

EXAMINING HUMANIZATION AND ITS POTENTIAL TO AID IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

Maclaine M. Day
Brigham Young University—Hawaii
maclaine@byuh.edu

ABSTRACT

Conflict transformation has the potential to facilitate the establishment of sustainable peace in post conflict societies. Navigating such work requires the rebuilding of relationships and the reversal of negative conflict spirals. In combining psychological theories to philosophy, humanization becomes a focal point in understanding how positive conflict transformation occurs. The process of humanization can be transformational in and of itself, thus increasing its potential to aid in conflict resolution processes and especially in reaching reconciliation. In this study, transformative humanization is defined as change in oneself of how one sees and relates to others. An outlook of transformative humanization allows for conflict to become a positive process, rather than negative or destructive. The potential of transformative humanization is that change must happen within an individual first and be followed by a change in the ingroup and outgroup dynamics of how parties see each other. Key issues of analyzing such transformative processes will be discussed in this presentation. The key argument is that when parties in conflict engage in transformative processes, negative cycles are reversed, sustainable peace can be built, and reconciliation has the potential to be achieved.

KEY WORDS

Conflict Transformation, Change, Humanization, Peacebuilding, Reconciliation

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of conflict and peace has evolved over time and across cultures. As a result, recent decades have given way to the field of peacebuilding. Modern theorists have developed theories that stem from both the violent and peaceful sides that are connected to conflict. These theories contain foundational principles in understanding conflict, why it occurs, and how it can be overcome. Approaches begin with conflict analysis and practices include conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Each of these terms denotes a different aspect of conflict engagement. The purpose of this study is to examine conflict transformation as a process that can include humanization to potentially reach reconciliation between previously conflicting parties to promote sustainable, positive peace.

Rationale and Scope of the Study

Varieties of literature exist from psychology to peacebuilding theories on what humanization is and how it exists in human interaction. Examination of humanization in this study is related to conflict transformation processes. The theories presented are analyzed to determine how humanization can influence the way individuals and groups interact with one another, thus determining the spiral of conflict. Because humanization is a contested topic, this study draws from existing literature from a psychological angle before bringing in the philosophical theories relating humanization back to conflict transformation. It is also important to recognize the foundational theories that give way to the practice of transformative approaches to reach reconciliation as well as the foundational theories of humanization within the peacebuilding context.

All stories and theories presented throughout the study are used to demonstrate how humanization can work within conflict transformation to create change and potentially lead to reconciliation. The meaning of humanization will be broken down and placed in relation to conflict theory. Theories of dehumanization and infra-humanization are examined as a starting point. Consideration of ingroup and outgroup relationships as well as the function of humanization on an individual level will guide the analysis. Relevant conflict theories will be presented to create a framework for understanding conflict transformation and the potential of humanization in working through and after negative conflict spirals on multiple levels in society. Humanization will be redefined as transformative humanization based on analysis of its potential to aid in conflict transformation processes.

Research Question

The following research question has guided this study:

What potential does humanization have to change participant engagement in conflict transformation processes that lead to reconciliation?

The research also seeks to determine how humanization can occur in peacebuilding practices, as guided by the following sub-question:

What are the differences in the role humanization plays on an individual and an intergroup level where conflict transformation work is taking place?

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to determine the potential that humanization can have in aiding in conflict transformation processes.

Specific objectives include:

- Define humanization within conflict transformation processes
- Examine the difference of humanization on individual and group levels
- Develop understanding of how humanization can lead to reconciliation

Methodology and Data Collection

Qualitative research will be used to examine humanization in conflict transformation practices that have the potential to result in reconciliation. The use of qualitative research is important to this study. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research as the qualitative approach has a more recent history in researchers using selected methods for analyzing material to better understand human nature and worldviews related to a topic (Leavy, 2014, p. 20). Use of the qualitative research approach in this study is used to critically analyze concepts relating to humanization and conflict transformation to unpack meaning and create a new framework. Consequently, existing literature in the form of philosophy and conflict theory will be examined.

Data has been collected through literary analysis and interviews. The primary data presented was collected under the ethical guidelines. All personal communications presented in this study remains confidential, except in cases where individuals gave consent of personal identifiers to be disclosed.

Introduction Summary

The goal of this study is to better understand how conflict can be transformed to reach sustainable change and reconciliation. Qualitative research guides the study as existing literature will be examined for analysis and interpretation. The objectives are focused on forming better understanding of the potential humanization has within conflict transformation. Humanization will be redefined as transformative humanization as it is placed in the framework of conflict transformation and reconciliation. The possibility of reconciliation shows the potential that successful transformative processes have. In this study, conflict is understood to have a positive affect when negative conflict spirals are reversed. Conflict transformation is a component of peacebuilding that allows for humanization to take place.

A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF CONFLICT THEORY AND EVALUATION OF THEORIES ON HUMANIZATION

Identifying why conflict exist and how conflict escalates is crucial to understanding conflict engagement and peacebuilding approaches. Comprehension of conflict theory is necessary before examining why conflict transformation should include humanization to lead to reconciliation. Transformative approaches hold a unique place in peacebuilding processes. In this section, conflict theories are examined with transformation and reconciliation as the desired result of engagement. The presented literature creates a framework where reconciliation becomes the desired outcome of peacebuilding efforts. One key component of the research question is how humanization can change participant engagement. Answering this point of the question comes in examining why participants are initially engaged in conflict.

Conflict theories aid in explaining conflict causes, conflict escalation, and conflict de-escalation. Though there are many different theories on causes of conflict, this section works to unpack theories that relate to participant engagement. An exploration of cognitive dimensions of conflict shows that how one views conflict shapes the engagement process. Conflict exists across different levels in society, and these levels are important in understanding how conflict affects those involved as well as how conflicts can escalate. Humanization is a contested term that can be examined under many different angles. Psychology and philosophy are used as the framework for examining humanization to then provide a new definition of humanization applied to conflict transformation work in de-escalating negative cycles of conflict. To better understand humanization, conflict is viewed as an ongoing and everchanging process with the potential to transform relationships. Each sub-section seeks provide deeper insight on how humanization as a part of conflict transformation can make a difference.

Framing Conflict

This section focuses on the cognitive dimensions of conflict, conflict levels, and conflict spirals. How conflict is framed can impact the engagement process. Frames are templates in our minds that integrate facts “into larger interpretative templates” (Lakoff & Wehling, 2016, p. 85). This description is applicable to how one perceives and engages in conflict with the caveat that, “you must choose your frames carefully,” as the frame affects the way one accepts and processes information (Lakoff & Wehling, 2016, p. 85). Furthermore, frames that facilitate analysis of the conflict have an impact on the recommendations for addressing the conflict (Sandole, 2010, p. 34). Understanding the predominate frames relating to conflict allows for a better conceptualization of conflict transformation and humanization.

