or to put the appropriate pressure on Track I (and Track II actors), to end the violence and enter into good-faith negotiations.

An illustrative example can be found again in the Somalia context during the early 1990s (Lederach 1997, pp52-53). The bottom-up approaches commenced with a series of discussions and agreements on how to end the war, conducted within local peace conferences that brought the various sub-clans together. These conferences took care to invite legitimated representatives who could properly advocate each clan‘s fears and concerns, and, thus, put centre-stage issues of immediate concern at local levels. As these local conferences approached agreements, a similar decision-making process was then repeated at higher levels involving an ever-wider range of clans.

Whereas Track I and Track II actors in the conflict settlement and conflict resolution approaches tended to view (and render) the civilian population and grassroots levels as passive, Track III strategies put them centre-stage. Thus, conflict transformation will not be primarily the result of third-party intervention as it was under conflict resolution or conflict settlement.

It is clear that neither Track I nor Track II approaches (nor even both together) can provide a complete and satisfactory understanding of the complex nature and dynamism of peacebuilding activities called for in the context of contemporary violent conflicts. Not only does this point to the necessity for the inclusion of Track III strategies in the peacebuilding process, but also it implies that practitioners will need to link activities on all three tracks if they are to build domestic peace constituencies or strategic alliances between the different local, national and international actors.

This in turn suggests that all three track strategies are best understood when they are integrative and complementary, and, given what was said earlier, it seems safe to say that all three of these forms of conflict intervention have their proper place in the life-cycle of a conflict. Thus, Track II and III activities may complement Track I activities, although they must not be regarded as a substitute or even a panacea for apparently failed Track I strategies. Here, one might turn again to the example of the Norwegian couple who hosted and facilitated the peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians; while their work effectively laid the ground for formal negotiations, it did not at any point obviate the need for a negotiated settlement on substantive issues (*see* Lederach 1997, p34).

By the same token, Track I activities and strategies may not be well equipped to take on the lofty goals of long-term reconciliation and social justice. While Track III activities may foster these broader objectives, they will in the end remain ineffective, if not doomed to failure, unless they are complemented by structural changes on the Track I level such as the embodiment of models of minority rights and power-sharing and autonomy models across ethnic boundaries in legal and governance structures.

The underlying assumption is that any exclusive reliance on one practical or theoretical approach to conflict management will fail to deal effectively with the complexity and contradictions of causes and consequences evident in most protracted conflicts. The logical extension of this point might be an effort to integrate and synthesise Track I, II and III activities not only on the practical, but also on the theoretical level. In the past, most conflict management scholars have been reluctant to synthesise different theoretical approaches such as game theory, human needs theory and non-violent theory (and if they did, they certainly were not explicit about it).

There are several conceivable reasons as to why this has not occurred. First, conflict settlement, with its focus on the logic of management, may be viewed as too strongly associated with the now widely discredited realist power politics paradigm. Especially in the early work conducted in the field of conflict management, scholars tended to focus more on identifying differences than discovering similarities between schools of thought, as the discussion about the competing merits of conflict settlement and conflict resolution approaches amply illustrates. In general, the field has for a long time been marked by a well-entrenched dichotomous way of thinking: the objectivist in opposition to subjectivist understanding of conflict, and conflict settlement compared to conflict resolution strategies.

As shown above, those scholars focusing on conflict resolution and working, for example, with problem-solving workshops have tended to make use of very different analytical frameworks (such as needs and fears mapping) than have conflict settlement scholars, with their focus on interests and rational choice models of behaviour (*see* Clements 1998, p136). A final and more general reason for the persistent divergence between the approaches may be that some scholars have based their work on implicit rather than explicit assumptions, thus failing to verbalise the theoretical underpinnings of their argumentation.

If one is to consider conflict transformation as a conceptual and practical extension and a useful combination of the pre-existing models, it would make good sense to have some type of synthesis of game theory, rational choice, human needs theory and non-violence action. An

illustrative example can be found in the problem-solving workshops, which were inspired by different sources of non-violent action, such as those of Gandhi, King and Sharp, that all stressed the need for respect for the adversary and the search for mutually beneficial outcomes (Mitchell 1981, pp71-86). Mutually beneficial outcomes are, in turn, one of the core concepts and aims of most game theory approaches.

