Does Our Field Have a Centre?

Thoughts from the Academy

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Abstract

This article is a personal reflection on the development of the field of conflict reso-lution/peace and conflict studies from the perspective of the classroom: how what is thought necessary to teach has changed as the field has grown and reacted to often turbulent political change

> For almost a century, the Universe has been known to be expanding as a con-sequence of the Big Bang about 14 billion years ago. However, the discovery that this expansion is accelerating is astounding. If the expansion will con-tinue to speed up, the Universe will end in ice – Saul Perlmutter

I was drawn to this quote by the physicist Saul Perlmutter because lately I have been thinking a lot about how the field of conflict resolution has been expanding in the three decades or so that I have been working – writing, but especially teach-ing – around or within it. I am 'thinking the field', that is, from the perspective of university professor, and also from my particular academic location, the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason; why I think the site is important I will come to soon.

1. What Is in a Name?

One can observe this expansion by looking at the number of topics or areas of concern that over the years have been added to and counted as being 'in the field' (see below). But one might perhaps begin more elementally looking for this expansion by asking simply what the *field calls itself* – a not-so-simple question of nomenclature, as it happens, because in this case, nomenclature reflects aspiration: from (mere) conflict *regulation* (Wehr, 1979), to *management* (Sandole

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& Sandole-Staroste, 1987), to *resolution* (Burton, 1990), to *transformation* (Lederach, 1995), and finally, to *peacebuilding* (Schirch, 2005). From 'regulation' on, each change of name reflects, for its proponent, a desire to get deeper into the root causes of the conflict and to induce more profound and sustained changes in the conflict system and the relationship among the conflictant parties. Each change of name is also a subtle critique, if not quite repudiation, of the lesser goals that were seen to attach to the alternative name. The last name, 'peacebuilding', is the most ambitious of all, and the one most fraught with ethical (among other) concerns, partly because peacebuilding entails the most intensive and wide-ranging *intervention* by others into the conflict system (society or culture). In fact, the name 'peacebuilding' is an indication of the way in which the field called *Conflict Resolution* is now perhaps misnamed because the endeavour has so expanded, and the more inclusive label, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, is perhaps a better fit.

I want to underscore my point that these name changes are not idle semantics. Underlying them are deep moral and political assumptions about the nature of people and the world. To 'stop' at regulation or management is to adopt a realist or neorealist position about the nature of conflict and potentials for inducing change. The deep causes are assumed to be beyond our reach, untouchable, located in human nature or the very nature of the conflict system. Thus, one aims to achieve balance, stability or deterrence, and not much more. The notion of *resolution* as opposed to *management* was proposed by John Burton precisely as his critique of traditional state- and power-centred international relations as he found it in the 1960s and 1970s, and as a critique of settlement-oriented Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), particularly mediation, as he found it in the 1980s. Reacting to Burton's influence, later scholar-practitioners such as Lederach argued for *transformation* as going beyond resolution of the conflict to altering the quality of the relationship between the enemy parties, and aiming for *reconciliation*, a far more ambitious goal. And *peacebuilding*, while variously defined, most certainly involves multi-level structural or systemic change, and is thus, as I said, the most intrusive of all the sorts of interventions implied by the other terms. For this reason many of the critics of what has come to be called 'liberal peacebuilding' have pointed to the potentially negative or destabilizing effects of such deep and comprehensive intrusions (Duffield, 2007; Mac Ginty, 2011; Richmond, 2007).

Beyond nomenclature, I will have more to say specifically about the substance of this expansion, but of course the very idea of expansion brings to mind the question of 'expansion from where or what?' If the field is expanding, does it do so from some sort of primordial *centre*? And furthermore, even if there *were* such a centre, does the very nature of expansion mean that ultimately the centre cannot hold, and the field will eventually expand into incoherence (if not an icy demise)? I will argue that there was and is such a centre, though it is not so much a single point as a conglomeration of related propositions, held together by a primordial and perhaps irreconcilable tension at the heart of our field.

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2.   Location, Location, Location …

Let me be clear that the reason for all this rumination about centres and expansion is that I approach the field as an academic (rather than, like so many of my colleagues, a scholar-practitioner), and more precisely as a *teacher*. Trying to teach the field, particularly in introductory level courses at the master's and doctoral levels (tellingly, undergraduate education in conflict analysis and resolution came *last* to S-CAR, almost 25 years after the masters degree and 17 after the PhD: we needed to be confident that there was a field before we experimented on 18-year-olds), and worrying about such academic matters as programme design, course content, curriculum and, relatedly, the sorts of theory, research, and practice competence of our next and future faculty hires, means that I worry a lot about how well we are preparing our students to go out, find meaningful employment, and contribute to the field's development. Having been in the field as a teacher for several decades, I have had the opportunity first-hand to observe how, as the number of substantive, topical areas that have come to be regarded as (often necessarily) included in our domain increased, the conception of the field as a whole has grown and ramified.

My perspective on all this has been significantly shaped by my having spent my career at S-CAR: the fact that S-CAR itself has been around and educating students since 1981, and that it has pretensions to offer (now reflected in our recent elevation to 'School' status) a fairly comprehensive education in the field. (I should add that we fail: we are not as strong in conflict and development or conflict and economics as we should be, and many of our masters students complain that we do not adequately prepare them for mediation-focused ADR work. The first two are significant shortcomings in my view. As to the third, learning the set of skills needed to be certified as a mediator in court-affiliated mediation programmes can be taught in three full-day workshops. Learning to think critically about mediation – as a social formation or ideology, including its potentially negative or 'hegemonic' aspects, or even beyond its traditional basis in interest-based problem solving to include such emerging forms as transformational, narrative, or Insight mediation – is a different matter.)

