

## Nonviolent Conflict Transformation and Peace Journalism

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### Editors' preface

Nanni Salio (1943-2016) was a passionate and indefatigable theorist and activist in the fields of environmentalism and sustainability, pacifism and nonviolent conflict resolution. In publishing posthumously a translation of this paper, *Visions for Sustainability* wishes to pay tribute to his commitment and the importance of his contribution to the development of these fields. The paper examines the importance of the work of John Galtung, together with his debt to Mahatma Gandhi, within the framework of peace research and studies in the field of conflict and its transformation by nonviolent means. Both a model for conflict analysis and an approach to its nonviolent transformation are proposed. These lead to a discussion of the characteristics and significant role of peace journalism as part of a necessary transformation of paradigms in order to promote a sustainable approach to conflict. The work of Mahatma Gandhi is inextricably linked to his role in the nonviolent struggle for Indian independence. A recent article published in *The Times*<sup>1</sup> reported that India is firmly on track to become the third-fastest growing economy in the world, overtaking those of long-established countries such as the UK. From the perspective of classical economic growth, the tables seem to have been turned on "first-world" economies, yet at the same time India is gaining very high scores in terms of statistics on violent clashes between different religious groups, political corruption and gender violence. In *The Argumentative Indian* (2005) Amartya Sen drew attention to his own country as the birthplace of many creeds, a breeding ground for the largest multiplicity of languages, religious beliefs and ethnic groups, yet almost no other country seems to be so dramatically divided. From a cultural heritage of exchange and dialogue to a fast-growing modern India at the helm of a capitalist economy, the tables have indeed been turned from quite a different perspective. Historically, such periods of transition bring massive economic, social, and environmental transformations, yet the implications these may have at a global scale are less than obvious and by no means clear to all viewers. For India, as with a number of other countries, 'social instability' or even open conflict as is the case in Syria, are presented as recent occurrences, by-products of 'newly' emerging social or economic patterns, a rhetoric of the present, featuring rich and poor, winners and losers, 'victims' and 'perpetrators'. Watching the news from afar, the public is cast in the role of spectators, hopeful and hopeless. Nanni Salio argues that peace journalism has a fundamental role to play in 'joining the dots', enabling people to see the connections and opening up dialogical spaces. His paper outlines the key features of peace journalism and discusses the implications for training and practice in media communication.

## Introduction

Within the field of peace research, the seminal work of Johan Galtung develops directly from that of Mahatma Gandhi. One of his first works, elaborated together with his teacher Arne Naess, was concerned with the ethics of Gandhi's nonviolence policy (Galtung & Naess 1955), subsequently further developed by Naess (1974). Galtung defined Gandhi as a "conflictologist", or a founder of a "science of conflicts" (Galtung, 1987).

On 2 October 2007, on the occasion of Gandhi's birthday, at the opening conference of the first International Nonviolence Day promoted by the United Nations in New York, Galtung identified five basic points of Gandhian teaching. Two of these are of particular interest for this article: *never fear dialogue* (during all his battles Gandhi spoke with anyone, including the Viceroy of an Empire he hated, and his life shows how this bore fruit) and *never fear conflict: it is an opportunity rather than a threat*.

For Gandhi, a conflict was a challenge to get to know one another, to find something in common, for parties to not remain indifferent to each other. He preferred violence to cowardice and conflict and disharmony to a total lack of relations, but clearly valued above all the nonviolence of courageous and harmonious relationships (Galtung, 2007a).

Galtung's work on the figure of Gandhi, to which dozens of works continue to be added every year (including a particularly interesting reflection by the Iranian philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo in 2008) has helped both the ethical and the political dimension of Gandhi's nonviolence to emerge with greater clarity. A crucial step was taken when in the search for peace and in nonviolence education we came to realize the fundamental conceptual and practical importance of the idea of conflict.

## What is conflict?

A growing number of authors, researchers and

schools of thought have been moving towards the analysis of conflicts at micro and macro levels, starting from a vision of conflict as holding both constructive and destructive potential, at one and the same time. In other words, conflict is neither regarded as a synonym of violence nor of war, but as the ineluctable existential condition that characterizes all human beings, capable both of giving rise to creative and constructive growth for all parties involved as well as leading to a negative and dramatically destructive situation.