It is also important to establish a working definition of conflict. Rubin et al. provides a helpful definition by stating that “conflict means perceived divergence of interest, involving two or more parties who believe that their aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously” (1994, p. 5). In this study, perception plays an important role in the presented concepts of conflict theory and humanization. As stated by Rubin et al., conflict stems from perceived divergence. The validity of the divergence is not what is questioned, but rather the perception of divergence. If frames influence perception (Lakoff & Wehling, 2016, p. 87), then it is critical to understand how conflict can be framed to affect engagement. This is a foundational point in cognitive processes of conflict theory and engagement.

Cognitive Dimensions of Conflict

How we think about conflict affects how we engage in it. When conducting frame analysis, questions to consider include, “How does this person see their self and/or the other? What is important to them, and how does this influence or relate to their sense of self/other? What kinds of experiences might have been significant in forming their identity?” (Kelly, 2020). Each of these questions relates causes and frames to an individual and how they see and relate to others. These two issues underpin principles of humanization and how cognitive dimensions of conflict impact processes from beginning to end.

Another aspect of the cognitive dimensions of conflict is determining if conflict is viewed as subjective or objective. In the subjective view of conflict, conflict is seen as occurring due to the perceived divergence or incompatibility of interests between the parties involved (Deustsch, 1973; Mitchell, 1981; Rubin et al., 1994). The objective view of conflict affirms conflict as a result from how society is organized (Kelly, 2020). Each of these views can change the way causes of conflict are analyzed. Whether conflict is viewed as subjective or objective, it is nevertheless important to recognize that conflict arises from two or more differences, perceived or structural.

Though this study focuses on perceptions within cognition, it is important to acknowledge structures and the effects they have on how frames and perceptions develop. Cognitive dimensions of conflict derive from the structures in place as well as from party perceptions. Ruane and Todd explain that “identifying the long-term conflict generating structural relations and the basis of their reproduction [is] critical to explaining conflict and identifying paths to settlement” (2014, p. 2). Tangible structures, such as political or economic structures, do affect conflict. Such structures may also influence how parties create frames and develop certain perceptions. For conflict engagement to be successful, consideration of both the tangible and intangible dimensions of conflict must be considered.

Because every conflict is different, frames and structures must be carefully examined and interpreted to provide proper analysis. The constructed frames by individuals and/or groups provide means for interpreting data and determining the structural factors in place. Conflict theories relating to humanization must be explored first to provide a proper framework for analysis of social structures. Such social structures explain the nature of relationships of physical and mental variety that determine effect on conflict transformation and the potential for reconciliation, as will be explored later in this study.

Conflict Levels and Spirals

Because peacebuilding is a relatively new and constantly evolving practice, assessing conflict through analysis at different levels can provide a better understanding. Multiple levels of society should be considered when conducting analysis of social conflict (Mitchell, 1981, p. 4).

Lederach’s framework of actors and approaches laid out in a pyramid showcases the potential for conflict engagement at different levels in society, which creates an important precedent (see Figure One). The pyramid is intended to provide better insight on how all actors engaged can work together for more meaningful impact on peacebuilding approaches (Lederach, 1999, p. 39). Peacebuilding becomes well-rounded when each level of the pyramid is considered. The pyramid is also helpful in showing how transformation work at grassroots levels can be highly affective, as this level makes up most of the population. Nevertheless, each level should be considered relevant because each segment affects the other.

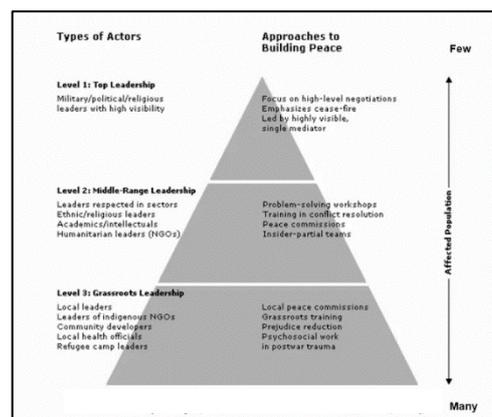


Figure One: Lederach, 1999, p. 39

Conflict style is another factor that affects the way conflict progresses at each or any level of society. Once in conflict, parties usually engage in one, or a combination, of three different types of coping strategies: contending, yielding, or problem solving (Rubin et al., 1994, pp. 3-4). Each of these strategies carried out on different levels would lead to different results. Contending in conflict is a “strategy that involves an effort by the Party to impose its preferred solutions on [the] Other” (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 253), whereas the yielding strategy is when the “Party lowers its aspirations” (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 258). Problem solving, the “strategy that involves seeking a mutually satisfactory alternative,” (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 257) may seem to be the most in-line with conflict transformation strategies. However, conflict transformation should do more than just reach a mutually satisfactory alternative. The aim of transformative work is to build “healthy relationships and communities, locally and globally” (Lederach, 2003, p. 5). Recognizing these strategies under the frame of social conflict show how conflict is unique in the level(s) it exists and the way conflict can spiral.

As conflict escalates, it can spiral destructively. Rubin et al. provides helpful cross-cutting theories about conflict escalation that can be applied to any level of the pyramid presented by Lederach. They state that escalation is “(1) The adoption by Party of heavier tactics now than before, and (2) an increase in the intensity of conflict as a whole” (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 255). Negative conflict spirals escalate due to “a vicious circle of contentious action and reaction” between parties (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 253). These ideas surrounding escalation are primarily linked to acts of direct violence, yet it can also include the psychological alterations in perception because of physical actions. Provocation of one party “is likely to elicit an even more aggressive response from [the] Other,” thus continuing conflict cycles (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 124). Though understanding violence plays a vital role in conducting conflict analysis, the extent of direct violence and the implications of the use will not be explored in this study.

With focus on social relations and the psychological side of conflict engagement, considering how violence is being addressed nevertheless becomes an important factor. Last explains that “The way we control violence needs to be intimately linked to rebuilding relationships. Those relationships are the means for managing conflict without violence” (2000, p. 80). Focusing on relationships creates a bridge between theories of conflict transformation and humanization. Analysis of party relationships and dynamics creates space for understanding conflict and planning conflict transformation strategies. The frames, levels, spirals, and parties engaged in conflict must all be considered when deciding upon implementation of transformative practices. Transformation becomes more of an incentive once what has the potential to be transformed is conceptualized.

Understanding Humanization

Humanization is essential to peacebuilding. Gill and Niens observe that, “humanisation presents an important opportunity to focus our understanding of peacebuilding as a transformative process, at the core of which lies the effort to restore and repair the interrupted relationships between peoples and communities” (2017, p. 2). Humanity becomes a focal point in how human beings relate to one another in conflict. Humanization can be contrasted with other cognitive processes that change the way people see other individuals or groups.