So this concern with expansion and centres stems from the mundane matter of keeping curricula up to date and relevant, and the less mundane matter of anticipating what skills, training, methodological orientation and research focus/agenda the next and future faculty hires should possess – in order to remain as comprehensive as we aspire to be, and as the field of Peace and Conflict Studies grows around us. The comprehensive part is important. If, even in an academic setting, one is offering training or a degree focused on 'dispute resolution' or ADR (say, in a law school), then feeling compelled to include courses on human rights, R2P, DDR, or trauma-healing (to pick just four topics now broadly considered to be part of our field), is not a problem. Likewise, the excellent and equally enduring Program on Negotiation (PON), based at Harvard, is acute in its focus on the interest-based and problem solving approach to negotiation (though scholar-practitioners associated with PON have certainly enlarged 'negotiation's' purview since the classic *Getting to Yes* neglected culture, gender, power, and affect) and,

while counting several other universities in consortium and straddling law, business and public policy, faculty there are unlikely to feel compelled to offer a comprehensive curriculum with courses on dialogue, appreciative inquiry or, in fact, other third-party approaches to resolving conflict.[1] It is unsurprising that Herbert Kelman, a pioneering figure in interactive conflict resolution through his many Israeli-Palestinian workshops, also based at Harvard, was not affiliated with PON, but with Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, where he directed the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution (PICAR). His conception of practice in the field is a very different one (*see, e.g.*, Kelman, 1972, 1996).[2] The point is that if one's focus is negotiation or ADR, one's conceptual and pedagogical centre of gravity seems clear.

A similar clarity holds for practitioners not operating primarily as academicians. Practitioners have their *technic* – specific forms of mediation, dialogue, interactive problem-solving workshops, collaborative planning, dispute resolution systems design, restorative justice (another relative latecomer to our field) – and that technic constitutes their centre.

Finally, with respect to designing comprehensive curricula and introductory courses, let me emphasize the teaching component, and the need to design a programme of study that seeks to represent the field 'as a whole'. Of course, each faculty member will have his or her own theoretical orientation and research or practice focus or agenda, topically and methodologically, and will offer more specialized courses based on these. These research, theory or practice foci vary quite a bit in a place like S-CAR, where several and very different disciplinary and research cultures can be found. For any of us, with respect to theory, research and practice, these probably prescribe our different intellectual 'centres'. But this raises a different issue I will leave aside for now: the extent to which we at S-CAR (or any other centre of academic research and instruction with claims to comprehensiveness) can find a minimally common centre around 'conflict analysis and resolution', and thus the extent to which we can say with confidence that our *field* coheres into a *discipline*. At present, it does not.

3.   The First Postgraduate Programme, 1981

Elsewhere, I have written, "there is no fully comprehensive history of our field, much less a critical assessment, as it is too early for either to convey much authority" (Avruch, 2012: 182). Kriesberg (2007) offers a partial account mainly in terms of institutional development, Ramsbotham *et al.* (2011) adopt a chrono-

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1   PON itself is not a degree granting entity, though it does sponsor executive education and training certificate programmes.
2   A bit of history. Both Kelman and Roger Fisher were members at one time of John Burton's 'Problem-Solving Workshop', then called 'Controlled Communication' (Burton, 1969): Fisher at the first one, in December 1965, and Kelman in October 1966. Kelman, adopting a loose basic human needs approach followed broadly in Burton's path; Fisher, privileging the rational-choice, utilities-maximizing thinking that underlay 'principled negotiation', decidedly did not (*see* R.J. Fisher, 1997:21-25; Fisher and Ury, 1981; Kelman, 1990; Mitchell, 2005).

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logical, indeed, generational, approach oriented around key figures, and one can find partial histories in accounts of particular methodologies, such as workshop-based 'interactive conflict resolution' (Fisher, 1997). Making no claims to supplant any of these, here I will narrow the focus on the field's growth to the perspective of the classroom, and what needs to be in an introductory course syllabus (at any level of instruction). I will then broaden this view by considering the intellectual and sociopolitical contexts and currents that have shaped the concerns and commitments of the field, flowing *into* (reactively, rather than flowing *out of*) the classroom. Behind all this there is a basic tension, alluded to earlier, between two views of how one conceptualizes what the field, as a *normative* undertaking, aims to achieve. This tension has been present from the beginning, at the field's inception as a self-conscious endeavour, and continues to characterize the field today (Scheinman, 2008).[3]

In 1981 what was then the Center for Conflict Resolution welcomed its first cohort of master's students in a Master of Science in Conflict *Management* programme, the first postgraduate programme of its kind in North America. The fact that the first iteration of the degree was as 'Management' precisely reflected the earlier stages of our field's aspirations, described at the outset of this essay. The fact that it was a Masters of *Science* rather than *Arts* reflected the design of the founding director, Bryant Wedge, a clinical psychiatrist and peace activist that the programme would *train* professionals in the process-oriented technical skills enabling them to intervene as third parties in conflicts and disputes. His model was the Masters of Social Work (MSW). The 'Science' designation of our degree has remained – an anachronism for some of us. 'Resolution' replaced 'Management' soon after John Burton's arrival in 1985. Based on his theory of deep conflict being caused by the suppression of Basic Human Needs, Burton sought to differentiate Resolution from ADR-like Management. These needs, he argued, could never be bargained or negotiated away, thus rendering the very popular model of interest-based or principled negotiation, described in Roger Fisher and Bill Ury's perennial bestseller *Getting to Yes* (1981), misguided or irrelevant for the sorts of deep-rooted identity and needs-based social conflicts Burton engaged in such books as *Deviance, Terrorism, and War* (1979) and *Violence Explained* (1997).[4]