This distinction has been made explicit in psychology, particularly within the work of Erich Fromm, and the difference between benign and malignant aggression has by now been conceptually established, in the same way as that between violence and assertiveness and that between passiveness and active and proactive nonviolence (which intervenes beforehand). However, in both political and educational common practices there is still widespread perplexity and resistance to such distinctions, as conflict tends to be regarded as something negative and to be avoided, while invoking a generic condition of harmony, which overlooks existing contradictions, leaving us unprepared when conflicts suddenly explode. In the language customarily used by the media, conflict is considered even more synonymous with war and this semantic ambiguity adds to confusion, frustration and a sense of helplessness.

Conversely it may be possible to elaborate a definition of nonviolence based on ongoing studies and reflections that are not only philosophical and ethical, but also operational. as in, for example, the following statement: For Galtung, nonviolence is the ability based on a set of actions which may be deployed in order to transform conflicts in a constructive and creative way from the micro to the macro level in order to minimize all forms of violence. In this way, it consists in the ability to transform natural human aggression into a positive and non-destructive creative force. An analysis of conflict as a dynamic set of processes and relations

is central to this purpose, and it encompasses the process of nonviolent communication.

### Conflict analysis

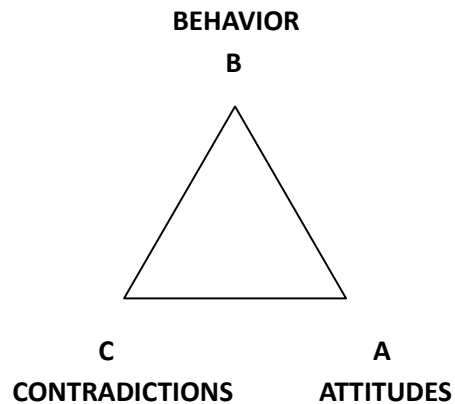
In recent decades a number of schools of thought concerning the concept of nonviolence have developed and are still present today<sup>1</sup>. The school of "conflict resolution" focuses on the key concept of the needs of the parties involved and the idea that a conflict can be permanently closed, apparently in a rather mechanical and rigid fashion when needs or demands are met. The school of "conflict management" places more emphasis on the concepts of power and values, focusing on the presence of dynamics which can orient the conflict towards pondered and controlled solutions which come from the outside with respect to the parties involved. A specific and original contribution to this framework, especially useful in basic education and training programs, is the one provided by Belgian anthropologist Pat Patfoort, who proposes an approach based on the "major/minor" model, by representing the imbalance of power between the parties that must be rebalanced<sup>2</sup>.

A further school, of which Galtung and the Transcend International Network are among the best-known representatives, prefers to discuss nonviolent transformation of conflict, highlighting the purely dynamic and ever-changing, relational nature of conflict rather than the search for final and static solutions. Beyond the Galtung/Transcend school of thought, other researchers and educators have increasingly adopted the expression "nonviolent transformation of conflicts"<sup>3</sup>.

Galtung proposes an interpretative model based on the "triangle of conflict". This proposal is presented in a systematic way in two manuals for peacekeepers, one in a reduced format, *The*

*Nonviolent Transformation of Conflicts* (2000), and the other, more extensive and comprehensive manual, *The Transformation of Conflicts by Peaceful Means* (2008). The manuals were originally published by the *United Nations Disaster Management Training Program* and are valuable tools for use in basic training.

In Galtung's triangle, each one of the vertices A, B and C corresponds to a characteristic feature that contributes to defining the conflict. A stands for behaviors, attitudes and emotions, what is "inside" every single key player, even at an unconscious level. B is the behavior, or what is "outside" every single key player, which is visible and manifest. C indicates the contradiction of purposes and incompatibilities, corresponding to the relation "between" the key players in the conflict. A fully developed conflict includes all three of these aspects, of which only the behavior is manifest, while the other two are latent. There can be cases in which only one or two of the salient features of the conflict are present.



The nonviolent transformation of conflict is a constructive approach, in that it helps find solutions allowing conflicting parties to obtain benefits and thus turning the conflict into an opportunity for growth for all participants. When trying to understand what is meant by "nonviolent transformation of conflict", it is important to recognize that the term conflict is not synonymous with violence nor with war. Rather it indicates a situation of contrast, of contradiction between multiple social key players pursuing different purposes. The use of violence is a negative

<sup>1</sup> Axt et al. (2006)

<sup>2</sup> Patfoort, P. (2002, 2006)

<sup>3</sup> Mischnick, R. (2006). and Galtung, J. (2007b)

outcome of this situation, causing the conflict to escalate if it cannot be creatively and operationally transformed by all parties involved.