A deeper understanding of how humanization works is needed before exploring the phenomenon within conflict transformation processes. Existing literature examines humanization from multiple angles. In this section, humanization is analyzed based on dominant theories in psychology and philosophy. These theories and ideas will be examined assuming that parties involved have been engaged in negative conflict. The goal is to understand how humanization can be applied to conflict transformation processes to lead to sustainable peace and reconciliation. Starting with the psychological analysis of dominant theories allows for philosophy to be coupled with emerging ideas that tie humanization back into conflict transformation. A new definition of humanization will be established based on the findings.

Defining Humanization Through a Psychological Analysis

As established previously, perception plays a powerful role in conflict theory. Positioning theory is one psychological idea that relates to the concept of frames and perceptions as previously discussed. In positioning theory, “Positions, storylines, rights, and duties are among the facets...that act as starting points for the dynamics of social life” (McVee et al., 2021, p. 194). Social relations exist because each person has a unique identity and belongs to groups within society. The relational feature of positioning occurs because agents operate within certain contexts (Baert, 2012, p. 313). Conflict creates different implications of how individuals or groups position themselves psychologically. Positioning theory is one psychological framework that helps explain why

individuals and/or groups make decisions within conflict. Certain positions may create stronger opposition between conflicting parties.

Understanding humanization also comes in exploring what humanization is not. Dehumanization as humanization's opposite means "viewing others as less than human" (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 64). This definition is simplistic in nature and provides a compelling idea that humanization, at the most simplistic level, is viewing others as human. Nevertheless, dehumanization is more complex, and there are other psychological theories on how others can be seen as less than human. Dehumanization can occur in different ways, though each is a result of denying another's "humanness." One summary of dehumanization is that it refers to "any process that involves the differential attribution of humanness more to an ingroup than an outgroup, independently of the specific definition or operationalisation of humanness that is used" (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 72). Deutsch (1973) makes a compelling observation that summarizes why dehumanization can be a common occurrence within perceptions as he states:

Thus since most people are strongly motivated to maintain a favorable view of themselves but are less strongly motivated to hold such a view of others, it is not surprising that there is a bias toward perceiving one's own behavior toward the other as being more benevolent and more legitimate than the other's behavior toward oneself. (p. 354)

Dynamics within and between ingroups and outgroups, and in how they view each other, serve as the psychological foundation for further analysis.

Occurrences of dehumanization can produce different manifestations of less-than-human views of the other. Intergroup dynamics become affected as expression of dehumanization can be explained in attribute-based and metaphor-based approaches (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 72). One form of dehumanization stems from a machine-like perception of the outgroup whereas another way stems from an animalized view (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 69). Target-based dehumanization is when specific characteristics relating to the humanness of others are denied (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 72). Each of these approaches to dehumanization occur in connection with the severity of the conflict. There are different levels that different scholars use to classify the extremity of dehumanization (Leyens et al., 2007, p. 143). The different variables of group boundaries, relationships, and ideologies within the intergroup dynamic significantly affect the way that dehumanization may or may not occur (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 94). Intergroup dynamics must be closely analyzed in determining how groups may have used dehumanization approaches to change their view of the other.

Dehumanization as an animalized view is a common occurrence that gives way to the phenomena of infra-humanization. Infra-humanization, as set forth by Leyens et al., is the process where the ingroup is seen as fully human whereas the outgroup is seen as more animal-like (2007, p. 140). The precedent of infra-humanization has important connections in explaining humanization in reverse. Leyens et al. argues that "infra-humanization may be perilous for oneself and is always a danger for others" (2007, p. 166). In the context of conflict transformation work, infra-humanization becomes a significant problem because it "obliterates past misdeeds [of the ingroup] and is a brake for reconciliation" (Leyens, 2007, p. 167). The severity in consequence of infra-humanization as explained by Leyens et al. connects the psychological occurrences to the previously explored conflict theories.

Infra-humanization becomes especially dangerous when it occurs during conflict. The occurrence is common and occurs even when there is not violence, however when infra-humanization manifests during violent conflict, the behavioral consequences have severe negative impact (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 67). Such consequences related to conflict spirals as explained in the previous section. As conflict escalates, the negative influence of behavior has a direct connection to a conflict's structure. Galtung (1970) theorizes conflict as a triadic structure of situation, attitudes, and behavior, as shown in Figure Two. This provides a helpful visual in understanding why infra-humanization of the outgroup contributes to escalation. When groups begin to practice violence against another group, cognitive consistency becomes a problem. Killing and other cruel acts against the outgroup that violate moral codes become justifiable when dehumanization through infra-humanization of the outgroup is successful (Mitchell, 1981, p. 95). Vicious acts justified through views of infra-humanization, creating a psychological affect that can lead to increased violence and conflict escalation. This is the exact opposite of what humanization should be.

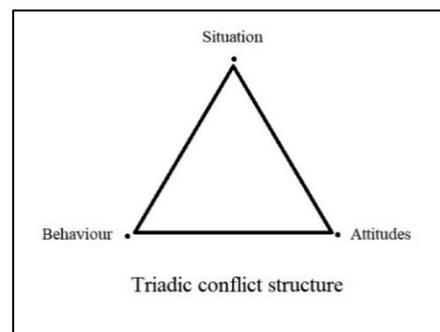


Figure Two: adapted from Mitchell, 1981, p. 16

Philosophical Approaches to Humanization

Humanization takes shape as something more than seeing someone as human once the psychological theories of dehumanization and infra-humanization are coupled to philosophical theories on humanity. The Arbinger Institute focuses on mindset in their trainings for organizational change (Arbinger Institute, 2017). Their guiding theory is that there is something deeper than behavior that drives actions. Figure Three captures one of the Arbinger Institute's foundational theories that one's "way of being" separates how one sees from what one does. This means that any behavior can be done by one of two ways: seeing the other's humanity or acting in resistance to the other's humanity (The Arbinger Institute, 2006, p. 32). The concept of how seeing others has a direct impact on Galtung's triadic structure of conflict in relation to behavior (shown in Figure Two). As established in previous sections, perception and behavior play significant roles in how conflict unfolds. Though the Arbinger Institute uses a unique jargon, their theories are synonymous to other philosophies relating to humanization and conflict.

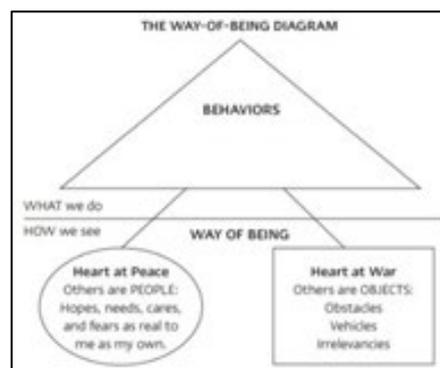


Figure Three: The Arbinger Institute, 2006, p. 32

Martin Buber is a philosopher whose theories of how humans relate to one another are vital in unpacking meaning of humanization in conflict transformation processes. His ideas begin by considering the term "otherness." Buber explains that "otherness" is a natural occurrence because individuals are essentially "other" to everyone else (1947, p. 61), and that human-beings crave for confirmation of self (1957, p. 225). His central theory relating to humanization and how perception of others influences behavior is in his "I-It I-Thou" theory. This theory was published in 1923 as part of Buber's philosophical-theological work on human relations (Morgan & Guilherme, 2012, p. 982). It is significant to note that Buber was a German-Jewish philosopher who wrote during a period of tension in Germany (Morgan & Guilherme, 2012, p. 983). The social conditions Buber faced provide insightful context on why the "I-It I-Thou" theory relates to social conflict.