For all this, Fisher and Ury's book was at the centre of our introductory master's course for many years, and not only as conceptual foil. In truth, compared to today, the reading list of core texts in conflict resolution that was available was a remarkably short one. Of course one could point to what may be called 'founding' books in the field: Rapoport's *Fights, Games, and Debates* (1960), Boulding's (1962) *Conflict and Defense*, Coser's (1956) *Functions of Social Conflict*, Schelling's (1963), *Strategy of Conflict*, Kriesberg's *Sociology of Social Conflicts* (1973), among them.[5] All these were taught; but the conflict analysis *and* resolution library was a

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3   Indeed, post Iraq and Afghanistan, with the militarization of both development aid and conflict management construed as 'stability and reconstruction', perhaps even more so.
4   A longer description of the early years of the Center can be found in Black and Avruch (1993). A description of the earliest curriculum can be found in Wedge and Sandole (1982).
5   And other works, less often taught but part of the then-known universe: Doob (1970), Deutsch (1973), Gulliver (1979), Raiffa (1982).

meagre one until the middle of the 1980s. Pruitt and Rubin's (1986) social psychological treatment (now in its third edition as Pruitt and Kim [2004]), Axelrod's (1984) *Evolution of Cooperation* and Christopher Mitchell's (1981) *Structure of International Conflict* (which already presented a Burtonian view that deviated from classical realist or neorealist IR treatments) – were among the books taught to entering students. More on the practice side, Chris Moore's work on mediation (Moore, 1986) and Wilmot and Hocker's *Interpersonal Conflict* (in its second edition in 1985) – and a Xeroxed prepublication version of Diamond and McDonald's seminal work on multi-track diplomacy – also circulated among students (1991, 1996). When Dennis Sandole came to Mason in 1981 as the first dedicated hire in the Center for Conflict Resolution (its first incarnation; for several years his line was split with International Relations until he moved to the Center fulltime), the first course he taught was a practicum with guest speakers from a very wide variety of approaches and backgrounds. These lectures were transcribed and appeared in the volume *Conflict Management and Problem Solving* (Sandole & Sandole-Staroste, 1987). The title echoes two eras in our development, 1981-1982 – management rather than resolution – and the years of its appearance, 1987, with 'problem-solving' reflecting John Burton's influence ('problem-solving' being the main methodology espoused by Burton in his workshop). This book was the first sustained scholarly 'product' that in some way represented the sensibility of conflict analysis and resolution emerging from George Mason. Given its provenance as a series of lectures by diverse scholars and practitioners, it was, as Sandole put it, a sort of 'convenience sample' of what was going on at the time in an emergent and very multidisciplinary endeavour. A later collection (Sandole & van der Merwe, 1993) was more focused and impactful; many of its chapters are still regularly cited in the literature. But the earlier volume did capture a sense, for many of us, of the excitement of an emerging field. The late Kenneth Boulding felt this as well. He wrote the Foreword to the book. He had been a visiting professor and recalled a class he taught just four years after the programme's inception, in the Fall of 1985:

> [I] look back on it as perhaps the most exciting class I ever taught in my more than fifty years of teaching. The age range of students was about twenty to seventy and I think a good deal of internal learning took place between the younger and older members. The variety of life experiences in the class added to the learning process. About a quarter of the class came from something like a military background; another were peace activists; another quarter environmentalists; another quarter, unclassifiable. I think we all learned from each other. (Boulding, 1987: ix)

4.   Back to Location, Location, Location …

Citing Dennis Sandole's two edited volumes as exemplary serves to point out that a faculty charged with instruction in a new and emergent field where the dedicated scholarly literature is thin finds it necessary, individually or collectively, to

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write the field into existence. Of course I do not in any way mean to imply that we at S-CAR did this singlehandedly! Colleagues at other universities teaching in the field, on both sides of the Atlantic, have collectively created this library, which by 2013 is quite impressive and, indeed, is indexical of the field's academic 'reality', vigour, and legitimacy. Thinking, for example, about our colleagues in the UK (at Bradford, Kent, Lancaster, among other university-based programmes), I like to point to the three successive editions of Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall's *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (3rd edn, 2011) as another manifestation of our growth and vigour. Each succeeding version is not only substantially longer, but is substantively longer through the inclusion of entirely new chapters on conflict resolution and the (new) media, art, popular culture, the environment, 'linguistic intractability', critical and post-structural theory and, most importantly an emerging statement by the authors on what they believe to be the future of the field as a 'cosmopolitan' venture.[6]

It is not that we at S-CAR, solo and Prometheus-like, brought the fire of scholarship to the hitherto unillumined. But we did have a significant institutional advantage in helping to grow the field. Throughout the 1980s the then-Center for Conflict Resolution was housed within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and protected from possibilities of hostile take-overs or other machinations of baronial social science department chairs first by the graduate dean (Thomas Rhys Williams, an anthropologist and chair of the faculty group that designed the degree in 1979-1980), and then by the canny chair of Sociology-Anthropology, Joseph Scimecca. In fact, Scimecca became Director when the Center moved from the Department to its own space. Within the Department the fact that we offered a separate master's (from 1981) and (in 1988) doctoral degree in a field *not* sociology or anthropology, also provided a measure of autonomy (as did generally supportive and sympathetic colleagues in those disciplines). However, the most important change occurred in 1990: the Center became the Institute and its leadership negotiated a separation from the College of Arts and Sciences and official university status of 'Local Academic Unit'.[7] This guaranteed our bureaucratic autonomy and meant that we were never buried inside one *disciplinary* department or another. This meant that though we were a tiny faculty (far smaller than almost every academic department in the College of Arts of Sciences), our Director held the status of Dean. All admissions, staff, and academic appointments (including promotion and tenure) were made in-house. The bureaucratic profile of the unit was extremely flat, and the leader of our group (in