### **Symmetrical and asymmetrical conflicts**

The Transcend model posits the existence of basic types of conflicts, symmetrical and asymmetrical, which differ depending on the power relations between the parties involved. In symmetrical conflicts, there is power balance between the parties, whereas in the second type of conflict the relationship is unbalanced. Most of the micro conflicts, which are relational, are predominantly symmetrical, while asymmetrical examples tend to prevail among macro conflicts. One of the techniques employed in dealing with symmetrical conflict is mediation, which cannot be immediately used in the asymmetrical case, because one must intervene initially in order to rebalance the relationships of power. The party holding more power is unlikely to agree to sit down at a table and mediate.

The mediator is an external, neutral party, equidistant (or equally near) with respect to the conflicting parties, able to facilitate communication and the search for solutions which may come from the conflicting parties themselves. The mediator's intervention must be accepted and requested by both parties on the basis of trust. The function of the mediation is to act like a "mirror", facilitating the transfer of perceptions, feelings and motivations held by the participants and which are fuelling the conflict. The mediator's role is to help separating and identifying the objective components from purely subjective ones. In order to do so, active listening skills and the ability to use dialogue to help people to empathize and identify with the situation are of crucial importance.

In asymmetrical conflicts the external parties play the fundamental role of intervention, which is not necessarily requested, in order to rebalance the power relations which put the oppressed party at a disadvantage. In addition to rebalancing the

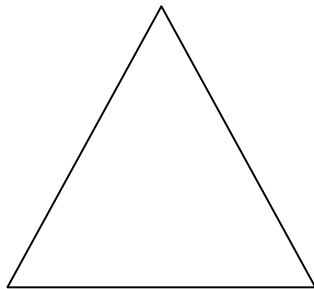
power relations by intervening on behalf of the oppressed, the external parties are tasked with restoring interrupted communication channels. They must re-humanize both the oppressed and the oppressors, taking upon themselves the violence of repression so as to show the suffering of the oppressed and the group that intervenes in their favor, evoking empathetic behaviors that change attitudes, prejudices and behaviors. In addition, they put themselves in the position to reduce the influence of direct and indirect consensus which indifferent external parties give to the oppressors' power system and so facilitate the emergence of a win-win type of higher-order solution, allowing everyone to be a winner and ensuring no one is a loser.

### **From the triangle of conflict to the triangle of nonviolence**

Galtung matches the vertex of another triangle, the nonviolence triangle, to each of the vertices of the triangle of conflict. Vertex A, that of attitudes, corresponds to empathy, or the ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes, feeling and perceiving their feelings, to "see from the inside", thus using the mediation process to help the parties in conflict free themselves from the mental ghosts that often prevent them from understanding what is actually happening. Vertex B, behavior, corresponds to nonviolence in actions and dialogue in communication. Nonviolence is essential in order to avoid the progressive ascent towards conflict, which may turn into violent behaviors. Together with strictly nonviolent attitudes, dialogue is the best tool for investigating what is happening on the outside, beyond social key players, in the form of overt behaviors. Furthermore dialogue is necessary in order to pursue nonviolent communication, to build bridges between the parties and facilitate mediation and reconciliation processes. Dialogue is the tool that acts as a bridge between the subjective aspects, the attitudes that characterize the personal experience and emotional perceptions of the

conflicting persons, and the objective component consisting of the real contradictions that exist between the goals of the parties involved. Vertex C, contradiction, corresponds to creativity, which is necessary for the emergence of higher-level solutions that enable all the key players to fully achieve their legitimate objectives, overcoming the contradictions between the parties in conflict.

**DIALOGUE and NONVIOLENCE**



**CREATIVITY**

**EMPATHY**

From the analysis conducted thus far we recognize the applicability of Galtung's analysis of conflict to the training of mediators but also and more generally, of communicators, those being people directly involved in the conflict as well as those that are peripheral to it. For example, media communicators, but also other professionals involved in reconciliation and restoration processes, teachers, social workers, politicians or businessmen (we will return to this point later). Nonviolence comes in many forms and may pertain to different dimensions of the triangle.

In order to develop skills related to each of the three vertices, it is necessary to train and acquire practical experience. The Transcend manual offers some guidance, exercises and specific suggestions.

Galtung comes from a Norwegian family of doctors and nurses who influenced him at a very young age. This medical culture centered on care led him to regard violence as a disease and war as an illness, both of which must be addressed through a "medical paradigm" based on

diagnosis, prognosis and therapy (DPT). Both peace and health can be defined negatively (as the absence of war and disease) or in a positive way (quality of relations on an international and a micro scale). In this way, Galtung and other scholars have proposed an isomorphism between peace studies and those on health (2005).

