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**“ Tools from the past for a problematic present: How relevant is
Burtonian Theory and Practice for 21st century conflict
transformation?”**

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It gives me very great pleasure to be giving the John Burton Memorial lecture on the 100th anniversary of his birth. We are honouring a complex man who made many important contributions to the formation of an independent identity for Australia and the independent identity of peace and conflict studies. It's impossible in the space of 40 minutes to do justice to either contribution so I am going to be very selective in my comments.

Biographical Background

John's life began in war and ended in war. He was born on March 2 1915 and died in 2010. 1915 is a memorable year for Australians and New Zealanders because, a month later, on the 25th April many Australian, New Zealand and other Imperial troops were slaughtered at the battle of Gallipoli in Turkey. A New Zealand historian, Ormond Burton, (no relation, incidentally, although also a staunch Pacifist as well as a much decorated soldier in the First World War) stated that “New Zealand's national identity was formed somewhere between the battle of Gallipoli and the Battle of the Somme”. (O. E. Burton, 1935).

I don't buy the idea that nations are formed out of military battles and defeats-they are much more complex than that- but this is the myth and this is what Australians and New Zealanders commemorate on ANZAC day every year. I often wonder whether these two moments – a military defeat turned into foundational myth and John's birth in the same year-were relevant to John's own life time preoccupation with identity as a central organising principle in his work.

Burton was the son of a Methodist Minister, which undoubtedly shaped many of his fundamental values. He grew up during the great depression, which fuelled his desire for equality and socialism. And his political inclinations remained on the left all his life even if he often found himself in deep conflict with the Australian Labour Party at different stages of his career. After his Ph.D., he was employed by the Australian Federal Government and experienced rapid promotion. As a very young man, for example, he was at the heart of Australian responses to the Second World War and was on the Australian delegation to the Charter meeting of the United Nations. He could, therefore, and did talk about war and violence from an elite insider's perspective.

In 1941, he became the Private Secretary to the Australian Foreign Minister "Doc" Evatt. In this post he was often compelled to articulate where Australian and British interests converged and diverged during the Second World War. This gave John a profound appreciation of the

differences between interests and values and a deep ambivalence towards hegemonic power. He was a radical from the beginning and his ideas were often at odds with the Australian Department of Defence as he pushed for greater independence from Britain in combination with more engagement with Asia.

He had numerous stories of how he and Evatt challenged the British High Command about the best strategy for the defence of Australia against Japanese and German threats. In one instance John, in the absence of Evatt, personally ordered a convoy of Australian troops to drop anchor and turn back half way across the Indian Ocean because he and Evatt disagreed with British requests to send Australian troops to North Africa instead of defending Australia against the much more pressing threat from Japan. John was in his late twenties then so this gives you some sense of his precocity and hutzpah!

This wartime experience and his meteoric promotion to Secretary of the Department of External Affairs (at the age of 32) in 1947 gave John a deep appreciation of power and decision-making. He stood unsuccessfully for parliament in 1954, which was probably a good thing for John, the Parliament and Peace Research!! It is interesting though that the man who later was so uncomfortable with power politics was deeply imbedded in and profoundly tempted by them at the beginning of his career!

By the late 1950s and after some bruising personal political experiences, [he was charged with being the Australian Labour Party's "Pink Eminence" in relation to the Petrov spy affair] John developed deep scepticism about government, governance processes and the negative consequences of much national statecraft.

This scepticism emerged also in response to the Korean War and as he tried to make sense of post war developments in Asia and the rest of the world. Having been in San Francisco for the Charter conference of the United Nations. John was appalled at the way in which its idealistic aspirations fell victim to the Cold war. But he was also challenged by the Chinese Revolution, the Korean War and all the regional and global independence struggles of the 1950s and 60s. It was in response to these dynamics that John really started wondering about the motivators of political behaviour and why decision makers lapsed into military responses to political challenge.

This concern fed John's interest in understanding the relationships between personal behaviour, wider domestic dynamics and national and international conflict. He was particularly interested in how and why elite decision makers were constantly being trapped by top down desires to control and coerce citizens and protagonists. He felt that the dominant political science, power political frames ignored the significance of emotions, human needs and the multiple diverse domestic processes that drove government decision makers. Having been in a position of power he could see its limitations in terms of

representing and doing justice to the interests of multiple individuals and groups and he grew progressively disenchanted at the inability of modern state systems (founded as they were on a monopoly of force) to engage the sources of domestic and global violence creatively and non-violently. He saw no future or utility in perpetuating violent and vicious cycles in response to violence so when he was freed of official constraints he developed both a radical critique of realism and embarked on a life long quest to understand the deeper sociobiological sources of violence and how to respond to these effectively and non-violently.

For those of you who knew John you will appreciate that his public peaceful and collaborative aspirations were always somewhat problematic at the personal level. He was a very strong, opinionated and conflict creating personality. It took some fortitude to live with John. He was married thrice and had a most astonishing ability to generate conflicts with people who were his natural allies. In fact I sometimes wonder whether it was the force of his personality and prolific writing – rather than his theoretical or analytical depth -that ensured we were all Burtonians while in his presence. In any event, whether John was endeavouring to understand his own complex personality as well as the conflictual world around him, from the 1960s onwards his life was directed towards exploring and identifying the origins of individual and collective unpeacefulness and how best to respond to it.

