

Moral judgments, Human Needs and conflict resolution

Alternative approaches to ethical
standards

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Many proponents of the Human Needs approach to severe conflicts argue that such conflicts arise from unsatisfied basic human needs and that the conflicts can be resolved when adversaries in a conflict, aided by facilitators, recognize that those unsatisfied needs and/or the perception of them were generated by their conflict. Building on that recognition, the adversary parties may change the conditions and/or their understanding of each other's human needs. Those changes can then transform the conflict positively. Experience in problem-solving workshops provides evidence that these ideas often resonate with workshop participants. This combination of theory and practice in facilitated workshops and dialogue sessions is attractive to many workers in the conflict resolution field.

An additional attraction of a Human Needs approach for some practitioners and theoreticians in the conflict resolution field is that it seems to provide firm ground to stand on in order to assess when a conflict's resolution or outcome is likely to be regarded as just and sustainable. By positing the existence of specific, universal human needs, thwarting the perceived satisfaction of those needs can be judged to be morally wrong. The combination of having a basis for judging the morality of conflict outcomes together with knowing the factual basis for severe conflicts and knowing ways to resolve such conflicts enhances the value of each set of ideas.

In this chapter I examine the validity of this particular combination of three sets of ideas as they relate to relatively non-institutionalized large-scale conflicts. Admittedly, some proponents of the existence and importance of basic human needs emphasize the link between conflict and satisfying those needs, as a matter of science and not of morality. This is the case for John Burton, for example, who views the universal needs as rooted in social psychology (Sites 1973; Burton 1990). Maslow's theory of a hierarchy of human needs from physiology through social needs is also essentially analytic (Maslow 1970).

Nevertheless, the positing of human needs seems to invite the belief that it is morally right to try to satisfy them and wrong to obstruct human efforts to satisfy them. In any case, the wish among workers in the field of

conflict resolution to have a basis to judge the rightness of different ways to fight, goals sought and outcomes reached is strong. At the outset of this chapter, I discuss the reasons that having a firm basis by which people can judge the morality of different ways to wage and to resolve social conflicts is so important. I then examine the Human Needs approach articulated by Burton as providing an explanation for the waging and resolving of conflicts, doing so from the perspective of the conflict resolution approach. The place of the problem-solving workshop in the context of the broad spectrum of conflict resolution practices is then examined. Throughout, I discuss alternative claims regarding moral judgments of the ways conflicts are conducted and resolved, and contrast these with moral claims that might be made for Human Needs theory as a basis for moral judgments.

The importance of having solid ground to judge conflicts

There are several reasons to have clear and well-grounded standards to judge the propriety of alternative ways to conduct and various outcomes of conflicts. Most mundanely, persons engaging in conflict resolution work as interveners are increasingly being asked to assess the effectiveness of their work at the behest of funders of their work. Furthermore, anyone engaged in social action and efforts at social change should seek feedback about the effectiveness of their efforts so that appropriate adjustments in those efforts may be made.

Those assessments too often are quite limited, frequently focusing on reports of satisfaction with training or other conflict resolution measures by the persons who experienced them. Indicators are usually taken of possible outcomes sought by the conflict resolvers working to advance peace; they focus on the changes that the people providing intermediary services are trying to bring about. But other possible changes, desired and undesired, may not be subjects of inquiry. Yet such unplanned effects may be highly significant, for example, for longer-term impacts or other parties engaged in the conflict not directly targeted by the conflict resolvers.

Having principles by which to assess how a conflict is waged and ended can help partisans and interveners recognize and minimize unfortunate costs and consequences. Reflecting on such possible assessments can encourage consideration of better ways to wage conflicts, to intervene in them, and to settle them. Standards to assess how well conflicts are conducted and settled can help foster constructive conflicts and peace. Those benefits are greater insofar as the standards are widely shared by all parties in a conflict and by the would-be interveners. Another criterion for the standards is that they are comprehensive in encompassing the gamut of peoples impacted by a conflict. The benefits are enhanced insofar as the standards are congruent with good theory and evidence about the course of social conflicts in varying circumstances. Determining

what those standards should be, however, is extremely difficult, as discussed in this chapter.