In the Transcend approach, the knowledge-building process concerning the conflict is called "diagnosis". It is oriented both to the past and to the present and consists of two phases. In the first phase, the peacekeeper (*conflict worker*) uses the ABC triangle and dialogue with the parties to analyze and understand the conflict and build a map of the conflict with all the different direct and indirect parties. In the second phase, the peacekeeper uses dialogue to facilitate the passage of the perception of "the other" to each party in relation to the conflict. This can be useful in cases where the parties' legitimate purposes and positions are not understood. The subsequent "prognosis" also passes through two phases. The first is to explore the past, how the events occurred and how they could have been if the key players had behaved differently (therapy of the past). Therapy of the past can also be useful for the therapy of the future. The second phase is to use future predictions as a deterrent for the prevention of violence. History is an important reference for prognosis. In a further phase, that of therapy, creativity comes into play in order to go beyond the dominant paradigms and design a future that is not limited by the past.

Of crucial importance when dealing with conflict are empathy and in-depth listening. To develop an empathetic attitude, Galtung suggests placing ourselves "in deep relationship with people, with many people and with different kinds of people, treasuring the works of the artists that we have among us, writers, poets and those who have neither name nor fame, but that we may meet anywhere". The ability to establish an empathetic relationship with other people allows us to "soften our attitudes", gradually creating a predisposition

to more in-depth and authentic dialogue.

### **Dialogue, nonviolence and the search for truth**

Galtung proposes developing nonviolent behavior according to three main aspects (*Transcend Manual*, p. 98):

1. **Nonviolence in thought:** meditation, inner dialogue, preparation for work on conflict, moments of silence, trying to identify and eradicate our own destructive impulses.
2. **Nonviolence in words:** external dialogue with the parties in conflict, preventing the attribution of guilt/shame, seeking common roots, a common future and shared responsibilities, thoroughly exposing one's own anxieties, fears, unsatisfied needs, trying to imagine futures that all parties could live in.
3. **Nonviolence in action:** demonstrations, use of mass media, meetings to facilitate negotiations, what can be termed ordinary, soft political battle. Beyond these actions exists the political battle of strong nonviolence, such as non-military defense (NMD) against more direct outer violence, and nonviolent revolution (NVR) against internal structural violence (direct violence in a frozen form).

Dialogue, which is very different from debate, is also the main tool for gradually discovering "the truth" contained within ourselves and reaching higher levels of understanding, allowing us to build bridges between seemingly irreconcilable positions. The emphasis on creativity is the specific point that distinguishes the Transcend approach from other mediation proposals that explore more the inner aspects of conflicting persons and work less on contradiction. The task of the mediator is therefore to help the conflicting parties overcome the phase relative to the past and be able to develop a therapy and a project oriented towards the future, which in Gandhian terms is called a constructive project. Although a "creativity formula" is not known and

no one can ever be sure that it will automatically reveal itself, it is thanks only to our commitment that we are able to say that the basic direction to follow is the one to "introduce a new aspect-dimension-perspective, a new way of looking at the situation to change the conflict - a necessary condition so that the conflict will be released".

As with all approaches to conflict, this one is also mainly (but not only) centered on creativity, and does not aspire to be exhaustive. In fact, it is possible to identify a benign creativity, one directed at the nonviolent transformation of conflict, but also a malignant creativity implemented by those who do not even remotely intend to give up their power and privileges. Even techno-science presents this ambiguity in terms of creativity to develop even more lethal weapons in the arms race and creativity to expand our knowledge and lead to problem-solving tied to satisfying basic needs and sustainability. In the same way, advertisers may define themselves as "creative", but their work can deliver both a "regressive advertisement" and a "progressive advertisement".

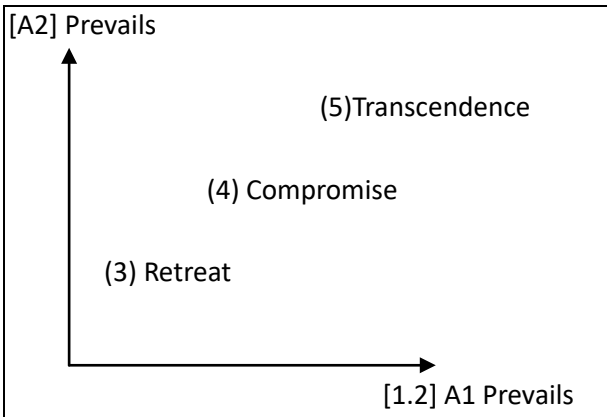
### **The outcomes of conflict**

Analyzing a basic case of conflict with two key players and stakes, A1 and A2 (contradiction), as in the Israel/Palestine case, Galtung identifies and classifies five main possible outcomes of the conflict.