Theoretical Contributions

No matter what we think of Burton as a person there was no doubt that he was one of the first significant critics of IR theory and a major contributor to the fledgling field of peace and conflict research. He had the public intellectual's knack of bringing insights, and theory from one discourse and applying it somewhere else. John was multidisciplinary in his background and orientation. He was not a political scientist or an international relations specialist but a social psychologist. A lot of his critical insight flowed from transferring the wisdom and knowledge of psychology or sociology into politics and international relations.

When IR was bound tightly to the nation state as the major unit of analysis, for example, Burton argued convincingly that we needed to think in terms of a world society (John Wear Burton, 1972). This was very prescient for 1972¹. Today's world is a vindication of this orientation. We do indeed live in a multi-layered, networked and interlinked world society. Space has been annihilated through time via the Internet and there are many non-state actors that are as important if not more important than most of the world's state actors. Burton's arguments on world society, therefore, prefigured and shaped a lot of

¹ Although he was one of the co-founders of the International Peace Research Association he had an argument with me in the 1990s about changing its name so that International did not appear. This was because he took great issue with Hedley Bull's anarchical view of global politics and wanted everyone to think in terms of a World Society. He thought it oxymoronic that International and Peace should be combined because he saw nation states –everywhere- as a if not the major source of contemporary violence. It was a bit of a handful though to think in terms of a World Society Peace Research Association.

later work on the role of civil society and transnational economic actors at the national and global levels. Thinking in terms of world society rather than anarchic nation states focused our attention on all the diverse exchanges and relationships that bind us together as opposed to those that tear us apart. It was typical Burton to reframe the old nation state frame in terms of trans-national relationships and transactions. This focus certainly helped shape a more positive and pro-active view of the role of civil society in relation to the promotion of sustainable peace and has been incorporated into the work of all those who are interested in the ways individuals, groups and organisations play a role in relation to norm and institutional building at national, regional and global levels. Elise Boulding's work on *Building a Global Civic Culture* (E. Boulding, 1990) and Mary Kaldor's work on *Global Civil Society as an answer to War* certainly stand in this Burtonian tradition, (Kaldor, 2003)

In addition to seeking alternative perspectives to a state centric view of the world Burton also sought to understand the deeper drivers of social and political behaviour. Because of his psychological training Burton understood that men and women were not just motivated by power or wealth. He knew that there were some deeper values, emotions and physiological drivers that were equally important. Here again John's focus on these individual motivators have been vindicated by a lot of recent work in neuroscience which establish very clearly that we are not hard wired for competitive individualism but for social bonding. This new work demonstrates that one of the most crucial elements in the determination of a peaceful person is not fear but close

maternal attachment in the first 5 years of life. We become peaceful as a result of the learned recognition of the ways in which our individuality flows out of successful bonding and interdependence (McGilchrist, 2009) Unfortunately John did not have these recent discoveries to guide him but he was very taken by Paul Sites book on *Control: The basis of Social Order* (Sites, 1973) . It was after reading Sites that Burton “discovered “ Basic Human Needs” and saw their frustration as the primary explanation for political anger, aggression and conflict. This gave rise to his book. *Deviance, Terrorism and War: The process of Solving Unsolved, Social and Political Problems* (John Wear Burton, 1979). P101 In this book, John focused on the origins of conflict, problem solving solutions to such conflict and the articulation of a paradigm shift that would shake the foundations of realist international relations theory. With typical Burtonian zeal, John saw Basic Human Needs as the best framework for challenging all the dominant realist assumptions of the time. Because these were needs rarely figured in IR discourse at the time- Burton believed that their application would generate the paradigm shift that would reorientate both the academic field of IR and the realist world of diplomacy.

In retrospect this needs based focus doesn't seem that innovative. Needs have been written about in Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology for many years and have always featured in counselling and therapy literature. John's unique contribution, however, was to apply the concepts to the field of politics and international relations where they were considered unusual and inappropriate. In applying

them to politics John was very concerned to develop a new understanding of power, which did not depend on dominance but capacitation. Other peace researchers were also trying to problematize power. In the 1980s, Kenneth Boulding, for example, (K. E. Boulding, 1989), also felt that social and political order owed more to integrative power than threat based or exchange power although he also acknowledged the significance of the latter for economic well being and order more narrowly conceived.

Few IR specialists in the 1970s and 80s, however, thought that identity, recognition, participation and security, for example, were all that important to global peace and stability. Nor could they see how to operationalize these concepts for either analytical or political purposes. This was before all the “new” identity based conflicts, and civil wars of the 1990s. (Kaldor, 2006) John did have an uncanny ability to anticipate what would be important, however, and he directed the rest of his academic life to articulating the ways in which individuals, groups and nations were consciously or unconsciously motivated by the satisfaction of these fundamental drivers of human behaviour.