Buber's theories parallel the Arbiner Institute's framework of behavior being influenced by something deeper. Nevertheless, the "I-It" and "I-Thou" mentality is not supposed to be an absolute. Buber's philosophy suggests that there is an inter-play between the two concepts and that "the I-Thou relation will always slip into an I-It relation, but the I-It relation has always the potential of becoming an I-Thou relation" (Morgan & Guilherme, 2012, p. 982). Relating to another as "thou" means that one considers the other "as means to his (her) own self-aggrandizement" (Ossewaarde-Lowtoo, 2018, p. 441). Relating to another as "it" however seeks to excerpt dominion over them (Ossewaarde-Lowtoo, 2018, p. 444). Though the term "thou" may have a religious connotation, it is applicable in describing the significance of the potential of an "I-Thou" relationship. Addressing someone as a "Thou" indicates that there is accepted responsibility for the well-being of the other (Ossewaarde-Lowtoo, 2018, pp. 444-445). Understanding these relations gives way to understanding how they can be used to promote conflict transformation.

Buber's ideology is applicable within the peacebuilding context. Morgan and Guilherme observe that I-Thou relationships help in conflict resolution endeavors because this kind of relationship "encourages people and communities to discuss problems and grievances and to find points in common" (2012, p. 988). Negative conflict cycles tend to shift parties from "I-Thou" to "I-It" because it is easier to engage in destructive practices against another when they are seen as an it. In conflict transformation practices, the focus is relationship centered (Lederach, 2003, p. 33). Focusing on the relationship is at the heart of what an I-Thou interaction entails. There are multiple practices of transformative nature that emphasize building positive relationships. Such practices will be discussed later in this study. For this section, it is sufficient to conclude that the terminology of "I-It" and "I-Thou" helps to conceptualize relationships and why parties may be engaging in conflict a certain way.

There are consequences that result in changing the way parties see and respond to each other. This has the potential to have a positive or negative affect, depending on the change in how the other is seen. Theories of how others are seen and how individuals relate to one another provide important insight on what humanization can look like. With the potential that comes in responding to another's humanity, there becomes unlimited potential in conflict transformation work. It is important to summarize here that as one transforms themselves, how they see the world changes, which changes behavior and the way they interact. Based on the presented theories, humanization can be redefined by stating the following: humanization can be a transformative experience as one changes the way they see others in relation to themselves. This change in oneself in how they see and relate to others will be referred to as transformative humanization. It is proposed that when both sides in a conflict engage in transformative humanization, conflict can become a constructive process, lending to conflict transformation and possible reconciliation.

FITTING HUMANIZATION INTO THE CONTEXT OF WORKING TOWARDS RECONCILIATION

Humanization has direct links to perception, behavior, and social relations. Such considerations are important in considering peacebuilding processes that include conflict transformation. Ideas of conflict transformation range in focus from individual, community, political, and economic levels of society, and there are critiques on how actors can engage at each level (Ryan, 2009, p. 308). As challenges of conflict transformation and reconciliation work are examined, a place for humanization to fit in becomes evident. The purpose of this section is to tie the principles of humanization back into principles of conflict theory. Applying the principles of transformative humanization allows for the potential of conflict transformation work to take shape in reaching reconciliation. The history of peacebuilding is also briefly reviewed to provide

reference of how conflict transformation processes and the potential of reconciliation fit into the field. Recognizing conflict escalation and how it occurs provides a reference for timing of conflict transformation work. Though reconciliation is something reached at the end of conflict, theories on conflict transformation provide an important context to the role transformative humanization can play at any stage.

The Evolution of Peacebuilding

Understanding the historical context of peacebuilding sets the precedent for important theories that shape exploring humanization within conflict transformation. Different definitions and views of what peacebuilding is and what it entails have emerged over time. The United Nations (UN) (2010) states that:

Peacebuilding involves a great number and variety of stakeholders – starting with the citizens of the countries themselves where peacebuilding is underway. It is neither a purely political, security nor developmental process, but one that must bring together security, political, economic, social and human rights elements in a coherent and integrated way. (p. 1)

This notion of peacebuilding shows how actors in both the public and private sector shape the course of conflict engagement.

Peacebuilding has evolved over time to address reducing violence and promoting development. Various approaches and aims of peacebuilding show how conflict engagement processes can vary in purpose. The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the way the international community engaged in peacebuilding efforts because peacekeeping, as outlined by chapters six and seven of the UN Charter, is specified as a means of conflict intervention to immediately stop direct violence and to keep violence from escalating (Greene, 2021). Another shift happened in 2015, again under precedent from the UN. The report, “The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peace-building Architecture,” called for the UN to do more in its attempts at peacebuilding, yet criticism remains that even this re-evaluation of peacebuilding techniques did not do enough to change the way peacebuilding is approached to achieve the best possible outcomes (Soto & Castillo, 2016, p. 220). Though peacebuilding as a field continues to evolve based on shifts and in response to criticism, there are important components of peacebuilding that explain different types of conflict engagement.

One significant detail is the level at which peacebuilding efforts are aimed. In recent decades, the two main approaches to peacebuilding have been liberal peace or local turn. Liberal peace has more of an emphasis on international actors within processes of democratization, free globalized markets, human rights, and the rule of law (Abi-Ezzi, 2021). The local turn in peacebuilding focuses more on creating sustainable peace and legitimacy through local partnerships and ownerships (MacGinty, 2015). By focusing on the local, the emphasis is placed on work done in a bottom-up approach, beginning work at grassroots levels. This distinction is more synonymous with ideas of transformative approaches that follow the same framework of a bottom-up approach.

Conflict Transformation as a Conflict Engagement Process

The transformative approach in conflict resolution seeks to aim deeper in engagement to reach more sustainable solutions. Lederach captures the potential of a transformative approach in explaining the process as requiring participants to “reflect on multiple levels and types of change processes, rather than addressing...a single operational solution” (2003, p. 38). This multi-lateral approach should “respond both to the immediate issues and the longer-term agenda (Lederach, 2003, p. 65). Lederach’s description of conflict transformation echoes notions of a broader

understanding of the potential of conflict resolution. Featherston links peacekeeping as a component of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. She describes the needs to include systematic theoretical thinking to “develop appropriate short and long-term goals, improve the means of analysing mission effectiveness and establish benchmarks for good practice,” in addition to providing “the basis for generating and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data” (2000, p. 192). Featherston’s insight shows the necessity of something more in endeavors to bring about sustainable change and in establishing peace. Conflicts vary in every aspect, thus approaches that truly address the conflict will also vary.