1. Violence is used to impose the winner's objectives on the loser, as in the case [1.2], whereby the key player A1 prevails (i.e. Israel).
2. In the symmetrical situation, always determined by violence, the key player A2 (i.e. Palestine) prevails.
3. An external solution is imposed from above, and involves retreat (administration of the entire territory by the UN).
4. Compromise reached as a result of negotiations (for example, two states, two populations).
5. Transcendence, meaning the parties are able to

develop a creative (transcendent) solution that satisfies all legitimate goals (for example one State for two populations, or a Middle Eastern federation similar to the European Union).

Outcomes 3, 4 and 5 are situated along a diagonal axis and are the most positive, in a rising scale that goes from 3 to 5. Outcomes 1 and 2 create conditions of exclusion and great instability, and are a prelude to more violent developments.



The difference between the various schools of thought we have considered mainly concerns the greater emphasis that Galtung places on creativity in the search for higher-level solutions that achieve the legitimate objectives of all the parties in conflict. Transcendence lies in a paradigm shift, in leaving predetermined and crystallized patterns that prevent us from looking beyond, to be able to facilitate the transformation of the conflict in a constructive and positive manner.

**The lifecycle of conflict**

Conflict is generally presented as a dynamic process that develops following three main phases: before violence, during violence, after violence. In order to act in a nonviolent way, we have to learn specific techniques for each of the three phases that can be classified as techniques for prevention, intervention and reconciliation. Prevention means to educate and promote *conflict literacy* concerning the management and

nonviolent transformation of conflict through dialogue, active listening, nonviolent communication, sharing, empathy and awareness. The purpose is to avoid the ascent of conflict towards increasing and destructive levels of violence, keeping aggression, anger and fear under control in order to avoid feeding a growing spiral of actions and reactions that may result in the explosion of extreme violence.

When prevention fails, or when we find ourselves as a third party dealing with situations where violence is already in place, the task becomes more difficult because intervention is necessary to stop the violence in order to protect victims, or weak parties, without adding more violence. It is the opportunity for the nonviolence of the strong, the brave, those who place themselves between the parties, putting their lives at risk without threatening that of others. It is obviously necessary to distinguish interposition and intervention on a small scale, even in casual everyday situations, from intervention in violent and/or armed conflicts of a macro type on a large scale, as an alternative to armies and military facilities. While in the first case individual intervention can sometimes be sufficient and, in any case, extreme situations, where we are forced to act alone, may occur, in macro conflicts we must intervene in a collective manner, planned organized beforehand in order to be efficient.

Unlike other types of intervention, nonviolence seeks to free both the oppressors and the oppressed, both the victims and the perpetrators, from the dehumanizing chains of violence. It is an ambitious and difficult task which many times throughout history has been taken on by the "righteous", whose behavior is like that of Bodhisattva, capable of manifesting compassion and sharing towards all living beings. The dynamics of nonviolent action require this willingness to self-sacrifice, even extreme, to personally bear the unjustly exercised violence by the oppressor and by the perpetrator, to trigger a boomerang effect that shatters the apparently monolithic power of the

enemy, gradually involving wider sectors of third parties which were initially indifferent or neutral. This has happened many times throughout history, and in very different situations: from the liberation struggle of India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, to the struggle against apartheid in the United States with Martin Luther King, and in South Africa with Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, as well as the changes in Central and Eastern Europe which culminated in 1989.

At the same time, the reconciliation work after the violence is equally important. Without this therapeutic action, the cycle of violence tends to easily reproduce itself. The wounds and trauma suffered individually and collectively have a deep effect within, and sooner or later are likely to re-emerge at a conscious level with destructive consequences. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa promoted by Tutu and Mandela is an important positive example to be followed and perfected in all those cases, from Rwanda to the Balkans, from Palestine to Ireland to the Basque Country and so on, where violence has caused immense hatred, thirst for revenge and the inability to coexist.

In order to render nonviolent transformation of conflict something concrete and feasible, it is necessary to invest in resources, energy and time and develop expertise in each of the three phases. Prevention is better than intervention, and is less difficult and cheaper. It is right to intervene because each one of us is, to a certain extent, a party in all conflict, even if external. Reconciliation is essential if we want to break the vicious cycle of vengeance and the resurgence of violence. We possess adequate knowledge and skills regarding each of these phases today, but they are not thorough. Research is ongoing, particularly in order to address the so-called "intractable conflicts", those that never seem to end, where the spiral of violence inexorably continues over time. In this respect it is fundamental to keep in mind the need to deeply

work together towards changes in three directions: transforming the violent key players, violent structures and violent cultures.