6   The first edition came out in 1999. (The order of authorship differed: Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse.) The first edition was comprised of eight chapters in 270 pages. The third edition features 20 chapters in 507 pages. They are two very different books, reflecting in my view the enormous growth in the number and variety of the field's areas of concern and engagement over a period of a dozen years. I'm not sure how many other academic fields (or, indeed disciplines), can boast of similar growth.

7   The Center for Conflict Resolution became the Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution immediately subsequent to the arrival on the faculty of John Burton in 1985. Thus, in 1990, CCAR became ICAR.

many 'demographic' ways the equivalent of a departmental chair) reported directly to the university's provost, our chief academic officer.

I cannot begin to emphasize the significance of this attainment of institutional autonomy for enabling our current position in the field as a whole. For one thing, it meant that if we decided we needed someone from social psychology or sociology (or from Peace and Conflict Studies, for that matter), to enhance our strikingly multi-disciplinary faculty, we went out and hired one. Were we in a political science or anthropology or communications department, for example, these sorts of out-of-disciplinary hires would never likely occur. My colleague Solon Simmons has referred to disciplines as being 'like churches', with notion of rites of passage, purity, and pollution as strong as any (nowadays embattled) denomination or tribe. Relations in the greater university with other (social science) disciplinary departments are much like Morgenthau's original vision of international relations among states: protecting your own (departmental) interests comes first, though one may form temporary alliances against outside aggressors or centres of power. This also meant that when we decided that human rights, say, was now to be considered part of the field, we were not constrained by a college dean, sitting above us, telling us, "Hold on, I think there's someone doing human rights in the Philosophy and Religion Department. I will not approve this search. Redundancy is not economic".[8]

5. A Growing Field: Proliferating Topics and Expanding Ambitions

In one way, we scholars 'wrote the field' by recognizing gaps or lacuna in existing theory or research. In my case, the glaring gap was the inattention paid to culture (to *difference*), a result, as I wrote elsewhere, of the origins of the field in IR (even if as a reaction to neorealist, state and power-centred IR) or, for negotiation theory and research, in social psychology. Most practice, on the other hand – particularly in labor-management relations, and leaving aside mostly unnoticed class-based cultural difference – did not take place in culturally diverse settings (Avruch, 2012: 6-9). Peter Black and I, both anthropologists and thus attuned to culture, wrote a series of critiques of this absence (Avruch 1998, 2012; Avruch &

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8   Like all evolutionary accidents, however, there are some costs as well. One is that our Ph.D. graduates have a hard time getting academic appointments in social science disciplinary departments. Most of the opportunities for our doctoral graduates who seek a career in the academy have come from the growing number of masters programmes in the field. Some of these are also relatively independent entities and can direct their own hires, while a few remain based in disciplinary departments where, if the student (*market*) demand is strong enough, an exception to the 'all outsiders are polluted' rule can be timorously made. In these cases the nature of the candidate's doctoral research (and his or her committee) – does it smell remotely like a topic in international relations? – is of prime importance. The fact that IR itself has now grown, conceptually and methodologically, and some researchers in it also engage areas familiar to Peace and Conflict Studies – human security, for example – has helped as well to open the market for our graduates, a bit. On the other hand, the academic market even for strong disciplinary based young scholars is so dismal in terms of finding a position with even the possibility of tenure, that few career futures in the university seem bright or secure whatever the academic discipline.

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Black, 1987, 1990, 1993), framing it as 'the culture question'. It is remarkable that for some this has become *the* crucial question facing the field, with culture now construed in ways consonant with post-structural or cosmopolitan theory. For a cosmopolitan conflict resolution 'the culture question' is central to matters of recognition and acknowledgment of the Other (Ramsbotham *et al.*, 2011: 425). For many post-structuralists, hyper-attentive to power, the culture question implies a 'politics of difference' and is connected to broader critiques of liberal peacebuilding (Brigg, 2008; Jabri, 2012).

Peter Black and I were hardly alone in writing culture into our field. The anthropologists Robert A. Rubinstein and Mary L. Foster (1988) offered a prescient and incisive critique of the absence of culture in conceptions of international security; and Sally Merry (1987) early on cautioned lawyers on the demerits of 'disputing without culture'. From political science, Marc Howard Ross (1993a, b) theorized culture in symbolic, interpretive, and psychological terms as part of a larger treatment of the sources and management of social conflict. From International Relations, Raymond Cohen first investigated how differences in culture negatively affected diplomatic negotiation between Israel and Egypt – he called it a "dialogue of the deaf" (Cohen, 1990), and then expanded this to investigate culturally based communicational impedances in elite and diplomatic negotiations more generally (Cohen, 1991/1997). Finally, so long as we are noting gaps and lacuna of the early days, we should not pass over gender. Elise Boulding's work is foundational here (*e.g.*, Boulding, 1976), but also the work called *Conflict and Gender*, coedited by Anita Taylor, who sat on ICAR's advisory board from its inception (Taylor & Beinstein, 1994). Cynthia Enloe's (1990) *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* was important critical work from a fellow traveller, more directly aimed at the heart of patriarchal IR.