In short, if complementarity is the key and if it is to be taken at face value, it must be theoretical in nature and bring about an effective cross-fertilisation or strategic marriage between game theory, human needs theory and non-violent action. While synthesising the different understandings based on conflict theory, human needs and non-violent action, a conflict transformation strategy must begin from a three-fold understanding of the nature of conflict.

Not only does this school of thought view conflict first and foremost as an element of political control and a catalyst for social change, but also as a natural expression of non-violent struggle for social justice. Conflict transformation, thus, takes up a dual understanding of conflict as an agent of both social control and change (Clements 1998, p138).

Moreover, conflict transformation does not stop here. It also fundamentally redefines the dichotomy between conflict resolution and conflict settlement. By placing its primary emphasis on the question of social justice, the conflict transformation approach rejects the traditional aim of conflict management to restore the *status quo ante* and, instead, elaborates on the notion of conflict as a positive agent for social change.

Conflict transformation is an open-ended, long-term, multi-track and dynamic process, which significantly widens the scope of actors involved. It effectively combines Track I, II and III activities along the continuum of short-, middle-, and long-term involvement. It is thus likely to engage a wide variety of actors, including: official, military and political leaders (Track I); informal conflict resolution experts, INGOs and NGOs working in conflict resolution (Track II); grassroots, indigenous NGOs providing development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (Track III). An approach, which is applied so widely, can and should no longer be reduced to a label of ‚peacebuilding from below'. This three-fold understanding of conflict also suggests a corresponding triple interpretation of success; it can be outcome, process, and/or change oriented.

As far as outcomes are concerned, conflict transformation aims to achieve a settlement of substantive issues raised by the needs and fears of the conflict parties. This has two elements: first, a process orientation approach emphasising the need to change mutually negative conflict attitudes and values among parties in order to increase cooperation and communication between them; second, a change oriented approach stressing the political imperative to create a new infrastructure for empowerment and recognition of underprivileged groups, thus fostering and enabling social justice. In short, the satisfaction of basic needs on the personal and relational levels will not be sufficient. Rather, practitioners must work to achieve equal access to resources and assemble the infrastructure that will make it possible to address structural inequalities with the aim of longer-term social reconstruction and reconciliation.

To define a successful outcome is more difficult under the conflict transformation approach than it was in the simpler cases of conflict settlement and resolution. For peace is now defined in positive terms. Forms of negative peace must be transcended as the diverse forms of structural and cultural violence are successively addressed. This will require, for many contemporary protracted conflicts, nothing less than a root-and-branch transformation of social relationships and social structures.

4. Role of Theory and Research Methods Employed

The field of conflict management in general and these three approaches in particular have touched only a few small ‚islands' of theory. In contrast to recent debates in international relations for instance, the field of conflict management has remained largely devoid of theorising, especially about ontological and epistemological questions such as the purpose of scientific inquiry, methodologies applied and the justification of knowledge.

The following analysis shall illustrate and exemplify this rather harsh critique. It is a truism that any theorising about different approaches to conflict management must necessarily base itself on some specific theory of conflict. One must expect, therefore, any theorising about conflict management to start with a theoretical debate on the underlying understanding of violent conflict. From this, it would seem to follow that such an understanding of conflict is not merely theoretical, but that it will lead to radically different conclusions for conflict management and conflict transformation in theory and practice.

A glance through the conflict management literature unfortunately suggests that most conflict management approaches or strategies are not based on such a broad or explicit theoretical concept of conflict (*see* Scimecca 1993, pp211-221). In general, the field seems to have „significantly surpassed theory building" (Wall and Lynn 1993, p182). Thus, Scimecca stresses that there is „…no real theoretical justification for when [, who] and why to use conflict intervention techniques" (Scimecca, *op. cit.*, p217). It cannot be surprising that most research has not been systematically theory-driven. (Exceptions might be the avowedly theory-driven (comparative) case-studies of Stedman 1991 and Princen 1992.)