### **Before, during and after "the rain": prevention, damage reduction and reconciliation**

The Macedonian director Milcho Manchevski used the title of his highly-acclaimed film "Before the Rain" (1994) as a metaphor to describe a situation of potential conflict crisis, where a timely intervention was necessary in order to prevent the outbreak of violence. This is what should have been done in the Balkans from the first signs of crisis, in Rwanda and in the Great Lakes area in Central Africa, and in many other situations. Prevention is far better than intervention, as it is more effective and less costly. In this regard, the director of the Transcend network, Dietrich Fischer, has compared the cost of international mediation operated by civilians, as in the case of the Peace Corps, with that of military intervention (Fischer, 2006).

In the 1980s, the fear of a war in the Balkans was focused on Romania, where 1.6 million Hungarians and more than 30 million people belonging to other minorities coexisted with a population of 23 million Romanians. Romania and Hungary were enemies in both world wars and both committed atrocities and fought each other over a few territories. Fear and mistrust always had deeper roots. But Allen Kasso and two of his colleagues from the Project on Ethnic Relations of Princeton managed to bring four senior representatives of the Romanian government and four representatives of minorities together. In two three-day meetings held in both Switzerland and Romania, they helped the parties reach an agreement that gave the Hungarian community the right to use their language in schools and in local newspapers in exchange for the promise to renounce the secession. With this effort, a civil war similar to the one that broke out in former Yugoslavia was avoided. In contrast, international peacekeeping operations to end an ongoing war require not days or weeks, but years. UN troops have been



stationed in Cyprus for more than 30 years and are still needed; this is not merely a few individuals, but tens of thousands of soldiers. 20 thousand UN soldiers failed to stop the fighting and massacres in Bosnia Herzegovina. 60 thousand NATO troops were sent to enforce a cease-fire, yet a reconciliation was not reached. This means that it was necessary to engage about 10,000 times more people, for a period 100 times longer, compared to those involved in a reconciliation. The costs for a peacekeeping operation are thus one million times more than the costs of an attempt at mediation. Instead of spending a few thousand dollars for a meeting room and airfare, billions of dollars are instead spent. Even worse: in 1991 the Gulf War to expel Iraq from Kuwait cost \$100 billion, without counting the destruction it caused. But the most important aspect to consider is that the prevention of a war before its outbreak saves many lives. The difference between peacekeeping once the war breaks out and mediation consists in spending at least an extra order of magnitude every step of the way.

If violence erupts, action is immediately needed in order to "reduce the damage", such as that of fire fighters who rush to put out a fire. The previously proposed methods of transforming/managing/resolving conflicts do not go into the merits of this delicate task. They are addressed to other phases of conflict and simply report and express hope for the establishment of rapid civilian deployment forces (like the Peace Corps mentioned earlier) to interpose and help the population.<sup>4</sup>

Galtung and others emphasize that after the violence we must act through the "3Rs: Reconstruction, Reconciliation, Resolution", to address the visible and invisible effects of war and violence" (Galtung, 1998). Much literature has been concerned with the consequences of violence. Two studies in particular are in line with

Galtung's analysis: one by Richard Mollica, *Invisible Wounds* (2007) and the other by Adriana Cavarero, *Horrorism. Naming Contemporary Violence* (2007). Cavarero identifies twelve different approaches to reconciliation in the different traditions of human history, some of which are specific to certain ancient cultures and, in some cases, are still implemented. At the same time, despite the apparent wealth of multiple approaches, Galtung considers the world "ill-equipped for almost all of these tasks".

Galtung lists twelve creative ways to promote reconciliation after violence: the exonerating nature/structure/culture approach; the repair/restitution approach; the apology/forgiveness approach; the theological/penitential approach; the legal/punitive approach; the origins of interdependence/*karma* approach; the historical/the commission for truth approach; the theatrical/reliving events approach; the combined suffering/healing approach; the combined reconstruction approach; the combined resolution of conflict approach; the *ho'o pono pono* approach. Of particular interest is the *ho'o pono pono* approach, a traditional Polynesian, and more specifically Hawaiian, way of acting, which means "do the right thing", or "assume the right attitude". This practice also takes on a therapeutic value that goes beyond the reconciliation process and is based on the idea that we are responsible not only for what we do personally, but also for all those people who are in our environment. The perpetrators, the victims, those who are both and those who are neither one nor the other, sit around a table presided over by a "wise man" and begin to speak freely, clearing their minds (Galtung, 2005; Urbain, 2004).