Besides paying attention to significant, neglected areas like culture or gender, the field grew as a large number of topics came to be considered integral parts of it: I already mentioned, for example, human rights. Consideration of structural sources of conflict meant that class and issues around what many today call 'globalization' (others call 'empire') were already on the syllabus. Likewise, religious and identity conflicts were to be found. But new topics presented themselves as demanding coverage. Here is a partial list of topics that should be part of a comprehensive introductory course in conflict resolution or transformation, even if a particular topic is to be treated with a critical scepticism – *e.g.*, 'fragile states' or 'stability and reconstruction'. How these topics came to be added I will discuss shortly:

– Transitional justice (including TRCs, tribunals and restorative justice)
– Civil Society
– Fragile states
– Reconciliation
– Environmental conflict and conflict resolution
– Human rights
– Humanitarian interventions
– Human security
– Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

- Peacebuilding
- Peace education
- Sustainable development
- IDP/refugee/combatant reintegration; DDR
- Trauma healing
- Coping with 'spoilers'
- Post 9/11-US post-invasion 'stability and reconstruction' efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan

As an instructor, when I compare this list (and I am sure others would add to it) to the topics covered in our introductory course as taught in the first decade or so of our masters curriculum, I am struck by the fact that the earlier course content was focused on the sources of conflict and conflict dynamics, on basic human needs theory, and on negotiation, para-negotiation, and third party roles (particularly interest-based mediation and, at S-CAR, the Burtonian analytical problem solving workshop). The course focused, that is, precisely on the process of 'getting to yes', getting to an agreement or, adopting a contingency approach, transitioning from Track 2 modalities to Track 1 official, 'peacemaking' diplomacy. What is striking about the bulleted list, in contrast, is that our focus of concern has shifted significantly from reaching settlement (as a sort of terminus) to 'post-conflict' (which is to say, post-settlement) matters. Also striking is that the list has expanded from concerns with the technicalities of reaching agreements (techniques of analytical problem-solving, integrative negotiation, or facilitative, interest-based mediation techniques), to broad-based problems in the psychological and structural requirements for making the settlement sustainable – and humane.

This expansion transformed our field. But unlike culture or gender, where one could argue that scholars and researchers led the way in 'writing the field', the latter changes occurred through the imposition of exogenous forces, that is, it reflected the field (as it was being taught in the academy) responding, reactively, to changes in the state of the world. Here we faced the *world writing the field*. The provenance of these exogenous forces matters: The North mostly writes the South; NATO, the IMF and World Bank write and others mostly take dictation. New topics for research and theory were being suggested (often emphatically) by acts and events, by agents or actors through their *practice*. We in the academy played catch-up.[9]

In my view, there were two main exogenous sources for this transformation. The first was the end of the Cold War, and following this the brief moment of optimism represented by Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* (1992/1995). (The brevity of optimism was perhaps connected to the resumption of many unfinished post-colonial struggles that had been 'put on ice' by the Superpowers

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9   At S-CAR student impact on course material is also a factor. When I teach the capstone masters course (aspirationally called 'Integration') I ask students what topics in their many courses were not discussed that ought to have been. *What is lacking, in their view, in their faculty's conception of the field*? Because many of our postgraduate students come to us with working experience 'in the field', we have learned that they sometimes have things to tell us.

during the Cold War.) The second was the tragedy of 9/11, and the multiple tragedies that have followed bitterly in its wake.

6.   From Conflict Management to Peacebuilding

In that brief period when it seemed that the era of superpower rivalry, mutual assured destruction, and a UN Security Council perennially gridlocked by veto, had ended, there was great hope that the UN might finally play the role ensuring world peace that its founders had envisaged. Nowhere was this more clearly stated than in Boutros-Ghali's 1992 *Agenda for Peace*. Anticipating that obstructions to Security Council action in this direction were more or less free of East-West veto, a concern with *preventive diplomacy* was vigorously articulated, for one thing. But the most radical thing in the *Agenda* was the addition of *peacebuilding* to the customary UN categories of *peacemaking* and *peacekeeping*. Peacemaking implied diplomatic work with the UN acting as third party to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement. Peacekeeping entailed, traditionally, the lightly armed 'blue helmets' intercessionary forces, deployed at the invitation of the parties (*governments*) in support of the ceasefire or agreement reached through peacemaking.[10] But, envisioning a new and expanded role for the UN, peacebuilding implied something else: "action to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people". This action included "rebuilding the institutions and infrastructure of nations torn by civil war and strife [...]" and addressing "the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice, and political oppression" (1992: 32).

This was a radical change for several reasons. First, it aims to achieve 'structural' and institutional change. Second, in speaking of 'nations torn by civil war' it relocates peace from something forged *between* (sovereign) states to something crafted *within* 'nations' torn asunder internally. The parties in conflict, that is, may not be governments or regimes: indeed, in civil wars by definition the very legitimacy of the government is challenged, and *insurgents* are by definition 'non-state actors'. Third, it seeks to address conflict's root causes, and identifies these not with a Realist's focus on the instabilities of a balance of power among states suspended in an amoral international system of states, but with *morally* infused notions of despair, social justice, and oppression. On all three counts – seeking structural change; potentially setting aside sovereignty to act within states; and seeking root causes in the language of morality and, broadly, human development and 'well-being' – peacebuilding promised something very new. (We will engage this idea of 'promise', a little sceptically, later on.)