Assessing Basic Human Needs in conflict resolution theory

Several chapters in this book and other writing discuss the Human Needs approach and how it provides a helpful guide to conflict resolution practice. And other chapters and publications offer critiques of this approach, notably by challenging the universality of particular human needs and their manifestations (Avruch 1998; Väyrynen 2001). But I will focus on problems in the Basic Human Needs approach deriving from conflict resolution theory and research and also from the practice of conflict resolution, all broadly understood. This focus can contribute to the integration of social conflict theory with conflict resolution practice, as the link between Basic Human Needs approach and problem-solving workshop practice are examined.

In this chapter, I discuss major tenets of social conflict theory as they are articulated or enacted by self-identified conflict resolvers and other persons engaged as conflict partisans or intermediaries. These conflict resolution tenets will be compared with the ideas of the Basic Human Needs approach.

The principles I discuss are particularly prominent in the conflict transformation or constructive version of the conflict resolution approach (Lederach 1997; Dayton and Kriesberg 2009; Kriesberg and Dayton 2012). There is no consensus on a comprehensive theory about the emergence, escalation, de-escalation and resolution of all kinds of conflicts. Therefore, I discuss principles and propositions of the evolving perspective underlying explanations of how conflicts are conducted and transformed. A basic premise in this perspective is that social conflicts are not inherently bad or destructive and to be avoided. Indeed, as widely understood, conflicts can be recognized not only as inevitable in social life, but they are often beneficial in discovering and advancing truth, justice, and other aspects of human well-being. Accordingly, there is a close relationship between moral concerns and how conflicts are conducted and resolved. Therefore we should try to maximize constructive ways of waging and resolving conflicts and minimize destructive ways.

A Human Needs approach, however, may imply that conflicts will not arise when basic human needs are sufficiently "satisfied"; sometimes there is a tendency to treat satisfaction dichotomously, as attained or not.

Another related tenet regarding large-scale social conflicts is that the emergence of a conflict and its course, moving through escalation, de-escalation and termination, is constructed in interaction among numerous actors. Those actors are made up of many different constituent groups, each of which has its own set of needs and concerns. To regard a large entity such as a nation or ethnic community as having a particular set of

basic human needs entails reifying that entity. It assumes the entity is much more homogenous and unitary than it actually is. Human needs are too often discussed in terms appropriate for an individual human being but not for a large collectivity.

The broad conflict transformation approach emphasizes the multiplicity of actors in every conflict, as they vary over time. Consequently, costs and benefits, pains and pleasures are experienced to different degrees among different elements within each side and they change over the course of a conflict. Moreover, the parameters of each socially constructed conflict can change significantly because all the groups engaged in that conflict are connected to numerous other conflicts (Kriesberg 1980; Bar-Siman-Tov 2006). When the salience of one conflict falls relative to another conflict's increasing salience, it is likely to de-escalate and may even become dormant.

Despite all this complexity, each conflict is too often considered to be a two-sided fight, particularly by the partisans. They readily structure it as a fight between "them" and "us." The fundamental trajectory of conflicts is largely shaped by the primary adversaries in the conflict, with intermediaries usually having only limited effects. Conflicts tend to move through stages as they emerge, escalate, de-escalate and move toward resolution. They are constantly in flux, shifting in multiple dimensions, at varying speeds.

In explaining the emergence of a conflict, deprivation and unsatisfied needs are not sufficient. A sense of grievance is only one of the conditions that minimally are combined for a conflict to emerge; a grievance entails a set of people feeling that they do not have what they should have or that others are offending their values. But, in addition, the emergence of a conflict requires that the people with the grievance believe that they have a shared identity, separate from people with different identities. The identity may be based on ethnicity, geographic location, occupational position, citizenship, ideology or any other presumed commonality. Which basic needs are more or less unrealized depends on the salient identities.

Furthermore, for a conflict to be manifested and waged, the members of a potential contentious party must believe that their unsatisfactory condition is attributable to the actions of some other identified group whose actions can be altered. A conflict will not arise if suffering unfulfilled human needs is attributed to God's unfathomable will or to one's own inadequacies. Members of the aggrieved group must envisage a goal whereby their grievance would be reduced if the people responsible for their grievance would change or go away.