The meeting follows four main phases:

- 1 Establish the facts, *what* happened in the community.
- 2 Investigate *why* this happened, highlighting the committed acts.
- 3 Share responsibilities, including acts of omission, apologize.

<sup>4</sup> L'Abate, A. and Porta, L. (eds.), (2008)

4 *Develop a constructive future-oriented program* based on the positive outcomes along the diagonal of the possible solutions diagram.

**Nonviolent transformation of conflict experiences: education and training of professionals**

The types of conflict situations we can be involved in vary considerably, both in terms of the specific focus of the conflict (gender, generation, environment, economy, interpersonal relations, racism and international relations) and in relation to its magnitude. The latter can range from micro dimensions (intra- and inter-personal) to medium-sized (condominium, ethnic groups, union disputes, neighborhood, school and work) up to the macro dimension of the world's global relations (economic, political and environmental), and arriving at conflicts between civilizations. We still do not know enough to be able to formulate a general theory that can be applied to every type of conflict, on any scale. However, we can establish some general criteria that can be applied as a first approach to different situations. Galtung addresses this problem by assuming the existence of an isomorphism between conflicts of different scales, ranging from micro to macro, and believes that his model can be applied, at least in a first phase, to any scale.

We have already noted most of the micro conflicts of a relational type are predominantly symmetrical, while most macro conflicts are asymmetrical. Considering that the mediation techniques usually employed in dealing with symmetrical conflicts cannot be immediately used, intervention is necessary in the asymmetrical cases in order to balance power relationships. The dynamics of nonviolent action that underlie the interventions promoted by external parties has been the subject of analysis by various authors, in particular by Gene Sharp in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1986-1997) and by Galtung in Chapter 2 "Theory of conflict" of

*Peace by Peaceful Means* (2000). These works, and other ongoing research and theoretical perspectives, are essential reference points for training mediators and peacemakers.

Over the last two decades, there have been widespread practical examples of nonviolent transformation of conflicts in many countries at various scales and in differing social environments. The basic groups that operate in the macro context, with interventions of nonviolent interposition in situations of armed conflict, reconciliation after violence and prevention, have led to, in the most successful cases, the design and partial establishment of professional and permanent operational structures (a significant example is the project for the establishment of a Nonviolent Peace Forces).

In terms of educational projects, both micro and medium-scale, multiple contexts have given rise to developments in the mediation of conflicts between peers, specifically addressed to interpersonal relationships. Numerous educational materials are available which offer theoretical and practical tools for starting self-training courses<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, it is important that all those approaching these educational processes for the first time follow specific courses that use active training methodologies, which are essential for activating the set of emotional, perceptual and intellectual factors that make it possible for a nonviolent transformation of conflict to avoid being reduced to a purely theoretical proposal.

Galtung's experience as a Peace Research scholar and mediator extends over half a century and has been documented not only in the great bulk of his writings, but also in a paper that presents a hundred case studies where he has applied the Transcend method: *50 Years: 100 Peace & Conflict Perspectives* (2008). In addition to specializing in international mediation, Galtung has also extended

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<sup>5</sup> C.f. the *Departures* series by Daniele Novara for the La Meridiana editions, the works of Marianella Scavi (2003, 2006) and the work she edited for the Consensus Building Institute in 2007.

his mediation method to other levels, as described in one of his latest works, *Facing Conflict* (0000). Another example is *Transcending and Transforming* (2008), where in every single chapter, corresponding to each day of the week, he introduces conflict situations ranging from micro to macro, to even larger, approached following his methodology. The result is an invaluable tool for everyone to use for study and practise, and for all those who want to familiarise themselves mediation. The SABONA project has been launched in Norway and applies the Transcend methodology in schools. SABONA is a local word meaning "I see you", in the sense that you are part of me, and "I feel you". It is also used as a greeting, which according to Galtung is better than our usual 'Good morning', which he ironically considers "a not very deep meteorological message", while SABONA expresses a deeper relationship. "Sabona" is also used as a response to this greeting, a practice is similar to other greetings such as shalom or salam ubuntu.