It is for this reason that Scimecca makes the case for the establishment of a theoretical framework drawn from the sociology of Weber (Weber 1948): He claims that Weber's conflict theory lends itself well for use as a single overarching framework within which to situate both the practice and the theory of different approaches to conflict management. While many scholars (and practitioners) might challenge his exclusive reliance on Weber's sociology, Scimecca raises important questions concerning the theoretical shortcomings of the field of conflict management and its lack of any explicit theory of conflict.

What seems to be of primary concern is that most of the assumed realities of the theory and practice of conflict management are, in fact, imposed by an implicit theoretical framework of conflict (such as the earlier discussion of objectivist and subjectivist understandings of conflict). Furthermore, they seem to work even when the understanding of the role of the theory is limited. Usually, the interpretation of theory evident in the field of conflict management is limited to some sort of explanation of observable or personal experience, viewed in terms of causal logic with ensuing policy recommendations.

The ultimate test of a theory will be found in the degree of its usefulness and technical applicability as it seeks to guide and orient policy towards given ends, such as the settlement of violent conflicts. If the focus is to be on conflict management practice (that is, ‚the real world out there') one could argue that a scholar-practitioner does not need to be concerned with theory? Apart from anything else, this way of thinking only reveals a rather limited understanding of the general place of theory in the field of conflict management, as most conflict management research seems empirically to approach and work with the understanding of theory.

Theory, thus, should first offer a framework enabling scholars and practitioners to more accurately analyse and describe (and sometimes predict) the real world. This assumed real world of conflict management consists of, and is bounded by, the behaviour of the conflict parties and

intervening variables, such as third-party characteristics, resources and strategies, such as coercion, expertise and reward (*see* Bercovitch 1992, pp10-21). If theory is understood in this way, one can then identify at least four different ways in which the field of conflict management can approach the „theory-research-practice loop" (Fisher 1997b, p263).

Some analysts, such as Stedman (1991), Bercovitch and Rubin (1992), Rubin (1981), Princen (1992), Zartman (1985) and Jabri (1990) have offered comparative, descriptive and empirical case study documentation of either conflict management practice which have been perceived as failed or successful (*see also* most issues of The Negotiation Journal and International Negotiation). Systematic theory-driven comparative case studies seem to be more the exception than the norm.

On other occasions scholars, such as Bercovitch and Wells (1993) and Nicholson (1992), aim to discover and develop regularities and correlation or even causal explanations about what constitutes effective conflict management. They inductively construct theories, making use of quantitative methods in order to test and frame hypotheses about, for example, the contextual variables of mediation. These might be concerned with the nature of the parties or the identity and rank of mediators. Research of this type will take the form of large-scale systematic studies on effective conflict management, such as can be found in Bercovitch, or constitute more experimental and laboratory-based approaches to third party intervention as attempted by Rubin (1980). The large-scale systematic studies are followed particularly closely for the policy-relevant findings that they can generate for political decision-makers (Bercovitch 1997).

Scholars such as Fisher and Ury (1981) and Burton, especially in his earlier work (1969), are less empirical in nature, taking instead a rather descriptive, sometimes anecdotal and prescriptive form. This approach is one of inductive theorising: most of its adherents present „…a number of processes which are dependent upon the idiosyncratic expertise of the individual practitioner" (Scimecca, *op. cit*., p214). Most of these will turn out to rely on rather static models that are „… inductive descriptions of core components of practice, with some prescriptive guidelines for interventions" (Fisher 1997). The most predominant example may be the work of the Harvard Negotiation project.

Kleiboer points to the fine line between empirical evidence and conjecture in the field of conflict management when she stresses that most "… research is represented as evidence but turns out to be based primarily on usually un-stated conjectures, opinions and ad hoc observations" (Kleiboer 1996, p376). In fact, many of the findings of Fisher and Ury (1981), Ury (1991) and Burton (1987) come in the form of manuals, handbooks or ‚cookbooks' offering rules or instructions for successful conflict management exercises (*see* Mitchell 1993).