Basic Human Needs, in one form or other, while not prominent in 20th century mainstream International Relations Theory certainly did shape the field of peace research and the emergent field of conflict resolutions/transformation and it remains one of Burton’s enduring legacies to the field. It gave rise to many robust debates in the 1990s and beyond [e.g. (K. Avruch, 2013)] about how to conceptualise and

satisfy needs without generating additional conflicts and whether they are indeed universal or not but there is no doubt that this perspective has persisted in different ways to inform much theory and practice within the field of peace and conflict studies. (Sandole, 2013).

Johan Galtung's extension and typology of basic human needs, as security, welfare, freedom and identity, for example, has shaped much of our thinking about the ways in which agents and structures seeking to satisfy these needs have or have not contributed to peace or violence. (See Galtung, "International Development in Human Perspective" Chapter 15 pp. 301-336. (John W. Burton, 1990a).

While the framework has been critiqued as culturally blind, methodologically individualistic and unable to bridge the gap between micro and macro [see the famous debate between Burton and Sandole /Avruch and Black (J. W. Burton, Sandole, J.D., 1986) (K. Avruch, Black, Peter. W, 1987)] it is interesting that some variants of Basic Human Needs continue to shape most of the ways we think about the root causes of violence and the social, economic and political conditions necessary to guarantee their satisfaction. Certainly most conflict transformation practitioners utilise some variant of Basic Human Needs in their conflict diagnoses and prescriptions.

The final theoretical contribution that I want to tag was John's concept of "Provention." (John W. Burton, 1990b). This was a clumsy word, which has never really caught on in the literature or in the real world,

but it was John's attempt to describe pro-active as opposed to re-active intervention in violence. It was also his effort to try and grapple with some of the root causes of violence; like poverty, inequality ethno nationalism, overpopulation, institutional domination and militarism. Burton developed "Provention" to link social psychology to wider concepts of peaceful social and economic change. Like Maslow (Maslow, 1954) Burton understood well that individuals could not develop or realise their full potential if their basic survival needs were not met. So he needed to develop a link between the individual motivators of peaceful and unpeaceful behaviour and wider development policies aimed at feeding, housing, clothing and educating populations. To some extent the basic idea (largely unacknowledged to Burton) was elaborated in the work done in the 1990s and 2000s on "conflict sensitive development strategies". For John, however, the idea of provention was his way of scaling micro concerns up to general social systems thinking and, in the last few years of his life, it became his rationale for developing a whole new political philosophy. This new political philosophy was not based on the pursuit of power but on a quest for human fulfilment and the creation of institutional arrangements that were neither dominatory nor adversarial.² When we lived close to each other in Canberra in the 1990s, for example, I had many discussions with John about what non-adversarial educational, judicial and political systems would look like. While many of these ideas were utopian they were absolutely right in terms of trying to imagine a

² If I were being a little psychoanalytic here I would argue that Burton's concern to move beyond power and adversarial processes sometimes reflected his own personal struggle with these temptations.

more peaceful, less competitive and less dog eat dog world. Although he didn't frame these arguments in terms of a rejection of the Weberian state the logic certainly moved in this direction.

I could talk at more length about all of these conceptual and theoretical contributions but in the cool hard light of conceptual day I don't think that this is where John made his most useful contribution. On the contrary, despite his prolific written output I think he made his most significant contribution as a scholar practitioner and it is to this that I want to turn now.

The Scholar-Practitioner and Conflict Transformation Practice

Academics don't normally like to venture too far from the ivory tower. John came to the academy, however from a career as a bureaucratic decision maker and he never lost his desire to make a practical political difference wherever he found himself. He wanted his theory to challenge the academic and political establishments. This is what gave his work its radical edge and resulted in him being labelled an academic stirrer and troublemaker. From his time in the Australian public service, however, he understood the strengths and weaknesses of operating as a state representative and the ethical challenges of representing national interests. When John moved into the academy he realised that the University was viewed somewhat differently. It was seen as a legitimate (moderately neutral) space for the free flow of ideas and behaviour. Burton decided to take advantage of this neutrality to

develop academically based “political” processes that would enable participants to discuss a wide range of issues in an academic environment. To some extent these small group processes were an interesting example of non-conventional politics. They were, to some extent Burtonian anti-politics. He started at University College London and then here at the University of Kent by developing social psychological processes for social and political problem solving. He started off by discussing a wide range of political problems using “controlled communication” techniques and then these gradually morphed into what we now call “problem solving” workshops aimed at addressing a range of violent conflicts.

In the beginning he utilised his old diplomatic connections to bring together a group on the Indonesia- Malaysia confrontation of the early 1960s. This was followed by interventions on Cyprus, working with Trade Unions and Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland, in the late 1980s with Ed Azar, civil wars in Lebanon finishing off with Sri Lanka and the Falklands/Malvinas to name a few. ³

The controlled communication workshop was a technique used initially in social work and was aimed at bringing parties in conflict together, under the care of a neutral third party panel. The aim of this process was to clarify misperceptions, share goals, agree on the nature of the

³ When I asked Chris Mitchell for a comprehensive list of PSW’s that John and others had done we realised that there was no such data base. This would be a good Masters or even Ph.D thesis for someone to try and reconstruct the rationales for, membership of and outcomes of these diverse workshops.

problems dividing them and generate options for addressing them. (John Wear Burton, 1969). Burton brought his old diplomatic convening roles to this process as well as his acute listening skills (whenever he wasn't involved in dispute with anyone!). Once again I think that this Burtonian technique was innovative in its application not in its design.