We all know how quickly this bright optimism faded in the wake of Yugoslavia's demise, Haiti's continuing torments, Somalia's implosion, and genocide in Rwanda. Yugoslavia saw the return of concentration camps to Europe, Rwanda

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10   *Peace Enforcement* also featured in this and succeeding documents, pointing the way to recognizing a more coercive or military role for UN peacekeeping operations, something beyond Chapter 6 interventions but not quite Chapter 7, either – what many observers have come to call 'Chapter 6 and a half'. These actions require Security Council approval.

demonstrated how easily new holocausts can belie the world's commitment to 'never again'. Moreover, the performance of the UN – specifically regarding the protection of civilians – in Yugoslavia and especially Rwanda, was deplorable. The later version of the *Agenda for Peace* (1995), less assured or radiantly optimistic, sought to explain this by recognizing and stressing how much greater were the challenges facing peacebuilders intervening in intra- rather than interstate conflict. Such interventions were now called 'complex' and when paired with 'humanitarian' reinforced the moral (as opposed to realist or cost-benefit based) calculus by which they were motivated and assessed.

My concern in this essay is less to encompass the meaning of UN peacebuilding and its fate in general, and more to focus on how the two *Agendas for Peace* affected developments in our field, conflict resolution, and on curriculum and the classroom. For one thing, the immediate effect was to necessitate the inclusion of those new topics bulleted earlier, the whole range of 'post-conflict' activities now covered by the requirements of peacebuilding. The more significant effect was to bring the notion of *peace* more directly into contact (and 'dialogue') with *conflict resolution*. The two were not always so easily consonant in the past.

7. American Pragmatists versus European Structuralists: Conflict Resolution or Peace?

The notion of 'peacebuilding' was of course well articulated in our field long before the 1992 *Agenda for Peace* sought to make it UN doctrine. Boutros-Ghali's focus on structures, on seeking root causes of conflict, on economic despair, social injustice and oppression, can be read (in the beginning, at least, with some satisfaction) as a come-lately gloss on Johan Galtung's (1969) seminal idea of positive (deep structural) peace entailing the removal of structural violence (entailing economic inequalities and social injustice). In fact, as traditional 'peacemaking' meant the implementation of ceasefires, truces, and lines of disengagement – the cessation, at least, of ongoing military combat – it could be thought of as aiming to achieve negative peace, the cessation of direct violence. Boutros-Ghali intended 'peacebuilding' to refer to much deeper transformations. The link to Galtung and to the already established school of peace research, mainly in Europe, that he helped to found was clear. But did Galtung ever have in mind what came to be called 'liberal peacebulding?' The tragedies of 9/11, the Global War on Terror, Iraq and Afghanistan, lead me to think not.

Even before the events of 11 September 2001, however, the emerging field of Peace and Conflict Studies was riven by what some considered a deep fracture between two orientations – a difference that in effect split 'conflict (resolution)' from 'peace' entirely. To some extent this fracture could be characterized on continental grounds: the early conflict researchers based in the United States (and particularly, under Kenneth Boulding and Anatol Rapoport, at the University of Michigan), and those in Europe, particularly in Scandinavia, based around Galtung. Some have characterized this difference as one between a narrow, minimalist, conflict management or pragmatic orientation adopted by the Americans

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(in some sense concerned initially with avoiding a nuclear exchange and holocaust), and the broad, maximalist, positive peace and structuralist orientation of the Europeans (aimed at achieving structural change in society and polity writ large; *see* Avruch, 2012: 24-25; Ramsbotham *et al.*, 2011: 42-49; Scheinman, 2008: 193-200). The *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, established in 1957, and the (European) journal established purposefully as its counterpoint, the *Journal for Peace Research* (JPR, established 1964), exemplify in their articles and tone these differences.[11] Articles published in the latter journal criticized the 'American' approach as technocratic and unconcerned with social justice and structural change (Reid & Yanarella, 1976; Schmid, 1968). On the other hand, Kenneth Boulding published in the JPR an extended review essay featuring 'twelve friendly quarrels with John Galtung' among which were quarrels with Galtung's *over*-emphasis on the normative (as opposed to scientific- empirical) aspects of his work, and the over-generalizing and consequent lack of specificity of such key *ideas* as positive peace and structural violence (Boulding, 1977). Here one can see, palpably feel, the empirically minded economist calling for some conceptual discipline in Galtung's (over) numerous 'taxonomies' such that key *variables* could reasonably be operationalized. Unsurprisingly, Galtung would have none of this, and a decade later published his rejoinder to Boulding as 'one friendly quarrel' – choosing in the end to defend his conception of 'structural violence' as foundational, indeed as indispensable, both to the 'science' as well as the *attainment* of peace (Galtung, 1987).

These quarrels were not carried out simply in the rarefied atmosphere of purely intellectual encounters. The world was intervening to write the field. Scheinman, citing Lawler (1995), recounts how the 'schism' within the field "began to crystallize in the aftermath of a 1967 conference on the Vietnam conflict hosted by the Peace Research Society [...] in the United States". He goes on:

> [T]he basic dispute that emerged at the conference was over the question of whether or not American peace researchers (at least those that presented at the conference) were engaging in thinly veiled strategic studies that took as their point of departure the legitimacy of the United States' military engagement with North Vietnam [...]. There was a sense among the European participants at the conference that science was being used to advance the hegemonic interests of the United States government rather than the interests of the oppressed or less well off (Scheinman, 2008: 192)

The echoes of this in some of the radical critiques of liberal peacebuilding, four decades and several wars later, post 9/11, Iraq and Afghanistan, are striking (*see* Campbell *et al.*, 2011). They should not be surprising. As in 1971 at the height of the war in Vietnam, some contemporary critics see peacebuilding as a hegemonic

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11 One can see these differences echoing in the decision, noted earlier, of Bryant Wedge in 1980 to push for a Master's of *Science* in Conflict *Management* as our first degree, aiming to train skilled technicians.