There seems to be some confusion as to whether, for example, the exercises of problem-solving workshops, introduced by Burton and others, are meant as opportunities for inductive theorising about ideas and hypotheses on conflict and conflict resolution processes (*see, for instance*, Fisher 1997b, p256; Hill 1982) or whether they are instead the result of deductive theorising – i.e. generalising about conflict and conflict resolution and thus drawing on a more generic theory of human needs (*see, for instance*, Featherstone 1991). Perhaps this lack of clarity, or even evidence of contradiction, inherent in much of the conflict management literature, could be traced to the general ambiguity and definitional imprecision that can be found in Burton's work, or at least on generalisations resulting from selective reading of his rather elusive work.

Yet a study of different forms of problem-solving workshop exercises, as proposed by Burton (1969), (1972) and Fisher (1983), reveals a more general but equally serious problem: most research on these workshops seems to deduct and induct hypotheses simultaneously. This is not particularly surprising when one considers that the initial enthusiasm for problem-solving workshops

as opportunities for theory generation among some scholars never actually led to a systematic testing of theories (*see also* Mitchell 1993, pp89-90).

Still others take a rather different route to inductive theorising in conflict management and transformation: other scholars have been heavily influenced by ‚grounded theory' (*see, for instance*, Weiss 1999) and by anthropology and ethnography (*see, for example*, Wolfe and Honggang 1996). The primary focus of this kind of qualitative research is an attempt to derive research questions from data and to test these during field-work before refining and reviewing them at the end of the data collection phase.

Different as these approaches may be methodologically, it seems fair to say that they are all underpinned by some notion of research which is objective and free of value judgements, and assume that objective knowledge of the real world out there is possible, whether or not such knowledge is grounded in subjective experience. Along the way, such scientific, objective findings not only sharpen the contrast with value judgements, which are considered highly subjective, but are also usually given epistemological priority.

Only a few scholars, such as Curle and others working with grounded wider social theory, question this approach, subscribing instead to Galtung's definition of „objectivity as an inter-subjective dialogue based on explicit premises *i.e. values*…" (Galtung 1996, p16; emphasis added). They will insist that the primary analytical focus of conflict management research must be on empirical evidence, without explicitly considering that theoretical notions already inform the practice of conflict management itself. Thus, most of the past research in the field of conflict management, especially in the Anglo-American research community, has largely focused on a detached analysis of third-party strategies and behaviour and of the nature of conflicts.

Consequently, it was possible in the past to focus on the apparent reality of conflict management practice without acknowledging just how far that practice was already informed by highly normative, but as yet unquestioned, assumptions. These concerned, for example, the legitimacy, power and neutrality of the third party, the nature of universal and generic human needs, the unequal distribution of power between the parties, and the success and impartiality of the conflict management process.

When theory is viewed as an empirical tool, most theoretical or conceptual approaches to conflict management turn out to be problem-solving approaches: they work within a given dominant framework of institutions and social relations. By definition, the problem-solving approach, „…takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised, as the given framework for action" (Cox 1981, p129). It should be noted that this is a very different type of problem-solving approach than that implicit in Burton's problem-solving workshop mechanism.

It seems clear that the problem-solving approach fails to critically reflect upon the underlying frameworks it assumes, especially those of social order and status quo, of gender, or to question its assumptions about universality and objectivity. This may explain why most of the existing problem-solving conceptual and explanatory frameworks operate within implicit and tacit agreement about the concepts of social justice and, therefore, of negative and positive peace (*see* William Zartman et al. 1996, pp79-98). While Bush and Folger concentrate their analysis on domestic conflict resolution, and here particularly on the development of ADR in the US, they also offer some provocative questions for further discussions about the assessment of conflict management success (*see* Bush and Folger 1994). Some scholars and practitioners may deem certain conflict management efforts to be effective without properly defining what effective actually means. Is, for example, the overall reduction of hostility and of violence or the establishment of a cease-fire a form of effective conflict management?

What is notably missing from most conflict management research efforts is any type of explicit normative theoretical grounding, which would be essential for the proper understanding and evaluation of conflict management success (*see also* Kleiboer 1996, p377; Kleiboer 1998). Thus, Rasmussen, Rouhana and Rothman have stressed that most evaluation is either conducted poorly or even completely omitted, principally because „the theoretical grounds on which an intervention has been built have not been clarified" (Folger 1999). We should dare to rock the boat of conflict management. After all, just what are these sacrosanct and unspoken values which inform all analysis but which are never spelled out or questioned?