Finally, the members of the aggrieved group must believe they are capable of acting so as to bring about the desired change in the group that is responsible for the grievance. They may believe that they can coerce the other side to change or use various non-coercive means to bring about the desired change, by persuasion or by promised benefits. This condition is

important, and it helps explain why so often a conflict does not erupt and if it does, it is the relatively powerful who start the fight.

Social conflict theory also has much to say about the course of a conflict: how it escalates, de-escalates, becomes transformed or terminated, and how the outcome is sustained. Considerable attention is given to means of struggle and managing them with minimal destructiveness. A fundamental idea is that conflicts are conducted in more or less institutionalized fashion. Within organizations, cities, countries and even internationally, there are rules about how to handle disputes and even major conflicts. The regulations vary in detail and in the effectiveness with which they are implemented.

In recent decades, considerable attention in conflict resolution theory and practice is being given to the transformation of destructive conflicts into sustained constructively conducted conflicts, particularly after periods of large-scale violence or oppression. Conduct that results in the emergence and escalation of conflicts is not the same as the conduct resulting in the persistence or the de-escalating transition of conflicts. Actions relating to negotiating conflict settlements, building legitimate conflict-management institutions and maintaining equitable relations are also different. The distinctions among these conflict stages varies among partisans and analysts; thus, a given situation, a war, may be seen as the outcome of past conduct or as a means to achieve a particular future outcome. Significantly for this chapter, the salience and interpretation of various human needs tend to vary in these different conflict stages.

Another complication is that opponents in every conflict are connected with each other by many ties and also by some degree of mutual interdependence. They also are embedded in larger social systems, which are characterized by shared values and interests as well as cross-cutting differences. Such factors generally help constrain conflicts from destructive escalation and diffusion. If the cross-cutting ties are numerous and very strong while the shared values are few and weak, however, the result would likely be widespread destructive conflicts.

These complexities stressed in social conflict theorizing pose another problem for applying a narrow Human Needs approach. The fulfillment of human needs is not a dichotomous matter; it is not likely to ever be fully met or unmet. In any circumstances a person may have various needs varyingly satisfied. Moreover, in any large-scale conflict, the members of each side will differ in the degree diverse needs are unsatisfied.

In short, it is not the existence of any particular human need that explains when a conflict becomes manifest or how it is conducted. Basic human needs do not, by themselves, explain the great variability in the patterns of the many different kinds of human conflict. Framing a conflict largely in terms of the satisfaction of basic human needs, nevertheless, may be useful in moderating and resolving a social conflict in certain circumstances. I turn to that consideration next.

Problem-solving workshops in the context of conflict resolution practice

Problem-solving workshops have been a major contributor to the development of the field of contemporary conflict resolution. The practice of bringing together a few persons from adversary countries, ethnic communities, business organizations, or government agencies for intensive interactions that are guided by facilitators has been an important vehicle for research into ongoing conflicts and also a way to help transform and resolve severe conflicts (Kelman 1992; Fisher 1997). Initially, in the 1960s, these workshops were usually organized and facilitated by academics.

Notably for the concerns of this chapter, they were specifically undertaken in the context of international and intra-state conflicts to foster movement toward a peaceful resolution. An early significant case related to the conflict in 1963–1966 among Indonesia, the newly formed Federation of Malaysia and Singapore; the conflict is often identified by its Indonesian name, *Konfrontasi* (Mitchell 2005). The conflict escalated despite many official mediated and unmediated efforts to settle it. A group of academics based at University College, London, led by John Burton, had been developing an alternative to traditional international relations scholarship. Given Burton's knowledge and connections acquired when he was a senior Australian diplomat, in December 1965 the group was able to initiate quiet discussions among high-level non-officials associated with the contending governments. The meetings among them, along with a panel of social scientists, went on into June 1966.

The discussions indicated the value of having social science ideas about conflicts introduced into the discussions by external facilitators. In this case, the ideas related to the functions of conflicts and the reasons for misunderstandings, not evidently about human needs. In this atmosphere, communication between persons from contending parties developed so that they better understood each other and could explore possible solutions to their conflict. The understandings and possible resolutions contributed to final official negotiations resulting in a settlement.