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practice. Practice drives theory (Avruch, 1991: 4, 1998: 78). The world (some parts of it more than others) writes our field.

8. From Peacebuilding to Conflict Management – and Back

The early exchanges between 'pragmatists' and 'structuralists', phrased in any number of ways, reverberate through the decades and constitute one of the essential tensions in our field. One can see it in the critiques mounted by many in the Law and Society school of sociolegal studies throughout the 1980s and 1990s against what Laura Nader called the 'somatizing' effects of ADR (Nader, 1980, 1991).[12] One can also see earnest attempts to relieve or bridge this tension, for example by arguing for the ways in which social justice and 'system maintenance' are not in fact binaries but interconnected and mutually dependent processes. The role of conflict resolution, in fact, is to continually 'reconnect' these processes. While the 'ends' may be those of social justice, Schoeny and Warfield remind us that, absent a 'when the revolution comes' imaginary, the institutional 'means' by which to achieve those ends will have to operate within existing (if also necessarily democratic) systems. They write:

> As distasteful as it may be for some social justice theorists, transformative conflict resolution (in the social justice sense) requires being attentive to the proletarian goings-on of systems maintenance, for it here where the outcomes of a resolutionary agreement will be determined. (Schoeny & Warfield, 2000: 263)

Not everyone agrees with this hopeful, essentially liberal view of the potential for conflict resolution to resolve the binary: it remains our essential tension. Nevertheless the impulse towards this resolution is part of our own history (and curriculum). It is not surprising that the authors of the article just cited, Mara Schoeny and the late Wallace Warfield, are connected to Mason's S-CAR: Schoeny as MS and PhD graduate, and now faculty colleague, and Wallace as faculty from 1990 until his death in 2010. I say this because once John Burton arrived (in 1985 to what was then ICAR), and 'conflict management' was replaced by 'conflict resolution', the curriculum here always represented a mix between pragmatic and structuralist (social justice) orientations. Burton, in many ways a consummate pragmatist, at the same time argued that his conception of 'resolution' necessarily entailed structural changes in society if those imperious 'basic human needs' were to find satisfaction. He wrote several times of conflict resolution as both a political philosophy and a political system (*e.g.*, Burton, 1990: 261-268, 1993: 55-64). In this way, through Burton, the 'European' perspective, even if not always self-consciously parsed as 'peace research', was represented in the curriculum: certainly Galtung's ideas were always central ones.

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12 A summary of her and others' critique of ADR as 'hegemonic' may be found in Nader (2002:142-167).

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Nevertheless the effect of Boutros-Ghali's addition of peacebuilding to peace-making and peacekeeping, as well as the era of 'complex humanitarian emergencies' and 'post-conflict' interventions of the 1990s (Haiti, Somalia, ex-Yugoslavia), greatly and explicitly broadened the number and range of topics that needed inclusion in our curriculum, and brought conflict resolution as a field closer to development and peace studies. But even more significant, and fraught, was the connection formed between some topics traditional to International Relations and those in Peace Studies. After the *Agenda for Peace* established peacebuilding as UN doctrine, Sabaratnam writes,

> [T]he silos that had been established between 'peace studies' and 'security studies' during the 1970s and 1980s had begun to break down. In particular, peace studies was rescued from its political obscurity and engaged in the service of this new international agenda for peace. In particular, theories of human need (Burton, 1987) and social grievances (Azar, 1986) informed these early, Third World friendly readings of conflict held by multinational organizations. These readings of conflict held out the promise of peaceful resolution of conflict along politically emancipatory lines. (Sabaratnam, 2011: 16)

Let us pause to appreciate the tone and diction of Sabaratnam's observation. First, Boutros-Ghali 'rescues' peace studies from its condition of obscurity. It is very clear where status, legitimacy, and authority reside. Nevertheless, 'hitched' to the new agenda of the (momentarily promising) new world order, the marriage of peace and security appears to be a very good one for the side of peace: the obscure and impecunious partner is as fortunate (momentarily) as any Jane Austen heroine – hitherto unmarried and fearfully unmarriageable. But Sabaratnam also hints as to where this relationship is heading, and that the 'promise' of 'emancipation' does not appear to be assured or fulfilled.

And of course it is not. A few pages later, reflecting not on the recent end of the Cold War and the early 1990s but on the aftermath of 9/11, the war on terror and the full-bore military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan (having unsettled and destroyed, the need to 'stabilize and reconstruct'), she writes:

> Since 2001, the overt re-configuration of mainstream academic and political discourses in conflict *management* away from peace and reconciliation towards governance and statebuilding has been substantial and systematic, in no small part catalysed by a new security agenda, the substantive political problems faced by the coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan, and changing political discourses about the origins of the conflict. (Sabaratnam, 2011: 24-25; emphasis added)

Early on, the UN's doctrine of peacebuilding as theory and practice promised to bring peace and security together in the same discursive frame. Instead, a decade and two or so wars later, peacebuilding, rather than 'pacifying' security, is itself securitized and militarized. Instead of focusing on economic despair, social injus-

tice, political oppression and the 'well-being' of people, the concerns are now focused on 'fragile' and unruly states and how we – *who? the United States? 'The West?' NATO? the international community?* – ought to set about governing them.