Understanding the historical context and shifts of peacebuilding demonstrates why different approaches are needed for different situations. Conflict transformation at its core is a multi-faceted approach that can be practiced in many creative ways. Recognizing the potential of peacebuilding shows the need for transformative approaches that can lead to sustainable peace, change, and reconciliation. Despite all the differences in criticism and approaches, there is one underlying aspect of conflict transformation that sets it apart from simply being a “peacebuilding” approach. Humanization as part of conflict transformation processes can more effectively bring about reconciliation because it has the potential to change the way peace is built.

Timing for Conflict Transformation Work

Conflict transformation carries the connotation in the peacebuilding field as something that happens at the very end of conflict. This broad statement has certain validity. Sandole observes that “peacebuilding has tended to be reactive, ad hoc and minimalist. It has been applied primarily to ‘post-[violent] conflict’ situations, where overt hostilities have ceased, and some degree of negative peace has been established between previously warring parties” (2010, p. 35). If conflict transformation is about building relationships, relationships cannot be built “in an atmosphere of violence and intimidation” (Last, 2000, p. 80). Processes requires flexibility and coordination of international, national, and local levels involved in peacebuilding (Lederach, 2012, p. 8). This coordination results from combined efforts developed over time. Being mindful of the potential for reconciliation also affects processes. Non-violent coexistence can be a starting point in moving towards reconciliation (Bloomfield et al., 2003, pp. 19-20). There is nevertheless a place for transformative work before, during, and after violent conflict.

Peacebuilding approaches can be either reactive or proactive. Reactive approaches are primarily ad hoc and based on a “trial and error” approach whereas proactive peacebuilding is carried out by third party attempts to build peace before violence occurs (Sandole, 2010, pp. 12-13). Preventing violence requires careful strategy and sustained engagement by all parties involved (Lederach, 2012, p. 9). The timing for conflict transformation work may seem evasive in a proactive context. Conflict transformation, or any form of conflict intervention, should not be limited to only occurring in post-conflict societies. Leiner and Aldajani argue that reconciliation should be a part of conflict transformation to transform “adversarial relations into peaceful relations while the conflict is ongoing,” and they use the Hölderlin Perspective which asserts that “reconciliation requires one to be in the middle of the conflict” (2019, p. 114). Referencing back to the definition of conflict as “perceived divergence” (Rubin et al., 1995, p. 5), transforming frames that shape the perceived divergence is a potential way to circumvent escalation of violence within conflict spirals, even if they are ongoing. Humanization can then enter the discourse on how transformation can and should occur at any level and during any stage of conflict.

The Result of Reconciliation

When reconciliation is reached, conflict no longer holds an adversarial hold over the parties. Buber advocated for “development of an organic community” characterized by mutually respectful

and co-operative relationships that come through collaboration through conflict (Morgan & Guilherme, 2012, p. 989). Societies only reach reconciliation once relationships are re-built and conflict has been completely transformed. Maintaining a social-psychological analysis helps in peacebuilding endeavors, as it can identify issues of conflict and provide insight on how negative cycles can be reversed (Kelman, 2009, p. 180). Allowing transformative humanization to become a part of conflict engagement requires a different frame to be placed on what conflict is. When conflict is viewed as an opportunity (whether for physical structural change or changes in perceptual frames), there is greater potential for positive and sustainable outcomes. Reconciliation is the ultimate reversal of violent, escalated conflict.

Reversing Negative Conflict Spirals to Achieve Sustainable Change

The word “conflict” tends to have a negative connotation and denotation. English dictionaries often use words such as disagreement, fight, and incompatibility to define conflict (Cambridge University Press, 2021; Merriam-Webster, 2021; Oxford University Press, 2021). Such words limit the potential of conflict to be an opportunity to lead to reconciliation. Different approaches to conflict are often derivative of how conflict is seen. If conflict is perceived to be dangerous, then conflict avoidance and/or conflict management are often the approach, whereas if conflict is perceived to be constructive, conflict transformation and reconciliation can become viable solutions (Ford, 2020, p. 4). Escalation is what drives conflict into the negative spirals that create problems (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 117). Transformative humanization can reverse the effects of escalation and move parties towards a more constructive view of conflict. Reconciliation becomes possible as seeing humanity “offers possibilities, opportunities to be creative, understanding and empathy, humility and forgiveness” (Ford, 2020, p. 79). Creativity and uniquely catered approaches can help in reversing negative conflict spirals. This is the epitome of transformative humanization.

When conflict become an opportunity for change, parties continue efforts to change themselves and how they engage with others. The purpose of reconciliation is to reach a “stable and lasting peace” where parties are responsive to each other’s needs and interests (Leiner & Aldajani, 2019, p. 114). Relationships determine engagement in conflict. Social bonds are what determines one side either yielding when conflict arises or both sides engaging in problem solving together (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 127). Sustainable change in parties leads to future engagement in productive conflict. When parties use conflict as an opportunity to maintain relationships, cooperative conflict resolution is possible without an escalation of violence. Cooperative conflict resolution requires “openness, lack of defensiveness, and full utilization of available resources” (Deutsch, 1973, p. 363). These principles are re-enforced by principles of humanization. Without seeing humanity of others, no change or resolution can be sustained without risking a relapse back into the negative spirals of conflict.

Ingroup and Outgroup Dynamics

Transformative humanization has the potential to change the existing relationship between the ingroup and outgroup. Groups are not essential in needing to differentiate between one and the other when existing as arbitrary social constructions (Leyens et al., 2007, p. 160). However, issues arise when the ingroup changes perception of the outgroup to dehumanize or infra-humanize. Dehumanization and infra-humanization lead to weaker relationships between groups and is often the cause for an escalation of violence towards the outgroup (Capozza et al., 2017, p. 2). The classification of an ingroup and outgroup is helpful in clarifying parties engaged in conflict. Not only can the relationship between groups affect conflict, but the inner workings of groups also have an effect.

How a group views itself plays a role within the humanization process. Even if a group is not actively or consciously dehumanizing the outgroup by resisting the humanity of the outgroup, how the ingroup views itself still matters. Humanization can occur on an ingroup level which does not necessarily mean that the group will then negatively treat others (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 99). However, focusing inward on oneself or one's group limits capacity to fully see humanity of others and results in behaviors that only protect and/or advance oneself, as demonstrated in Figure Four (The Arbinger Institute, 2016, p. 25). Using Buber's theory of "I-It I-Thou," the ingroup and outgroup relationship can become jeopardized when the "I-It" mentality is applied. There is an ethical difference between the two. When the relationship is "I-It," there is no inclusion between groups which means that there is no shared empathy in experience (Morgan & Guilherme, 2012, p. 986). Managing the relationship between the ingroup and outgroup is a vital component of any peacebuilding approach and understanding how each group sees each other can be a first step in creating a plan to transform conflict.