It was assumed by IR specialists, for example, that decision makers and influentials knew how to handle themselves in negotiations. Burton knew (from personal experience), however, how misplaced this assumption was. Controlled communication, therefore, was his first attempt to get participants to acknowledge the deeper drivers of their behaviour, to communicate in ways which did justice to their own values and those of the opposition and to think in terms of superordinate goals. Most of these early initiatives were dyadic conflicts with relatively few major issues. This is an interesting contrast with the conflicts that we are confronting in the 21st century which tend to be multi-party and complex. I will return to this later.

Once Burton identified Basic Human Needs, however, as a major element in the causation of conflict he grafted this perspective into the controlled communication processes. Joining forces with people like Chris Mitchell, Tony De Reuck and others Burton started thinking in terms of what he described as “analytical problem solving facilitated conflict resolution”. (Burton J.W, 1990)p 328. This was a bit of a mouthful and these workshops are now thought of simply as Problem Solving Workshops or to use Herb Kelman’s formulation, Interactive

Problem Solving workshops. These workshops brought together techniques from controlled communication workshops with Basic Human Needs. The main point of the workshops was to get parties in conflict to talk about the ways in which their needs for identity, recognition, security, welfare and participation were or were not being met and how and why these frustrated needs were generating the incompatibilities that lay at the heart of different types of violence. The driving idea was to get participants to acknowledge their needs and fears and then to direct their attention to needs satisfiers rather than self interests. (John W. Burton, 1990a) It was assumed that if conflicting parties could acknowledge each other's needs then they could discuss mutually agreed satisfiers that would enable non zero sum collaborative solutions to their problems.

To do this effectively Burton argued, required a paradigm shift from coercive power politics with zero sum outcomes to collaborative and negotiated anti-politics with non zero sum solutions. Burton argued that the only way that this would happen was under the watchful eye of a panel of skilled facilitators who would help participants see negative stereotypes, identify prejudiced behaviour and, negative misperceptions of the other and get them all to focus on their shared and irreducible "sociobiological" basic human needs.⁴ The important point about Problem Solving Workshops, however, was that they provided ways in

⁴ [See his 1990, 3 Volume series aimed at embellishing and expanding all of these concepts. (J. W. Burton, 1990; John W. Burton, 1990b).].

which academics could bring parties in violent conflict together for what we now think of as “Transformative Conversations”.

When I was Secretary General of International Alert I asked my Great Lakes Programme Manager, Bill Yates, what theory he employed in his work in Burundi and Rwanda. He laughed and said that he didn’t have any guiding theory. His role was to bring awkward and difficult people from awkward and challenging places to relatively safe spaces, where he and IA could catalyse awkward and difficult conversations, which might result in warring parties figuring out how to stop fighting and build or rebuild sustainable peaceful relationships.

To some extent this is exactly what collaborative problem solving is all about, namely bringing people out of violent conflict environments to safe places for facilitated conversations about how each one can help the other to meet their basic human needs. Identifying the right people to convene, however, is a critical part of this workshop and healing process.

John would probably not be happy with my characterisation of PSW’s. On the contrary as with most things he felt impelled to write an entire book mapping out 56 process rules to guide the facilitation panels. (John W. Burton, 1987) . The major point of these facilitation techniques, however, was to create an environment within which individuals could (i) change their perceptions of those they were in conflict with; (ii) recognise the centrality of frustrated human needs in the conflict; (iii)

start thinking about positive relationships and (iv) begin the challenging process of option generation to enable the actors to transform their relationships in a more peaceable direction. These workshops were very deliberately not negotiations but elicitive processes aimed at getting shared agreement about the nature of the problems each was dealing with and some sense of how to resolve them.

An important part of the PSW process was getting parties to cost the consequences of their actions. Burton felt that if you could get participants to cost, honestly, the emotional, material and personal consequences of the conflict the search for solutions would become an imperative. After costing the conflict or in Zartman's terms after reaching some "mutually hurting stalemate" (Zartman, 2000) conflicting parties would then be prepared to look at their needs (especially frustrated identity needs) and work out how they could treat each other with dignity and respect. Only by doing this would they begin to recognize their collaborative power and capacity and their joint ability to do something about their incompatibilities. These two elements of the PSW model (costing the conflict and satisfying identity needs) remain important practice tools for any third party intervener and still guide much of our practice in relation to conflict transformation.

The challenge facing those of us working in this field today is whether or not John's overarching concern with satisfying basic human needs at the

inter personal, intergroup and national levels are all that helpful in relationship to current challenges to peacefulness?