9.   Whose Peacebuilding? Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Peace and Conflict Studies

Vivienne Jabri, in a public lecture at S-CAR in October, 2012, presenting a familiar critique of 'the liberal peace', remarked that peacebuilding might well have signalled "the end of conflict resolution".[13] One can understand this sentiment, particularly if one considers the sort of 'peacebuilding' carried out, in the case of Iraq or Afghanistan, mainly by outsiders in the aftermath of warfighting, where in retrospect the responsibility to protect civilian populations can be seen as a rationale for invasion and regime change. Yet this is not the only conception of peacebuilding possible, much less desirable. It is now almost two decades since John Paul Lederach wrote of "building peace" as a matter of bringing about "sustainable *reconciliation*", and had us recognize that all levels of the *indigenous* society, from elites and top leadership to the grassroots, must be involved and committed (Lederach, 1997). Lederach understood that peacebuilding is first and foremost a matter for healing a fractured society, and not just for pursuing 'structural adjustments' and insuring a state friendly to foreign direct investment. Recent work, including a series of case studies on how one connects local-level peacebuilding to efforts at achieving peace at the national level, carries this sense of building peace forward (Mitchell & Hancock, 2012). And even work that examines how mainly outsiders can effect peacebuilding, work closer to the more traditional IR view of the process, recognizes that any form of peacebuilding that "does not privilege the local and does not effectively address deep-rooted underlying causes and conditions of a given conflict is bound to fail" (*see* Hewitt *et al.*, 2010: 1-4; Sandole, 2010).

   Looking at this development from the perspective of the classroom – and over three decades or so – my sense of the field is that of an expanding universe: of topics, concerns, engagements, skill-sets and, not least, ethical issues and moral dilemmas. An introductory course to the field or a curriculum that claims to be comprehensive are now no longer about 'getting to yes', about negotiation (or even pre-negotiation or para-negotiation), problem solving, or facilitative, interest-based mediation. Reaching the agreement is now a station on the way to a whole arena of 'post-conflict' (meaning, post-settlement) concerns. But if the field has indeed been expanding at such a rate, then the question I posed at the beginning is germane: do we have a centre? And if we did, 'at the beginning', do we *still* have a centre? I think we do, but that knowing of it demands we keep a critical lens on how others have adopted the field, that we teach it with the lens intact and that we continue to ensure that what we mean by 'peace' is truly something different from *si vis pacem para bellum*.

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13   A similar sentiment has been voiced by her in Jabri (2010, 2012).

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10.   A Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and Practice

> Observations indicate that the universe is expanding at an ever increasing rate. It will expand forever, getting emptier and darker – Stephen Hawking

Another cosmologist heard from, saying much the same thing as the first, though somehow even more menacingly. Unlike the universe, it's hard to imagine any field of human knowledge or practice expanding indefinitely. So expansion in our domain has its limits and one hesitates to identify the liberal peace with icy darkness, even metaphorically – though, as I intimated, things do get (at least morally) 'darker' as we reach out to those limits: Any sort of 'peacebuilding', even the humanistic sort described by Lederach, involves a great intrusion into the 'target' cultures and societies, and a greater chance for mischief, than a PON sponsored training workshop in principled negotiation. And, as some critics of peacebuilding point out, a 'transitive subject-object split' remains: "*We* are doing peacebuilding to *them*".[14] Withal, the liberal peace retains its champions, for example, Roland Paris, who writes:

> The key principles of liberalism – individual freedoms, representative government and constitutional limits on arbitrary power – offer a broad canvas for institutional design and creative policymaking. (Paris, 2011: 166)

Three decades of teaching the field is a long time but not, of course, cosmologically speaking, and perhaps what I have seen as expansion is better and more modestly characterized as the field's 'emergence'. Then the question becomes, Can the field maintain its coherence in the face of emergence? This depends on the sustaining coherence of its centre, by which I mean a set of principles both analytical and normative. These are broader and more inclusive than any particular 'theory' or skill-set. In fact, I believe they have been well articulated almost 15 years ago, in a review essay examining the state of the field, by Paul Rogers and Oliver Ramsbotham (1999).
Rogers and Ramsbotham discern seven criteria by which the field is fundamentally defined and definable:
–   A concern to address the root causes of conflict.
–   The realization that an interdisciplinary effort is required.
–   A recognition that while conflict per se can serve to bring about pro-social change, and conflict resolution is not a blind defender of the status quo, *violence* need not be an inevitable or necessary companion of conflict or change.
–   Analysis is required that overcomes an exclusive focus on level (individual, group, state and interstate).
–   The adoption of a 'global and multicultural approach', one that is sensitive to cultural context but attuned to global sources of conflict.
–   A commitment to the field as both an analytical and normative enterprise.

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14   I owe this phrasing to Richard Rubenstein.

– Respect for the relationship between 'theory' and 'practice' in research – despite the more marginal position accorded practice in academic settings.

In his critical reading of this essay Oliver Ramsbotham (one of the authors of these principles!) rightly points out that in borrowing them I have still left the reader somewhat 'in the air', certainly not resolving what he calls the 'indeterminateness' or ambivalence of, for example, approaching the field mainly as 'conflict resolution' or 'peace and conflict studies/research'. I am aware that setting forth these seven borrowed 'theses' as providing *me* a sense of coherence is not the same as demonstrating a strong 'gravitational field' (his phrase in line with expanding universes) that ensures the field's coherence or integrity as a whole, or even for others. He points in fact to the challenges that we (will always) face. We are, after all, perpetually *in media res*.

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