Many other problem-solving workshops followed, within the context of several intractable conflicts, most notably between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Palestinians and Israelis, and Republicans and Unionists in Northern Ireland (Rouhana and Kelman 1994; Rouhana 1995). In varying degrees, these facilitated workshops drew from evolving practice and thinking, sometimes including ideas pertaining to the Basic Human Needs approach. These workshops generally could not be credited with major breakthroughs, but they often helped to prepare for negotiations, complemented the negotiation process, or contributed to sustaining peace agreements. When they have contributed significantly to the transformation of a major conflict, the workshop participants were generally at high official levels.

A related kind of conflict resolution practices began in the 1950s and has continued to expand, often under the rubric of "Track Two" diplomacy, a

non-official channel of communication between leading figures from adversarial countries. The Pugwash and the Dartmouth conferences have made important contributions to conflict resolution theory and practice. In 1957, nuclear physicists and others involved in the development and possible use of nuclear weapons, working in the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, began meeting to exchange ideas about technical matters related to reducing the risks of nuclear warfare. The first meetings, held in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada, evolved into the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Discussions at these meetings contributed to the later signing of many arms-control agreements (Rotblat 1972; Pentz and Slovo 1981). In 1995, the Pugwash conferences and Joseph Rotblat, the executive director, won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work.

The Dartmouth conference began at the urging of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. At his request, Norman Cousins, then editor of the *Saturday Review*, brought together a group of prominent US and Soviet citizens to help keep communication open when official relations were especially strained. The first meeting was at Dartmouth College in 1960, and many meetings followed, providing a venue for the exchange of information and ideas such that participants could serve as quasi mediators (Chufrin and Saunders 1993).

After the Cold War, reflection on the process and the phases of development of the Dartmouth conference provided the basis for two members, Gennady I. Chufrin and Harold H. Saunders, to co-chair another set of conferences, called the Tajikistan Dialogue (Saunders 1995). A vicious civil war erupted in Tajikistan after the Soviet Union dissolved and Tajikistan became independent. Meetings among a wide range of high-ranking Tajikistanis were begun in 1993; their sustained dialogue facilitated by Saunders and Chufrin contributed to building interpersonal relations and developing ideas that significantly aided a settlement of the civil war.

It should be noted that persons who identify themselves as conflict resolvers or have been trained in conflict resolution are not the only people who apply diverse techniques and strategies that are excellent examples of mainstream conflict resolution thinking. In actuality, many people do so, unwittingly as well as wittingly. Indeed many of the ideas about negotiation, mediation and conflict transformation have been drawn from the doings of persons who were unschooled in the field. This includes government officials and former officials, religious figures and experts in technical affairs (Yarrow 1978).

Of course conflict resolution undertakings entail many other kinds of activities, aside from problem-solving workshops, dialogue groups, or Track Two diplomacy. One broad area of essential work is carried out largely by academically based persons. They conduct research, assess various conflict resolution practices, and analyze the trajectory of diverse kinds of social conflicts. They strive to synthesize the results of such efforts

and infer implications for conflict resolution practice. They also often teach and train people who are engaged in social conflicts or anticipate being so engaged regarding the ideas and practices of conflict resolution.

Another major set of activities focuses on developing alternative policies to those being pursued, which sustain and even exacerbate destructive conflicts. Thus, during the Cold War, peace and conflict analysts in Western Europe developed non-offensive defense strategies that were particularly influential for Soviet leaders and contributed to transforming the Cold War (Evangelista 1999; Wiseman 2002). This entailed, for example, ways to restructure defense forces so that they were clearly defensive, and not forces readily capable of rapid forward advances that could be regarded as designed for offense.

Many other persons and organizations working in the conflict resolution field analyze particular conflicts and propose policies for mitigating those conflicts. They publish books, magazine articles, or op-ed newspaper columns, suggesting general strategies or specific tactics to avoid destructive conflict escalation, to end a violent conflict, or to establish an enduring peace (Fisher *et al.* 1996; Galtung *et al.* 2002). They may also consult with conflict partisans providing advice and counsel to help transform a destructive conflict.