From when John began his work in the 1960s there are now many individuals and organisations engaged in what can loosely be described as non violent transformation of violent relationships coupled with short and long term peacebuilding and non violent social change.⁵

In fact even before Burton, there were many other individuals and organisations engaged in somewhat similar processes. The Quakers, for example were convening conferences for diplomats across the cold war divide and also engaging in quietly facilitated discussions with warring parties in Geneva, New York and London as well as in conflict zones such as Biafra, India-Pakistan, and the Middle East.(Yarrow, 1978) (A. Curle, 1971) (Adam Curle, 1986). Since the 1970s and 80s there has been a nonviolent explosion of individuals and groups who are engaged in somewhat similar processes to those that John devised in the 1960s. In addition to the Quakers, there are organisations like Conciliation Resources, International Alert, Search for Common Ground, Mercy Corps and the Mennonite Central Committee to name a few who have committed themselves to working with small groups of actors in conflict zones interested in nonviolent solutions to their violent problems.

⁵ Herb Kelman, for example, told me in personal correspondence, that “ Over the years my colleagues and I have organised over 80 workshops and related events mostly with Israeli and Palestinian participants . This estimate includes only workshops in which I was personally involved not ones organised by my students and associates without my participation. “

If John were here now he would probably acknowledge some of these initiatives and dismiss the rest because of straying from his own techniques. There are, however, many practitioners who still use some variant of the PSW ⁶ to bring warring parties together for collaborative and analytical problem solving although some many would frame their work as conflict transformation rather than interactive problem solving. There are many others, who have built on, designed and developed their own processes for dealing with deep rooted and intractable conflict. Although they would not necessarily label themselves as problem solving facilitators in Burtonian terms. There is enough commonality, between what John did from the 1960s to 1980s and what many of us continue to do today for there to be some intellectual and practical link back to John and those who developed his ideas like Chris Mitchell, Tony De Reuck, Herb Kelman. Nadim Rouhana, and Eileen Babbitt to name a few. Others like Adam Curle, John Paul Lederach, Paula Green, Paula Gutlove, Lisa Schirch et al take what they will from Burton but have developed their own distinctive conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes. ⁷

The questions we have to ask, however, are what successes can we point to from problem solving workshops and all the other efforts to bring small groups together to deal with both the presenting problems

⁶ I formed a PSW team two years ago to bring influential from Korea, China and Japan together to discuss stresses and strains in their relationships-of which more later.

⁷ See John Paul Lederach. (J. P. Lederach, 2000) (John Paul Lederach, 2005), Galtung (Galtung & International Peace Research Institute., 1996)Kelman, (Herbert C. Kelman & Cohen, 1976)Mitchell , (C. Mitchell & Banks, 1999)Curle (Adam Curle, 1986, 1999)

and underlying sources of direct and indirect violence? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these initiatives and how do they help us deal creatively and nonviolently with the very particular challenges of the 21st century?

I want to try and answer some of these questions in relation to some past problem solving workshops and a variety of other peace initiatives, which are arguably in a Burtonian tradition even though they have no direct lineage to Burton himself. I will finish by asking whether we need to revisit John's desire for a completely new political philosophy and orientation to power, since it is becoming increasingly clear that levels of political dissatisfaction with established political processes in all parts of the world are rising.⁸

One person who stands very directly in John's lineage of Burtonian problem solvers is Herb Kelman. I want to focus some attention on his initiatives, because, unlike Burton, he has been actively concerned to quantify and evaluate whether or not these workshops do or do not make a difference.

In a recent article in *Political Psychology*, Herb acknowledges the Damascene experience he had observing John's facilitation of a Cyprus workshop in 1966. (H. C. Kelman, 2015) It was exactly what he was looking for in relation to his work on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He

⁸ The Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sander's phenomena in the UK and the US are good examples of this dissatisfaction with establishment politicians, political spin and a lack of basic honesty in political discourse.

absorbed the process and went back to Harvard to adapt, modify and initiate his own interactive problem solving initiatives. After directly facilitating 80 such workshops, Kelman now thinks of himself as a “Multipartial” facilitator, which is quite different from John’s Olympian assumption of strictly neutral facilitators.⁹ Kelman has over the years also acquired formidable knowledge about the Middle East both in terms of context and the parties. This too is something of a departure from John’s model. Burton thought that regional expertise was unnecessary to run a successful workshop and used to argue that if the process was right the facilitator simply had to hold it and the local expertise would be expressed by the participants themselves. Both Kelman and Burton, however, were and are committed to direct communication between adversaries, the centrality of the Human Needs framework and the scholar practitioner model.

Both of them see Problem Solving Workshops as academically based unofficial, third party approaches to conflict resolution. (Neither would use the term transformation although I think that this is a more accurate description of what each does in a PSW). They are both concerned to utilize these processes to promote changes in individuals as well as the larger conflict system.¹⁰ This is what most of us who think of ourselves

⁹ I think that Kelman’s idea of multipartiality is a good one, however, as it signals clearly to all participants that problem solving facilitators share an equal commitment to all sides of the conflict and are interested in everyone being able to forge peaceful and harmonious relationships even if they have been appalling and dominatory oppressors.