### **Nonviolent transformation of conflict and peace journalism<sup>6</sup>**

We have become accustomed to *war journalism* and recognize its features. Ongoing wars are presented as individual events, separated from historical dynamics and precedents. The media rarely plays a critical role, giving precedence to propaganda in favor of one or another faction in the war. Such an approach is based on the model of sporting competition, rather than *peace journalism*. For example, in order to understand what has happened since the attacks of 11

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<sup>6</sup> The latter was included in the revision phase of the complete works after the death of Nanni Salio, using part of his previous writing, the article *Wars, terrorism and media propaganda*, published in the Newsletter of Centro Studi Sereno Regis of 6 February, courtesy of the magazine Nuova Società, which was obtained from the author and published on 15 February 2016.

September 2001<sup>7</sup>, it is necessary to introduce the concept of "blowback", a term used by the CIA to describe the reactions of other countries on domain policies planned and implemented by the Pentagon strategists.

In his trilogy<sup>8</sup>, Chalmers Johnson offers a lengthy and acute analysis of this phenomenon. These are three essential books that help understand the roots and dynamics of the current crisis. As Galtung states, *blowback* is the third law of dynamics applied to international politics: "to every action there is a reaction, a counterforce". The terrorism of nations exercised from above with bombers and drones generates terrorism from below as a response, by those who rebel and often indiscriminately strike civilians, similar to state terrorism, which simply calls these deplorable consequences "collateral events".

In order to attempt to dispel the "fog of war"<sup>9</sup>, there are some steps that can be taken.

1 *Contextualize the events*. It is essential to reconstruct the history of the countries at war, drawing on many available sources, especially using the most reliable internet websites, knowing that everyone makes mistakes and that truth is a rare commodity often hidden by the "fog of war". International websites that can be consulted include [www.antiwar.com](http://www.antiwar.com); [www.znetitaly.altervista.org](http://www.znetitaly.altervista.org); [www.transcend.org](http://www.transcend.org),

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<sup>7</sup> In the author's article (referred to in the note) wars are also discussed, starting with the one in Iraq of 1991, whereby the attacks of 11 September 2001 represent the "repercussion". The date of the Twin Towers and Pentagon attacks has now become a 'periodising' event, and it is for this reason that specific reference is made in order to attempt to introduce the concept of *blowback*.

<sup>8</sup> *The Last Days of the American empire. The Repercussions of Foreign and Economic Policy of the last Great Power*, Garzanti, Milan 2003; *The Tears of the Empire. The Industrial Military apparatus, The Secret Service and the End of the American Dream*, Garzanti, Milan 2005; *Nemesis. The End of America*, Garzanti, Milan 2008.

<sup>9</sup> This term refers to the "The Fog of War" by Errol Morris, director of the documentary about Robert McNamara, winner of the 2004 Oscar for documentaries.

and Italian websites include [www.serenoregis.org](http://www.serenoregis.org), which contains the translation of Galtung's weekly editorials.

2 *Do not give into fear.* Equally important is considering which threats deserve more attention. In Western countries, the probability of dying from a terrorist attack is 100 to 1000 times lower than that of a car accident, terminal illness or death induced by environmental imbalances and pollution. We should also be aware that terrorism of Islamic extremist groups causes a number of victims 10 to 100 times higher among Muslims than Westerners. Finally, care should be taken to address major global threats: climactic chaos, energy crisis, financial crisis, extreme poverty and misery, which are all topics that are ignored or considered as being less important.

3 *Peace journalism instead of war journalism.* Peace journalism distinguishes between conflict and war. War is not a synonym of conflict, but the outcome of an unresolved conflict. Peace journalism is based on three fundamental steps: mapping all the key players of the conflict, identifying their legitimate objectives (those that do not violate fundamental human needs and rights) and developing concrete, constructive and creative solutions to meet the legitimate objectives of all parties involved in the conflict. Examples of this type of journalism can be found in Galtung's editorials.

A type of journalism that approaches this and is very useful is investigative journalism, by reporters such as Robert Fisk, John Pilger, Pepe Escobar and Marinella Correggia. In their contributions, peace journalists are not necessarily identified for their reportages on areas directly affected by conflict. Rather, they play the important role of making conflict transparent, by identifying the parties involved and the nature of the relationship which connects them. Important contributions in this regard are those which highlight the violation of basic human rights, through political or cultural oppression but also through the indiscriminate

consumption of resources for the benefits of the few. Peace journalism can be defined as the process which uncovers and unveils stories of environmental justice, reduction of personal demands, creative responses to oppression, and portrays the actions taken by many groups (such as nonviolent struggles, manifestations, marches) in many parts of the world and especially in the South. Peace journalism is a tool for re-establishing equality of knowledge systems, empathy and solidarity. Within this view, the principal objective of this paper was to offer a theoretical and research-based perspective for the development of peace journalism to enable transitioning for sustainability.

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