There are several other major areas of conflict resolution practice. They include direct mediation, as practiced by President Jimmy Carter while president and afterwards, by United Nations officials, and by members of non-governmental organizations. They include helping to build institutional arrangements that contribute to managing conflicts constructively, which may involve strengthening the relevant social infrastructure. That entails changing norms and modifying resource allocations, as well as establishing structures to conduct conflicts legitimately.

A great enlargement in conflict resolution work has emerged in recent decades, relating to recovering from disastrous mass violence and overcoming large-scale oppression. These grave problems, in the context of increasing globalization, have resulted in more frequent interventions to assist in needed societal transformations. Governments have not developed great capacities for such undertakings and international governmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have stepped in to perform the needed tasks, contributing to economic, political and social development. This work may entail facilitating group interactions fostering reconciliation, aiding and monitoring elections, and building systems to manage inter-communal conflicts.

The Human Needs approach seems particularly pertinent in many externally facilitated problem-solving workshops, perhaps especially when the participants are non-officials. An important kind of relevance is that the language of human needs may be accessible and attractive to the participants and therefore useful for the facilitators. This is noted in Chapter 11 by Susan Allen Nan. However, in many other domains of conflict

resolution practice, the ideas of the Human Needs approach do not play highly significant roles. Often, quite conventional ways of thinking about power and interests are applied and techniques of diplomacy, negotiation and mediation are used. In matters of conflict transformation, of constructive conflict escalation and of reconciliation the ideas of conflict analysis and resolution examined earlier are applied.

Alternative solutions for judging conflict conduct

In the light of this broad view of conflicts and their resolution and the limitations of the Basic Human Needs approach to explain the course of all kinds of social conflicts and therefore to provide standards of judgment of them, I turn to discuss possible alternative solutions.

One view of moral standards related to conducting social conflicts is that they derive from religious faith. Undoubtedly, many people in the world rely on their religious beliefs to provide moral guidance in conducting and intervening in conflicts. There are even some religious imperatives that are shared by many religions, for example, about doing unto others as one would want done to oneself.

However, in specific conflicts such religious directives generally provide parochial views rather than universal ones that would encompass enemies. Indeed, people on the basis of their religious faith characterize certain other people as evil and damnable. Although pacifist tenets can be found in many religious traditions, most leaders and followers in almost all religions tend to support the conflict choices made by civil authorities in the countries where the religious organizations function.

There are also some specific guidelines for particular kinds of conflicts that have philosophical and religious origins. For example, the just war doctrine is often presented as a way to limit warfare on moral grounds (Waltzer 1997). According to this reasoning, going to war justly requires a just cause, the probability of success, a legitimate public authority, proportionality, being a last resort and undertaken with a right intention. Furthermore, combatants should not conduct war actions against non-combatants; not use weapons such as mass rape or weapons with uncontrolled effects; war actions should be proportional and militarily necessary; and prisoners of war should be fairly treated. In actuality, political leaders can easily ignore such prescriptions or even claim their adherence to them as they make war as they please.

At another extreme, some people believe that moral standards are relative, deriving from culture and personal experience. No universal consensus about absolute standards exists or can exist. Furthermore, morality is based on value preferences, and according to an important social science tradition, value preferences cannot be derived from beliefs about reality. Morality is articulated in the form of "should" statements, not factual statements (Weber 1946). Moral standards are given authority

when people share understandings, for example, about God, which makes morality a matter of faith. According to widely accepted social science traditions, however, there is an objective reality that can be approached by empirical methods of research. Full and accurate understanding of the objective reality may never be attained, but by seeking it, more can be learned about it. That is the goal of the social as well as the natural sciences.

These conceptions of beliefs and values have been subjected to criticism and newer views should be considered here because they help lessen the dilemmas about what it means to act morally in conducting and resolving a conflict (Kriesberg 1999). The existence of a reality separable from the observation of it is sometimes questioned. The argument is that what we know must derive from observations and those are filtered through our senses, even if they are augmented by instruments (Rubinstein *et al.* 1984; Putnam 1987). It follows that reality can be known only under specific conditions of observation, and therefore reality varies under different conditions and from differently situated perspectives. However, this does not mean that we can construct reality any way we like. Matters vary in the strength of their predispositions to be perceived one way rather than another. After all, some things are generally viewed similarly, regardless of the bases of observations.