¹⁰ There are some ground rules for problem solving workshops which both Burton and Kelman have tried to adhere to over time. I will outline them here so that those who are unfamiliar with the process know what goes into them. See Kelman pp33-

as scholar practitioners want to do. The question is how and what successes can we point to. One attempt to do this was Mary Anderson's Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, which generated some important learnings for all of us working in this field. In this project she identified a central challenge for all micro level processes, namely, how to ensure that what happens at this level gets translated into what is now thought of as "Peace writ large". This is the biggest challenge for all of us who try and do good where we can, with whoever will join us, with limited time frames.¹¹

One way facilitators try and ensure "peace writ large" is by ensuring that participants in the workshops are "influentials", that is people close to power or able to influence those who are. The second way is by

26 (Herbert C. Kelman, 2008)The first ground rule is the principle of privacy and confidentiality which is very crucial if you are working with adversaries locked in violent conflict. Second, the process is not political it is analytical and problem solving. Third there is no expectation that parties will reach an agreement but there is interest in reaching common ground. Fourth there is equality of the two parties within the workshop setting. This has raised all sorts of comments and criticisms about whether facilitators can really `generate this kind of equality even in a workshop setting but it is a guiding aspiration and in my experience this normally happens parties who are assymetrical in the conflict find themselves on an even playing field within the workshop. Finally the facilitation team does not take part in the substantive discussion it simply creates the conditions for the parties themselves to seek common ground. The agenda's normally follow a common format. (a) An exchange of information between the parties about the situation under discussion (b) a needs analysis -concerns and existential fears- and (c) working towards some common solutions.

¹¹ There have been numerous efforts to assess the positive and negative impacts of this kind of work. I was involved in one such initiative, namely the *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project* of Mary Andreson (Anderson, Chigas, Olson, & Woodrow, 2004). The issues that Mary, Diana and Lara raised at the end of their study are pretty much the same as the ones that I will raise from an analysis of university based initiatives.

trying to create learning experiences within the workshops, which can be transferred back to the contexts from which participants come. (Herbert C. Kelman, 2008)p 33. The third way is by ensuring that our micro processes are at the right “entry point” for different phases of official negotiation processes. (Pre-negotiation, para-negotiations, breakdown of negotiations or post negotiations). P249 Kelman (H. C. Kelman, 2015). Or alternatively by making sure that the central topics of the workshop are addressing fundamental existential dilemmas being faced by individuals under economic, political, military duress.

In my experience, however, most of these workshops are never that closely connected to official negotiating processes, they either run in parallel or in sequential phase. They thus often appear to be related but are actually disconnected to more official processes.

Recently I have been facilitating a series of problem solving workshops in Northeast Asia. These emerged in response to the inability of the Japanese government to initiate summit meetings or even high level officials meetings with Korea and Japan because of Prime Minister Abe’s right wing revisionist position on war history and the Senkaku /Dokdo island disputes with both Korea and China.

There were, therefore, no on going negotiations, just a concern to work out how to create a political environment that was conducive to convening high-level summit meetings. I think that my experience is fairly common for many other such initiatives. Third parties are asked

to convene meetings to deal with very specific crises or dilemmas in order to prevent violence or develop paths back from violence. They are normally requested by moderates seeking alternatives to violence and by people who are shocked at the ways in which simple incompatibilities become sources of deep division and polarization.

While they might not pull countries or warring parties back from the brink the workshops do, however, play an important role in identifying the problems, combatting stereotypes, developing de-escalatory language, building relational empathy and a shared hopeful vision for the future but the meso and macro effects are often quite elusive even if participants have identified specific conciliatory gestures that can be made on the way. In that regard check out Chris Mitchell's excellent book on this subject. (C. R. Mitchell, 1991) .

Kelman has always been much more explicit than Burton about the two goals of interactive problem solving workshops. As Nadim Rouhana eloquently argued in his critique of such workshops (Rouhana, 2000) clarity about goals is critical to workshop success. The operational goals for Kelman's workshops have been first "producing change in the particular individuals participating in a workshop" and second "transferring these changes to the policy process" (H. C. Kelman, 2015)p 244. The challenge with these goals is that the requirements for maximizing individual change might contradict the requirements for maximizing transfer, which is what Kelman refers to as the "dialectics of problem solving workshops".

This dilemma and dialectic, however, is at the heart of what we all do as track two civil society actors in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. We all need to ask what sorts of changes we are trying to induce in the participants and what sorts of policy changes we would like them to propose. The big challenge is how to do this in a non-directive, non-didactic fashion? How can we create a space for agonistic discussion, for example, which doesn't result in us imposing our own values, aspirations and norms on the participants? How do we do this in a way that embraces the complexities of the situation while avoiding simplistic dualisms? How do we live with all the questions and ambiguities that conflicting parties bring to the table? And how do we avoid rushing to premature integration or unity when it is clear that the conflicting parties remain stuck in victim-perpetrator narratives? How can we do this when most western democracies are deliberately and systematically attacking civil society actors and privileging the national security state as the arbiter of what will or will not produce peace and order?