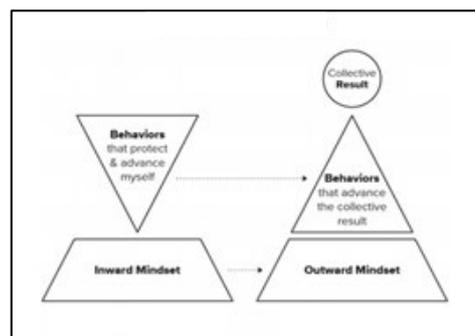


Figure Four: The Arbinger Institute, 2016, p. 25

Reconciliation between the ingroup and the outgroup after being engaged in conflict relates to restoring the relationship between the groups. Even if there was not a strong relationship between groups before conflict, part of conflict transformation work should include building a positive relationship. Relationships are often at the core of conflict, and how oneself and the other is seen is often a determining factor of results (Ford, 2020, p. 61). In order to reach reconciliation, there has to be a shift in how the ingroup and the outgroup perceive each other. This shift can be described by changing the parties' perceptions of the conflict from a "battle to be won to that of a problem to be solved together" (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 219). When groups can change the way they see each other, conflict becomes an opportunity and reconciliation is a possibility.

Ramifications of Identity and Emotions

Individual and group identities function through different frameworks that affect relationships. Three key structural elements to intergroup relations are defining boundaries, socio-structural relations, and ideologies (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 65). Each of these elements has ties to structures in society. For example, social actors can frame issues in certain ways that groups will follow (Rhys, 2020). Shared symbols within groups also function to create meaning within group identities (Leyens et al., 2007; Volkan, 2004). The expression of identity through nationalism is one example that shows how group identity and expression is woven with principles of how other groups are viewed, as infra-humanization can often resemble nationalism (Leyens et al., 2007, p. 153). Such views have the potential to produce negative effects when principles of humanization are not in practice. There are many more theories about identity and how it affects conflict that will not be discussed in this study. In relation to humanization, it is important to link identity and emotion to show how humanization can fit into intergroup dynamics.

Emotions play an important role in affecting identity as well as perception of an outgroup. Addressing emotions is an easier starting place than addressing social identity (McDonald et al., 2017, p. 131). Ingroup and outgroup perceptions, as explored in dehumanization, infra-humanization, and humanization principles, are shaped by emotions. Different theories exist that connect emotions to identity expression and the shaping of conflict based on individual and group levels (Friedman et al., 2017, p. 352). Certain theories about emotions at such levels aid in explaining how emotions tie into conflict and humanization. Three features of emotion that relate to conflict are cognitive antecedent, action tendency, and the relationship between emotions and psychological mechanism (Peterson, 2011, p. 24). These features change the way beliefs, actions, and desires may be expressed. Figure Five

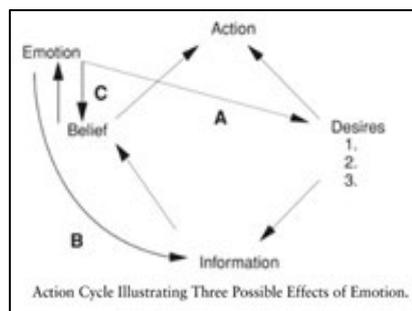


Figure Five: Peterson, 2011, p. 24

illustrate how the incorporation of emotions influences individuals or groups. Each point of the diagram is interconnected which depicts how emotions can influence individuals and/or outgroups.

In studies conducted on outgroup dehumanization and ingroup humanization, the role of primary and secondary emotions was evaluated in determining the effects of emotion on intergroup perceptions. Secondary emotions are the emotions felt based off more generalized emotions. Association of secondary emotions to group identity is one way that groups perceive their own humanity (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 68; Leyens et al., 2007, p. 146). Bias towards an outgroup result in infra-humanization which means that the ingroup dehumanizes the outgroup by not assigning secondary emotions to primary emotions of the outgroup (Capozza et al., 2017, p. 2). Just like identity, emotions are complex in nature and in how they exact influence. Managing emotions with perception is another important aspect of conflict transformation work, especially as it relates to how humanity is seen with and between groups.

Emotions of both the past and present must be carefully analyzed and managed to keep processes moving forward in efforts to reach reconciliation. An important component of conflict de-escalation is commitment. Deutsch explains that “people tend to act in accord with their beliefs” (1973, p. 356). If emotions and beliefs have a mutually reinforcing relationship, as shown in Figure Five, then it is critical in reconciliation work that both aspects are addressed in moving actions and desires to a more constructive plane. When left unchecked, emotions can lead to self-deception in the creation of new beliefs that justify often negative changes in behavior (Peterson, 2011, p. 29). Self-deception limits parties’ ability to engage in constructive conflict intervention processes. Conflict will continue to spiral when self-deception is reinforced by one or both groups as it leads to conflict becoming self-sustained (Ford, 2020, p. 98). Such relationships between groups will continue to use negative emotions to fuel conflict spirals with violent action and not towards reconciliation. Emotions can play a critical role in helping relationships go right and in reversing negative spirals.

Humanization plays a unique role in understanding effects of emotions during times of conflict and the result of how others are seen. Gill and Niens (2017) observe that:

It is within a common humanity that empathy and compassion can transcend animosity, fear and hostility towards the Other and, as a result, open the possibility for forgiveness and reconciliation at personal, interpersonal and intergroup levels. Therefore, humanisation could be argued to be at the core of developing solidarity and social cohesion in post-conflict societies. (pp. 2-3)

Their comments strike at the fundamental issue of addressing relationships in working towards reconciliation.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF HUMANIZATION AS CHANGE

In examining conflict theory and humanization, the potential for transformative humanization has been established. This section seeks to identify implications of change through transformative humanization on negative conflict spirals. Examination of these implications allows for each of the principles from this study to be brought together in one final analysis of humanization as change. An important tension between the role individuals and groups can play in conflict will be evaluated, and conflict transformation work guided by transformative humanization will be assessed. The important distinction between conflict transformation and reconciliation will also be discussed. Theories explored in prior sections will be drawn upon as transformative humanization is further examined.