Recent research also has affected our understanding of morality. One development has been the growing recognition that certain kinds of conduct are generally deplored. Two kinds of research are particularly interesting in this regard. One is the study of human evolution and human tendencies regarding cooperation, trust and fairness. Another major area of relevant research pertains to the development of norms regarding conflicts.

A remarkable body of recent research revives Charles Darwin's original recognition that natural selection sometimes acts on groups as well as individuals (Sober and Wilson 1998). He pointed out that a tribe that included many members who were always ready to aid one another and to sacrifice themselves for the common good would defeat most other tribes with few such members. Therefore, the standard of morality would tend to increase everywhere. In the 1960s, on the contrary, many analysts of evolution argued that natural selection could act only on individuals and not on groups, and established the concept of selfishness as paramount in evolutionary biology. At the same time, the concept of psychological egoism became prominent, minimizing the tendency of people to consciously choose to act altruistically. Beginning in the 1970s, however, group selection and intentional altruism became recognized and demonstrated in anthropological field work, psychological experimentation, philosophical reasoning and analyses in evolutionary biology.

For example, there have been numerous studies of food sharing among hunters and gatherers in human societies that reveal the widespread

practice of the more successful members of a group sharing food with those who are less successful. How extensive this is and the conditions that contribute to it vary with ecological and social conditions (Kaplan and Hill 1985). There is evidence that humans favor fairness and cooperation, innately dislike extreme hierarchical differences, and punish persons acting unfairly (Gintis *et al.* 2001; Fahr and Gächter 2002). Of course, as with human needs, such innate tendencies do not determine conduct. Their manifestation is shaped by cultural definitions of fairness and equality and by many social circumstances. They vary for relations within a "tribe" or between "tribes," and membership in a tribe or other identity group is socially constructed. But the existence of such traits among humans should be kept in mind in discussions of human nature.

Norms that guide conduct related to conflict are increasingly studied, revealing that certain kinds of actions are almost universally deplored. Even those persons who perpetrate condemned acts often hide or deny that they or members of their group actually committed such acts. But sometimes they even come to acknowledge that their group was wrong or that they themselves did wrong. The extension of shared norms may be seen in the growing acceptance of the existence of universal human rights and the widening condemnation of torture, rape and genocidal acts (Mueller 1983; Pinker 2011). The study of normative regimes in international affairs also indicates the existence of moral standards that influence the conduct of governments sharing those standards (Krasner 1983).

Shared normative standards provide a basis for moral imperatives. This is exemplified by the argument for conventionalism as the basis for ethics in international relations and other domains. Ethics is based on principles that people use to justify and win acceptance from others for their actions. To be effective, the concerned parties must share the principles. Rather than promulgating any particular ethical tradition as the foundation for moral theory, moral obligation can be and is based on agreement to regard "certain rules as authoritative, and certain practices as legitimate. . . . Whatever the parties concerned agree to regard as just or legitimate is just or legitimate," according to this view (Welch 1994). The present discussion is based on this conventionalist approach. Accordingly, I neither assert that there is a universally agreed-on moral code, nor assume that a particular moral code is supreme. However, the argument does not assert that every conventional moral code is equally supportable (Edgerton 1992).

Furthermore, in recent decades, increased use has been made of social science research to assess and help formulate social policies. The results often remind us that good intentions do not guarantee good results. Therefore, it is useful to carefully examine the actual consequences of alternative policies. Analyzing the consequences of different ways of fighting and of intervening does help ground morality in empirical and practical considerations.

The expanding work in conflict resolution has stimulated practitioners and analysts to reflect on the nature of their knowledge and of their morality. These concerns compel attention to the varying interpretations of the past and the present that adversaries construct, even about the same events. Moreover, as noted earlier, many practitioners and advocates of non-violence and conflict resolution believe that through mutual probing all parties can gain a more complete truth (Gandhi 1940). The probing can occur in many channels, including interactive workshops, confrontations in a non-violent campaign, or community meetings.