In relation to the three workshops I facilitated between China, Japan and Korea (2013-2014) for example, there was no doubt that we changed the attitudes, perspectives of and relationships between all the participants. The participants told us in evaluations that the discussions had been useful for giving them a deeper appreciation of the other side and for critiquing simplistic stereotypes. Our aims, however, had been relatively modest. We wanted to get the Japanese participants to

understand the diverse ways in which their government's actions were activating painful traumatic memories in Korea and China and we were wanting the Korean and Chinese participants to understand Japanese fears and anxieties and why they might be wanting to renegotiate post war peace agreements, remilitarize and become a "normal" nation again. At the end of the workshops, there was no doubt that all participants were more convivial towards each other than at the beginning. There was equally no doubt that they had a deeper appreciation of the issues that divided them and the traumatic memories that were impeding peaceful coexistence in Northeast Asia.

As one participant from Korea said:

"Recognition is an extremely important issue in Northeast Asia. Japan wants to be recognized as a "normal state," and this is the reason why it wants to revise its constitution and build up its military. Rising China wants to be recognized as a normal "great power." South Korea wants to be recognized as a "middle power."

This was an unprompted comment on Burton's recognition need.

The participants were also able to grasp competitive victimhood dynamics and why different kinds of Japanese apology never seemed to completely satisfy China or Korea. But there is very little I can point to in Japan, Korea and China which indicates that the initiative as a whole or the changed attitudes and behavior of the individual participants towards each other has altered the views of the Shinzo Abe, Xi Jinping, or Park Geun Lee governments or even senior officials underneath them.

At the level of individual workshop participant, however, even though the transfer effect was not obvious, friendships were formed, stereotypes challenged and some of the conversations reported back to Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. What was noticeable, however, was a major change in the atmospherics of the group. The first workshop started stiffly with participants holding strong national positions and physically locating themselves in national groups. Over the course of all three workshops, however, this frostiness was replaced by genuine warmth and a new sense of optimism and possibility. This kind of change should not be sneered at. The challenge is to work out what these changed atmospherics mean outside of the group and how they might be reproduced across societies as large and as complex as China, Japan and Korea.

Thus in terms of effectiveness I think we can argue that these meetings are important at the micro level but the re-entry problem and the transfer problem remain important challenges to those of us who believe in the power of small transforming circles to change what happens at the meso and macro levels.

Kelman's workshops have lasted much longer than my small initiatives so he is able to argue that the workshops he organized on the Palestine-Israeli conflict-along with other unofficial efforts;

“... helped to lay the groundwork for the Oslo agreement of September 1993. They contributed by developing cadres

prepared to carry out productive negotiations; by creating opportunities to share information and formulate new ideas that provided substantive inputs into the negotiations and by fostering a political atmosphere that made the parties open to a new relationship” (Herbert C. Kelman, 2008) p 32

But even this modest contribution was wiped out with the failure of Camp David and the second ‘Intifada.’ Much to Kelman’s regret many of the personal relationships that he helped create in his workshops were stressed and strained by these events. Mistrust replaced the trust that had been built up over the years and the whole process had to begin again.

I wonder, how many other scholar practitioners, however, are willing to dedicate 45 years of their careers to creating safe spaces for building and rebuilding stressed, torn and broken relationships across deep boundaries of difference. Certainly John Burton did not have this sort of patience. He moved from conflict to conflict without leaving behind alumni of the sort that Kelman can point to.

There have been many analyses of the costs and benefits of problem solving workshops running from how to engage questions of power without being sucked back into a coercive power politics frame;(K. Avruch, 2013)dealing with cultural differences and different understandings of needs and how to satisfy them. (K. Avruch, Black,Peter. W, 1987) There have been explorations into whether

women are better participants and facilitators of these workshops than men; (d'Estrée & Babbitt, 1998) and whether any of this work can be done effectively without a clear commitment to nonviolent and pacifist solutions to violence. But enough has been said to demonstrate that even though this is not a perfect process it can have transformative consequences for individuals and in favourable circumstances can result in creative non-violent options for elite level decision makers. The major point is that conflict transformation processes of this kind are good examples of cumulative acts of small goodness aimed at building relational empathy and virtuous non-violent dynamics to replace the vicious ones.

Meeting 21st century challenges

Are these examples of small “goodnesses” capable of dealing with the challenges we are confronting in the 21st century? In the absence of anything else they clearly have their place and concerned scholars and others have to do what we can where we can to help generate cultures and structures of peace rather than violence. But are they up to the challenges of the 21st century?

To take violence alone, this year the Uppsala Conflict Data Program recorded 40 armed conflicts with a minimum of 25 battle deaths, which is up by six from 2013. This is the highest number of conflicts recorded since 1999 and 11 of these conflicts are recorded as wars, with 1,000 or more battle deaths. Uppsala’s best guess for battle related deaths last

year was 101,400 most from the Syrian conflict but increasing numbers from the four separate conflicts in the Ukraine.(Petterson, 2015) .

The direct battle deaths, however, are just the tip of a vast iceberg of human misery. 59.5 million individual human beings have been forcibly displaced by war by the end of 2014. That number has increased in 2015 but we do not have good data on this yet. An estimated 13.9 million people were newly displaced by conflict in 2014, including 2.9 million new refugees. In 2014 the country hosting the largest numbers of refugees was Turkey with 1.59 million refugees. Syria is the world's top source country for refugees, overtaking Afghanistan which had held that title for 3 years. There are 38.2 million people who are internally displaced by war including 7.6 million in Syria alone. 32.3 million of these IDPs are under the protection of UNHCR. (UNHCR, 2015).