A good example of such a sacrosanct value might be found in the issue of gender. What is our largely implicit image of the individual in the field of conflict management? Do we view him/her as rational but also empathetic and cooperative, as gender-neutral? Apart from anything else, conflict management scholars may well be criticised for portraying the theory and practice of conflict management as a gender-neutral enterprise; their working assumption has always been that conflict management has no perceptible effect on the relative positions or roles of women and men in society during times of war and peace.

Especially the concerns of women and ‚devalued men' (those who are coloured, non-Westernised, working-class, or gay), their social interests, ideas and experience, have been simply left behind by the analysis and management of protracted conflicts (*see* Reimann 2001). A cursory glance at the conflict management literature will quickly show that conflict management on the conceptual and especially more practical level remains a man's world; in contrast to those involved in work on domestic and local conflicts, most of the practitioners and academics involved in conflict management in the international arena are still men.

Feminists can argue that this field of conflict management actually perpetuates, and indirectly enforces, the exclusionist power structures and hierarchies found in most patriarchal societies. Clearly, most third-party interventions tend to reduce or suppress social conflicts such as those arising from gender inequality. One might well ask from this perspective: is there a wolf in sheep's clothing? Does conflict management change the symbols but at the same time continue to subscribe to the ‚old' invisible principles and practices of patriarchy in the ‚new' post-settlement social order? Thus, conflict management remains mired in the logic and practices of management and, as such, neglects the underlying power arrangements of conflict management initiatives such as gender inequality.

This leads directly to the larger questions: if conflict management is not gender-neutral, just what is its hidden understanding of the public and private spheres in conflict management approaches? What does it mean to be an embodied, gendered mediator or conflict management scholar; that is, how does the practice of conflict management define a man or a woman? Alternatively, what is the underlying understanding of masculinity and femininity in conflict management theory and practice?

The analysis shows that most conflict management approaches work from a fairly static and simplistic notion of identity. Despite Burton, Azar and others considering the identity group as the most relevant unit of analysis in the study of protracted or intractable social conflicts, their work falls short of and fails to account adequately for the rich and varied ways in which identities both shift and are constructed. It is paramount to understand that notions of masculinity and femininity, and their connections with violence or peace in most conflicts, are fluid, requiring continual redefining and careful handling.

These questions serve to highlight that it is largely the unspoken and hidden values of scholar/practitioners, which serve to define success in conflict management. Viewed this way, the

concept of, for example, an effective outcome of conflict management comes to look more like a highly subjective value construction than an objective description. To label a conflict management effort as a success is, in itself, to make a value judgment.

It remains to be seen how far the ongoing discussion about Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) (*see* contribution of Mark Hoffman in this volume) can offer some remedy in the form of a conceptual framework for systematically classifying and evaluating the success of conflict management efforts. Critics may ask whether or not increasingly popular neat and tidy boxes of success criteria in evaluation forms are in the end little more than mere drops in a theory-starved ocean.

One might further question the degree to which arbitrarily isolated and, in my view, rather static conflict indicators can add insights to the overall picture of the unanticipated, highly complex and dynamic conflict interactions inherent in most inter-group conflicts. How might one, for example, squeeze the fluid, changing and complex identities and agencies of women to make them fit into a success or conflict indicator?

Most women are likely to experience intra-state conflicts in a rather ambiguous way. While some violent conflicts may indeed represent intermediate catalysts for women‘s empowerment, as women find they can successfully assume roles in the private and public spheres previously dominated by men. Nevertheless, for them, most conflicts remain above all devastating experiences, marked by gross atrocities and large-scale human rights violations such as sexual violence, rape and forced prostitution. Hence, while discussing the management of the process of women‘s agency in violent conflict, one must perpetually keep in mind the uneasy tension between vulnerability and victimhood on the one hand, and empowerment and emancipation on the other, always resisting the impulse to prioritise the one over the other (*see* Reimann 2001).