I believe that conflict resolution efforts require attention to moral issues (Nader 1991). For example, mediators and other kinds of interveners face choices about whether to intervene, when to intervene and how to intervene. Moreover, the partisans waging a struggle endeavor to morally justify their actions to their constituents and allies and also to their adversaries. If they take a conflict resolution approach, the moral issues are particularly salient. Some conflict resolvers concerned about the morality of various kinds of interventions declare particular basic values or moral principles that should guide conflict resolution work. James Laue, for example, argued that conflict resolution ethics rest on "the basic premise ... that persons are inherently valuable, and to be treated as ends-in-themselves" (Laue 1982: 34; also Laue and Cormick 1978). He derived three core values from this premise: proportional empowerment, justice and freedom; and on the bases of these values, he offers several ethical principles for interveners.

The analysis of conflicts makes evident that no means of struggle and no settlement has purely good or bad consequences. Every course of action embodies a mixture of moral characteristics. Thus, people may fight for a future with greater social justice, but in doing so they often reduce freedom for many, engage in killing, and suffer severe losses; or a settlement may end the killing, but only briefly and in a way that engenders new injustices. Indeed, to insist on the primacy of one's own value-ordering and moral principles contradicts some aspects of the conflict resolution perspective. I am convinced that reflecting on the growing empirical evidence about social conflicts can help guide partisans and intermediaries to more effectively mitigate the destructiveness of conflicts.

In the light of thousands of years of human civilizations, it is possible to discern trends toward larger realms of inclusion for humans. More and more forms of exclusion and subjugation have become widely viewed as unacceptable. This is evident regarding the practice of slavery, harsh treatment of young children and subordination of women. Such conditions continue in varying degree in some places around the world. Nevertheless, they have been increasingly deemed wrong and have diminished through the millennia.

Since the end of World War II, there has been a great movement to promote adherence to human rights. The movement has included an expansion in the domains and countries in which there is official and

public recognition of them; there also has been increasing institutional structures and ad hoc practices to punish violators. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, was a founding document for the movement. It stressed principles of liberty and equality and individual rights; this was criticized by some governments and additional covenants were adopted in subsequent years. In 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were adopted by the United Nations. Subsequently, conventions were adopted opposed to discrimination against any races, women and persons with disabilities, against torture and for the rights of migrant workers.

In addition to the broad standards of human rights, another way in which moral standards are set forth and implemented is by specifying them in particular arenas of conflict behavior. Elements of this were set forth in the Geneva Conventions, beginning in 1864. This has been greatly elaborated, often by drawing from both the analysis of actual conflict behavior and from widely shared norms and prescriptions, which may be embodied in international and national laws. The expansion of non-governmental advocacy groups for the protection of human rights has contributed greatly to this. Work by people in the field of human rights and in the field of conflict resolution can and do complement each other (Babbitt and Lutz 2009).

Policy recommendations based on empirical experience and normative concerns are exemplified in the formulation of a new doctrine: the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). It is responsive to the failure of international actors to intervene when that seems to be needed and the inadequacies of interventions when they actually are undertaken (Hall 2010; Mills and O'Driscoll 2010). During the wars breaking up Yugoslavia, the debates around the world about whether or not and how to intervene while mass atrocities were underway propelled efforts to agree about what should be done to deal with such circumstances. Addressing the General Assembly in 1999 and 2000, Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for international consensus about not allowing gross violations of human rights and yet not assaulting state sovereignty. In September 2000 the Government of Canada joined by major foundations established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), co-chaired by Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun.

A year later, the Commission released its report, enunciating two basic principles:

1. State sovereignty implies responsibility and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself.
2. Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle

of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.

(www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/publications)

The R2P has three components: 1. the responsibility to *prevent* the harms identified above by addressing root causes and direct causes of those harms; 2. the responsibility to *respond* appropriately to the situations of compelling need, and only in extreme cases respond with military intervention; 3. the responsibility to *rebuild*. Furthermore, the responsibility to prevent should have the highest priority. Military intervention should be the last resort and be the minimal amount needed to reach the objective. Security Council authorization should be sought in all cases and if the Security Council does not authorize action, the General Assembly may be asked to consider the proposal.