While the basic Human Needs of these millions are not being met its hard to think of problem solving workshops, capacity building projects, or even large scale development and peacebuilding projects making much of a dent in these figures. And this is the rub, how useful are the well intentioned interventions of liberally minded academics in privileged parts of the world in relation to cataclysms of these proportions?

This is particularly problematic when we think of the ways in which the world has been afflicted by 14 years of deliberately manufactured

political fear post 9/11. The world's conflicts have become nasty and entrenched because of pathological hegemonic initiative. Instead of an expansion of rational problem solving initiatives we have been exposed to 14 years of wars, military interventions, assassinations, torture, kidnappings and the growth of paranoid national security states everywhere. This has precipitated the emergence of reactive Islamic extremism across the Middle East. The state, which Burton rightly feared, has imposed secrecy on almost everything and there has been a systematic infantilisation and demobilisation of civil society actors everywhere. So what role is there for the academy and concerned citizens in this dystopian world?

How can we talk while Syria literally burns? But how can we not talk when the only alternative being mentioned by our leaders in the West are extra judicial executions by drone, renewed bombing raids and more military interventions on top of all the military interventions that have generated these cataclysms in the first place ? The other challenge in all of these conflicts is who do we talk to? Most of these conflicts are wars that are networked and deterritorialised; there are multiple parties with multiple issues making them structurally complex and problematic. The time for conflict preventing processes of a small or big kind have past so we are confronted by some extraordinary ethical , theoretical and practical challenges.

In the first place how do we in the West begin getting a clear moral compass on the problems that confront us? In particular how might we

replace the politics of fear with the politics of compassion? This is the subject of my study leave. How do we ensure that our security is seen in relational rather than agentic terms? How do we let our political leaders know that we wish to guarantee our security in the company of others rather than in opposition to others? And in relation to the current issue of the day, namely, the pressure of war torn refugees on Europe and any safe haven. How do we practice an ethics of hospitality so that these millions of human beings have a safe space to live and satisfy their other identity and welfare needs? What kinds of tools do we have in our theoretical and practice toolboxes to deal with these cosmic and complex tragedies?

In the first place it seems to me that as human beings have to rediscover some sense of our common humanity. This is no easy task but there is no point in catalysing positive micro processes if there is no general disposition to build transnational cosmopolitan community.

Second, everyone has a human obligation to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to all those in need and this is a global responsibility not just the responsibility of Turkey, Lebanon or Western Europe.

Third, taking my cues from my old friend and mentor Adam Curle we need to begin a global process of conscientisation/consciousness raising about which actors and which states are responsible for our current tragedies. It's a bit rich arguing that Europe has diminished

responsibility for Syrian, Afghani, Iraqi and Libyan refugees when the West generated the conditions for their displacement in the first place.

Fourth, how do we persuade these hegemonies and the networked groups of violent actors that they have spawned to assume responsibility for their actions and to figure out diplomatic and other strategies for stopping the violence rather than adding to it? What sorts of conversations with what sorts of people might short, medium and long term strategies for restoring peace and stability to all those places that know nothing but chaos at the moment?

Fifth, and this is the difficult bit, how do we in the global North join forces with those in the Global South in recognition of our common humanity to begin devising global solutions to these global problems. In addition to war, violence and forced displacement, we are all confronted with the negative consequences of climate change, accelerating youth populations, and growing global inequality.

Even if we could create thousands of problem solving processes and create small analytical groups on every continent to engage in problem solving it is unlikely that we would have much impact on the tectonic shifts that are occurring at the present moment. And here is the opportunity for Burton's second coming. The challenge it seems to me remains what John Burton was so prescient about 20 years ago. We need a new politics for a post colonial, post industrial, and post violent world. If this does not happen fast I fear for the future of the planet. Burton always said that the promise of Conflict Resolution (I prefer

conflict transformation) was to devise a way of being political that did not involve hierarchical, hegemonic and domatory individuals and institutions. It's a politics that is decentralised, networked, global in reach and it's a politics that does not depend on possessing a monopoly of force. It's a politics that depends on human will, hopefulness, and a realisation of collaborative capacity. It is grass roots and top down politics. Its a politics that is profoundly contextual, aimed at building emancipatory relationships and transforming institutions so that they are relatively equal and participatory. It's a politics in which the arms trade and the global financial sector are brought under effective global control. It's a politics where everyone is valued for who they are not who we would like them to be and it's a politics with the satisfaction of basic human needs at its heart. And, it must be a politics that has conflict transformation at its heart. As John Paul Lederach says,

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.(John Paul Lederach, 2003) p .14

You can summarise this in John Paul's mantra:

Reach out to those you fear

Touch the heart of complexity

Imagine beyond what is seen

Risk vulnerability one step at a time

Even though it's a long way from interactive problem solving and sounds a tad utopian. I think it's a vision that John and all the other Burtonians and neo Burtonians would be proud of.

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