More generally, one can even imagine a scenario in which one has classified various and diverse conflict indicators and yet is still unable to find a satisfactory explanation for the dynamics of the systemic inner-society violence that characterises many contemporary conflicts. What, then, are the political and ethical implications of PCIA?

It would appear that most PCIAs offer only limited political and ethical guidance on how to deal with its results. This is hardly surprising, as most of the success or conflict indicators proposed to date are not situated in the wider theoretical framework of a peaceful and just society. While it seems clear that PCIA may foster the economic efficiency of development cooperation projects, it is so far ill equipped to venture into ethical and political waters, by seeking to label peacebuilding efforts as a success or failure.

Burton was one of the few in the field who dared to take up and discuss in some length the shortcomings of problem-solving approaches (Burton speaks instead of „puzzle-solving approaches“). According to Burton‘s approach, „…the solution is not the final end-product. It is, in itself, another set of relationships that contains its own set of problems… [P]roblem-solving frequently requires a new synthesis of knowledge or techniques and a change in theoretical structure…[T]he system of interactions is an open one, i.e. the parts are subject not merely to interaction among themselves (…) but to interaction with a wider environment over which there can be no control“ (Burton 1979, p5).

This approach has some *prima facie* purchase on critical theory as an attempt at theoretical-normative critique. Like Burton, critical theory focuses on challenging and dismantling traditional forms of problem-solving approaches by questioning „entrenched forms of social life that constrain freedom“ (Devetak 1996, p148). The starting point here is, as it was for Burton, the problematisation of the origin of any given framework of institutions and social relations. And, like Burton‘s problem-

solving approach, critical theory aims to then clarify possible ways to bring about social change and, thus, to transform the dominant social and political system (*see* Cox 1981, pp129-130).

Another intriguing question is how far Burton‘s problem-solving workshop mirrors Habermas‘ ‚ideal speech situation‘? According to Habermas‘ ideal speech situation, all participants have an equal opportunity to participate and raise questions. Finally, similar to Burton, Horkheimer stresses that knowledge is not simply a reflection of a concrete historical situation, but must be understood as a social force to generate social change (*see* Horkheimer 1972, p215).

Yet, Burton‘s anti-positivist line of argumentation somehow clashes with his wider emphasis on a positivist approach to the scientific study of conflict: most of Burton‘s work reflects in one way or another his search for a non-ideological model of social order in general and a value-free concept of objective human needs in particular. In others words, Burton‘s credo to move „from subjectivity to theory-based objectivity“ (Burton 1993, p57), turns out to be“…inappropriate because any analysis of the social world will be infused with the values of the analyst. In a world of competing values, the merits of any particular model, therefore, are not self-evident. No model is free from ideology. Since John Burton wishes to change the world, he has no alternative but to make the argument for change in ideological terms. It is counter-productive to dress one‘s values in natural science garb. A non-ideological model of social order is a chimera which it is a mistake to claim or pursue“ (Little 1984, p95).

5. Ongoing Questions and Challenges

This chapter has aimed to clarify that the still dominant Anglo-American empiricist methodology, which seeks to combine scientific methods with policy oriented judgements, as put forward by Burton or Bercovitch, borrows heavily from conventional scientific theories of causality. Thus, the split between fact and value, so prevalent in social science, is accepted as given and somehow inevitable, and most research in conflict management leaves this seemingly irrevocable separation between facts and values unchallenged.

This in turn explains why dichotomous thinking is so prevalent in most conflict management research. This brief review of the conflict management literature suggests that much research has for far too long, unfortunately, been based on flawed dichotomies such as those between objectivity and subjectivity, between conflict settlement and conflict resolution strategies, and between impartiality and partiality (*see also* Beckett 1997).

There is a very real need for the field of conflict management and conflict transformation to open itself up to the wider debates of social and political theory, seeking especially to integrate approaches which attempt to bridge dichotomous thinking and theorising by use of insights drawn from feminism, critical theory and social constructivism (*see* Reimann 2001, for a discussion of the likely success of a more gender-sensitive approach to conflict management). Further discussion, both in and outside the fields of conflict management and transformation, will make it clear how far wider debates in social and political theory have begun to make important inroads into and ground-breaking contributions to the overall field.

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