Acceptance of the idea that the international community has a responsibility to protect, as prescribed in the report, has speedily grown (von Schorlemer 2007). This was recognized at the September 2005 United Nations' World Summit by the world's heads of state and governments. In 2007 Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took steps to institutionalize the Responsibility to Protect. An international coalition of NGOs is engaged in strengthening the normative and institutional character of R2P (<http://responsibilitytoprotect.org>). It is also noteworthy that on March 28, 2011, President Obama used some of the language of R2P in explaining and justifying the US intervention in Libya.

Efforts to assess particular kinds of peace actions can propose policy guidelines derived from widely shared norms and empirical analyses of such actions. This is demonstrated in Diehl and Druckman's (2010) book, *Evaluating Peace Operations*. The authors derive three core peace operations goals from the statements and mandates of the major stakeholders in such operations, national and international agencies and organizations. The core goals are violence abatement, conflict containment and conflict settlement.

Diehl and Druckman identify several measures of progress for each core goal, discussing limitations of each measure. They do the same for goals that are more specific to a particular mission. Analyzing the attainment of goals at that operational level focuses attention on actual effects of peace efforts and not on general intentions or remaining at the level of quite general goals. By formulating the template for evaluating a wide array of peace operations relatively broad principles of judgment are recognized. This also tends to expand the moral standard by which the operational actions are to be judged.

Conclusions

It should be clear that the quest for firm ground to stand on in ethically judging all kinds of ways to wage and to settle diverse conflicts is not likely

to be wholly successful. Particular persons and groups may prescribe standards, but without very widespread agreement about them, they cannot be effective. Such agreement is unlikely on a global scale in the foreseeable future. Moreover, such prescriptions unavoidably must be stated at a very abstract level and result in contradictions as multiple prescriptions are applied to specific cases under specific conditions.

The availability of a well-grounded comprehensive theory about all kinds of conflicts and their trajectories is also needed to formulate effective ethical standards for making and sustaining peace. Again, there is no consensus about any such comprehensive conflict theory. I doubt its feasibility in adequate detail. There is an inherent problem in developing a comprehensive theory when partisans and intermediaries are nearly always focused on a single case within a particular time period. The clinical medical model is one way to deal with that matter. But a public health model may be a better one. In the clinical model, a physician draws from many disciplines and applies them to a unique patient. In the public health model, general preventive measures are taken for the benefit of populations.

A public health approach also includes engaging non-professionals so that they behave in ways that prevents damaging their health. This relates to not spreading diseases and avoiding disabling accidents, as well as eating and exercising properly. An important aspect of conflict resolution work is the diffusion of knowledge and skills about preventing, containing and recovering from destructive conflicts. A risk in such diffusion is that isolated techniques in conflict resolution are adopted or only the words of conflict resolution are taken. Ignoring the basic ideas of the field can easily result in mistakes and ineffective actions. Some of the core ideas of the approach should diffuse with specific words or techniques. Furthermore, moral considerations are advantageously associated with the diffusion of the ideas and practices of conflict resolution. More research and reflection is needed about various packages of theory and practices as they are brought to bear in different circumstances.

The Human Needs approach to conflict resolution might be usefully viewed as one solution for a particular set of intervention methods to be applied to a particular set of conflicts, under certain conditions. That is not bad. However, this is only one of a number of possible moral yardsticks, as I have previously argued. The analysis made in this chapter indicates that islands of mini-theory and sets of limited practices are a way to develop ethical standards to guide conduct. Such islands would be for the use of partisans in a conflict and for intermediaries who do not view themselves as conflict resolvers, as well as for those who so define themselves (Kriesberg 2011).

The world is incredibly messy. Even if neat universal moral or theoretical guides are unattainable, it is not advisable to ignore the issue of morality in waging and settling conflicts. Conflict resolution practitioners can be

clear about the moral standards they choose to use. They should recognize other standards are possible, and are likely to be held by other stakeholders. All who strive to advance peace and widely equitable relations should strive for greater normative consensus and also bring to bear the best evidence possible about the trajectories of various social conflicts and what affects them.

Note

- 1 An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the conference "Reconsidering John Burton: Conflict Resolution and Basic Human Needs," April 29–May 1, 2011, The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. I thank the participants of the conference for their comments and also Bruce W. Dayton, Paula Freedman, Robert A. Rubinstein, and Carolyn M. Stephenson for their comments.

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