Comparing Individual Participation to Group Participation in Transformative Processes

Societies function based on the relationships between individuals and groups. Managing both dynamics plays an important role in any conflict engagement process. Open societies with loosely structured groups mitigate conflict differently than conflicts that exist within groups or more ridged systems (Deutsch, 1973, p. 9). Intergroup relationships affect conflict in the way group constructs influence principles of humanization. Groups rely on boundaries, relations, and ideologies as a framework in moderating the dehumanization of an outgroup and/or humanization of an ingroup (Vaes et al., 2012, p. 79). For conflict to reverse from a negative spiral into a positive spiral, such group dynamics must be addressed. In a cooperative process, participants can acknowledge conflict in a way that promotes solutions (Deutsch, 1973, p. 30). Such a process can be achieved by applying transformative humanization. As perceptions of the outgroup shift to recognizing humanity, there is an increase in the “association between the self and the outgroup” which enables better intergroup relations within society (Capozza et al., 2017, p. 16). The established principles of group identity and dynamics in society apply to individuals. Because individuals make up groups, there is a distinctive tension in the role individuals play in conflict transformation processes as well as groups. This section first assess why individual change and engagement is a critical step before group dynamics can be addressed in engagement processes. Both individual and group function play different roles in conflict transformation and in working towards reconciliation.

Why Individual Engagement Can Make a Difference

Individuals engaged in any scale of conflict hold certain responsibility in helping shift the conflict spiral. Though the group dynamics play a role in humanization, there is a level of individual responsibility. Individuals can make a significant contribution to conflict transformation processes as they seek to first change themselves.

The idea of changing oneself is echoed in other philosophies supporting the idea of transformative humanization. Buber identifies the soul as the component of being accountable for taking responsibility for what one does or does not do (1947, p. 115). Buber’s claim applies to human relationships. Ossewaarde-Lowtoot observes that “conflicts between humans reflect conflicts within individuals” (2018, p. 452). The Arbinger Institute also advocates for self-change through their emphasis on turning mindset outwards to produce behaviors that lead to collective results (2016, p. 25). Individual change makes a difference because it starts with being genuine. Lederach poses this question as the guide to conflict transformation: “How do we end something not desired and build something we do desire?” (2003, p. 30). The answer is in bringing both sides together, which starts with individuals. Group change cannot begin without individuals committing

themselves to the re-building of relationships and transcending the negative spirals of conflict together.

Group Dynamics of a Change Process

Groups play a powerful role in conflicts. In the escalation of violent conflict, changes in psychological states, the function of groups, and in communities of involved parties all occur (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 82). Dehumanization or infra-humanization may occur when conflict escalates between parties. As group functions and communities change, a more inclusive peacebuilding approach is needed in reversing the effects of violent escalation. The benefit of conflict transformation in such settings is that transformative work “requires us to reflect on multiple levels and types of change processes, rather than addressing ourselves only to a single operational solution” (Lederach, 2003, p. 38). This concept fits in the importance of group participation in transformative processes. There must be solutions as well as social change initiatives for post-conflict societies to overcome the negative effects of conflict (Lederach, 2003, p. 39). Though it starts with individuals, different levels of society will not be reached in conflict transformation processes without groups fully engaged.

The social structures in society mitigated by group dynamics play a critical role in moving conflict towards reconciliation. Social relations that are radically restructured better support traditional peacebuilding efforts, and this is done by addressing underlying assumptions of the “human element of contemporary conflicts” (Gill & Niens, 2017, p. 2). Groups must be brought together for processes of transformative humanization to occur and affect large-scale efforts. In a study done on intergroup relationships, it was determined that “the humanizing manipulation was effective in promoting contact,” meaning that when groups were exposed to humanizing manipulation, the ingroups and outgroups were faster in reaching a desire to have a relationship with members in the other group (Capozza et al., 2017, p. 8). This means that once humanization occurred, it was easier for groups to come together to begin working towards building better relationships in an intergroup setting. The study also showed that when outgroups were humanized, the ingroup had more of a desire for contact with the outgroup and that the subsequent contact led to further outgroup humanization (Capozza et al., 2017, p. 14). As groups come together, the potential for reconciliation increases. Though there is much more to group dynamics, the key aspect of this section is to demonstrate that humanization is a critical force in bringing groups together to promote change on a wider scale with the intention to build better relationships that can lead to sustainable outcomes to overcome negative conflict.

Turning Points in Conflict Transformation Work Towards Reconciliation

As individuals and groups become engaged in conflict transformation work, reconciliation becomes possible. There are certain turning points that mark opportunities for transformation to occur. Ford explains that “We are connected either in constructive ways or in destructive ways” (2020, p. 78). Reaching reconciliation requires seeing the humanity and having a desire to act. Turning points within conflict transformation may be manifested in different ways. This section seeks to identify how turning points are created through dialogue and peace education to further shift transformation to reconciliation.

Dialogue can be a powerful tool in opening spaces and facilitating dialogue between individuals and/or groups. Fisher explains that “The goals of dialogue are simply to increase shared knowledge and to build understanding and trust, elements that are critical to any further movement toward conflict resolution” (2009, p. 333). Each of the goals Fisher outlines as pointing to conflict resolution have the potential to move parties further towards conflict transformation and reconciliation. Using dialogue is a versatile approach that can include “curriculum activities,

biographical (creative) writing, narrative exchange, storytelling, expressive arts” in addition to discourse, all with the intention to provide participants opportunities to reflect and act in different settings (Gill & Niens, 2017, p. 3). The creative ways that dialogue can be applied creates unique opportunities for transformative humanization to work in parties transforming their relationships.

One aspect of dialogue is its ability to involve a third side in working towards reconciliation. When third sides become involved in processes they must be recognized by both parties as legitimate as well as remain unbiased (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 133). Third parties can also help conflicting parties recognize that action should be taken immediately while still managing timing of intervention stages (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 163). Whatever brings parties together, third sides can help conflict progress towards better outcomes. The nature of open dialogue works to facilitate this process, whether a third side is involved or not.

Power is another aspect affected by dialogue. Part of negotiating outcomes at the end of conflict depends on tactic bargaining which calls into account for what is represented in final negotiations inside and outside negotiation chambers in the final stages of settlement (Mitchell, 1981, p. 197). There are many angles that could be recognized in the role power plays, especially in more final stages of conflict intervention. Here, it is important to recognize that humanization seeks to rebalance power in the sense that both parties have an equal voice in changing the course of the conflict from a negative spiral to a positive one. Dialogue can reposition conceptualization of power between parties (IIR Prague, 2019, 1m12s). The shifting of power dynamics can depend on how parties see and respond to one another. Opening dialogue in such a way can be pivotal in encouraging collaboration between parties instead of competition.

Productive dialogue is characterized by the commitment of parties to be open and honest throughout the process. Trust can be a byproduct of dialogue. Built trust helps in balancing the contact between parties as humanization occurs, and this begins in seeing humanity of the other (Capozza et al., 2017, p. 15). Humanization allows for the process to be more open and honest as well. Morgan and Guilherme (2012) state that, “it is only through dialogue that a peaceful co-existence can be established” as groups have the ability to defuse conflict through dialogue by:

Seeking points in common, through getting people and communities to talk to each other, through allowing them to share grievances, problems and views, and through encouraging people to see each other as Thous, as fellow human beings with the same psychological, intellectual, emotional and spiritual make up. (p. 988)

Such use of dialogue can reinforce transformative humanization and is a helpful tool within transformative processes.

Another turning point in moving conflict transformation to reconciliation comes in using humanization as a form of peace education. Dialogue and reflection are both identified as ways that encourage peacebuilding education through humanization (Gill & Niens, 2017, p. 4). Teaching individuals to reflect on themselves promotes personal change which is a vital aspect of transformative humanization. Experienced facilitators can help processes move on a productive track because they provide specific skillsets based on the situations they facilitate (Sandole, 2010, p. 47). Dialogue workshops serve as an example of how dialogue, as explained in 5.3.1, often requires elements of peace education as part of its process. Learning about conflict and why it spirals aids in understanding why reversing negative spirals leads to better outcomes. As individuals and groups learn more about conflict and themselves, perspectives can change, and they can learn how to engage in conflict more constructively.

Learning about peace does not always occur in formal or academic settings. In 2017, a group of ten young adults, Turkish-speaking Cypriots and Greek-speaking Cypriots, embarked on a twenty-seven-day hike around Cyprus. One of the participants (Papagiori, personal communication, July 23, 2021) who helped organize and coordinate the logistics of the hike stated that:

The goal was to bring people together from both communities through a common hobby which was hiking and camping. Whilst also promoting peace and proving that even under

difficult circumstances – such as the summer heat, tiredness from walking 30km a day and having to prepare our meal afterwards, waking up very early, living with the basics, etc - peace and friendship is achievable.

The experiences of the participants show how coming together and seeking opportunities to learn about each other promotes peace and builds relationships.

Through the hike, views of the conflict in Cyprus were transformed. One participant shared that before the hike the group engaged in activities that would help them better understand each other which was the first opportunity they had to talk about issues of the conflict in Cyprus with someone from another community (Türkdoğan, personal communication, August 8, 2021). Being on the hike provided profound experiences of connecting with people on both sides of the conflict both between participants and in communities they hiked through. In response to a question about what changes were experienced because of the hike, one participant (Koumantaris, personal communication, August 10, 2021) said:

I also saw change in other people too of how they see things, of how they see themselves, realizing things about themselves....If we achieved to stay together, under the hard circumstances, and we finished it, well, then, I'm optimistic that everything can be solved about the conflict.

This optimistic response shows the powerful effect of learning about peace through working for and experiencing the effects of conflict transformation can have. The hike may not have been formal peace education, however, as the participants came together, they experienced transformation as they learned about each other. This changed the way they wanted to engage in the conflict. Learning about peace through personal experiences of transformative humanization is an effective way in inspiring individuals to change as those individuals can then continue their own personal work in promoting peace in what they do.

CONCLUSION

This study seeks to understand conflict transformation processes with transformative humanization as the how in reaching reconciliation. The frames, levels, and spirals of conflict all affect engagement processes and have a subsequent effect on principles of humanization. Transformative humanization emerges as the potential to change the course of conflict because it requires parties to change themselves and how they see and relate to the other. The literature examined in this study show that when both sides in a conflict engage in change, negative cycles are reversed into something positive. Individual change can inspire change on larger levels. Based on the presented findings, it is recommended that conflict transformation processes should consciously include approaches that encourage transformative humanization to help parties in conflict begin to change the way they see themselves and how they see the humanity of others as this can lead to sustainable peace post-conflict and aids in efforts to reach reconciliation.

Summary of Transformative Humanization Principles

The principles of humanization that guided analysis of conflict theory in relation to humanization are summarized in this section into ten key points:

1. Different levels and degrees of conflict affect engagement processes.
2. Reconciliation efforts require transformative work overtime.
3. Perception of self and others influences behavior.
4. There is a difference between dehumanization and infra-humanization.
5. Humanization relates to how one sees others.
6. Identity shapes the way individuals and groups relate to and interact with one another.

7. Reversing effects of dehumanization and infra-humanization require one to change oneself in how they view and relate to others. This is transformative humanization.
8. Individuals and/or groups are responsible for how they engage in conflict.
9. Relationships between parties have significant effect on the course of conflict.
10. The use of dialogue and peace education can be turning points in conflict transformation work that can potentially lead to reconciliation.

Each of these points are listed to consolidate the theories that tie humanization into conflict transformation processes. They also feature components that address the objectives of this study by highlighting how humanization can work within transformative processes and what should be considered within processes to promote reconciliation as a result of party engagement.

Answering the Research Question

The study was guided by a main research question and a sub-research question, as presented in the introduction. In this section, both questions are presented in italics followed by short, summarizing statement that seeks to answer each question in short.

What potential does humanization have to change participant engagement in conflict transformation processes that lead to reconciliation?

The potential of humanization is that it can become a transformative experience that changes the way parties engage in conflict, shifting them to a state where conflict transformation and reaching reconciliation becomes a desired outcome with the purpose to re-build relationships and establish sustainable peace.

What are the differences in the role humanization plays on an individual and an intergroup level where conflict transformation work is taking place?

Transformative humanization begins on an individual level, and groups engaged in conflict must have each member take individual responsibility in transforming themselves that creates a ripple effect that can reach effective conflict transformation work in intergroup settings.

Final Conclusion

Humanization can play a powerful role in conflict transformation processes. It is important to distinguish humanization as a contested topic while still placing it in the context of peacebuilding approaches that use conflict transformation to work towards reconciliation. A qualitative research approach was employed, drawing on a range of literature about conflict theory and humanization. The established idea of transformative humanization as presented in this study hinges on the discovery and analysis of the literary findings. Each section focused on certain elements of conflict theory and humanization to demonstrate the potential of transformative processes. Relevant conflict theories alongside theories on humanization were explored to provide the foundational basis and framework for fitting humanization into conflict transformation work. The presented definition of transformative humanization provides the backdrop for the tested theories in following sections.

The purpose of this study was to determine humanization's potential to change participant engagement in conflict transformation processes. The discovered potential is that change must happen within an individual and be followed by a change in the ingroup and outgroup dynamics of how parties see each other. Reversing negative cycles of conflict also comes in transforming the way parties relate to on another. Changing oneself can crosscut levels of conflict and builds upon principles of peacebuilding efforts being carried out over time. Positive change that leads to sustainable peace only comes through commitment to conflict transformation processes that transcend why the conflict began. Seeing humanity and responding to it unlocks the potential of

transformative humanization. It can be concluded that transformative humanization has the power to aid in conflict transformation processes as parties overcome conflict by transforming it into opportunities for stronger relationships and creating sustainable peace together through positive change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you goes to Dr. Chad Ford, Director David Whippy, and Professor Amanda Ford who first taught me about peacebuilding and inspired me that peace is possible. I would also like to thank my dissertation supervisor at the University of Bradford, Dr. Karen Abi-Ezzi, who played a significant role in assisting me through the learning process of research and writing while I completed my master's program. Finally, I would like to thank all of my family and friends whose love and support has guided me in all my endeavors.

FUNDING

This research received no external funding.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Authors declares no conflict of interest.

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