

1. Introduction

Brief intro of self: work has mostly focused on integrating human rights in conflict interventions; how HR activities can be geared towards CM & PB; and use of CT skills for HR protection & promotion

Key ideas from report (of relevance for my input):

- Notion of 'space' (procedural space, political space, technical space) & emphasis on importance of learning & different tools for learning (formal reviews, appreciative enquiry)
- Distinction between *initiating* processes of change & *sustaining* those (challenge of short term response & long term imperatives) → importance of long term vision; holistic response (coherence, various activities must hang together)
- Report looks closely at organisational structures and processes that trigger working on conflict & facilitate conflict responses, and technical modalities used for such responses;
- less attention for content of such conflict response - ie what does it consist of, what are activities, what does conflict response entail (how do development assistance differently).

NB points:

- experience advisors on development ass. & MFA policies/instruments; session limited time to look at these issues (!!!). Rather than focus on tools (technical, no time → emphasise a way of thinking about conflict transformation & in relation to human rights.

2. Conflict transformation: key ideas & principles

Report: Danish dev assistance 'geared towards responding to situations of violent conflict and opportunities for peace, or change situations of violent conflict into ones of stabilisation.'

Question: meaning of 'stabilisation' - return to status quo ante? Or something different?

- Probably elements of both negative peace (ie absence of violence, halting of hostilities) but also positive peace (state with institutions that are fair, legitimate and capable of delivery; entrenched processes for participation in public affairs; protection of rights; more equal distribution of resources and opportunities; etc.);
- idea being that creating such conditions is necessary for situation to be stable on the long term
- → thus changing situations of violent conflict & creating conditions for stabilisation effectively means transformation (ie fundamental change) in whole range of areas

Notion of conflict transformation emphasises idea of a change *process* - ie something that takes place over long period of time.

- It may involve change within the broader socio-political context; change to fundamental social, economic, political or cultural structures; change in values and world-views; change of or within main actors; a re-framing or transformation of issues; and change in the dysfunctional nature of and communication styles within relationships.

A common way to look at social conflict is by considering two levels: that what is immediate, visibly, and root causes.

- 1) Some argue that interventions should be geared towards dealing with immediate crisis: how stop the violence? How care for victims? How defuse immediate causes of violence? Focus is on immediate *crisis* and *issues* causing & raised by immediate crisis. (cartoon crisis: threat to Danish citizens abroad, property destruction, boycotting of Danish feta)
- 2) Others argue equally strongly dealing with immediate crisis is like putting a band aid on a headache. Instead, advocate that efforts should focus on addressing root causes. Thorough

analysis is necessary: way in which political, economic, and social *systems* (creating injustice, exclusion & deep frustration) must be laid bare and addressed.

Conflict transformation (JP Lederach) advocates that it is not one or the other: we must do both - defuse the current crisis *and* deal with root causes (instead of either/or, it's both and). One is nested / embedded in other. [draw nested paradigm with two levels] → Challenge is to do both in way that efforts towards one do not compound problems at other level

- Example 1: sense of exclusion by minority group; some strategies to defuse crisis may further disempower & exclude minority - harsh imposition of law & order → will compound conflict.)
- Similarly cartoon crisis: cartoons, upset amongst Muslim community in Denmark; dealt with by refusing dialogue → structural issues are compounded (lack of dialogue became metaphor/ manifestation of arrogance, lack of consideration, willingness to listen, etc.)

→ importance of short term response but to be done in such a way that it is oriented towards long term change. (link with NCG report); possible drawing of nested paradigm.

Difference btw 'conflict resolution' - image of finding solution to immediate, presenting problem (visible); 'conflict transformation' on other hand directed towards responding to immediate, direct problem and long term effort to look at structural factors & patterns out of which such problems arise.

How to do so?

Recognition of two intermediate levels: relationship level & sub-system level.

- Relationships: conflict happens in relationships and is expression of nature of relationships; relationships are both result of root causes & further strengthen root causes (relationships as way to construct meaning and understanding of world, one's identity and that of others - ex Danish cartoons: 'how did these cartoons have the power to stir up such tension?' → they don't: the relational context does); dialogue, forums to engage & exchange, facilitate understanding of other's perspective & views
- Sub-system: institutions and social spaces established to order and structure political, economic and social life; are a reflection and manifestation of deepest structural factors, patterns and conditions. (Ex: discrimination of minority group, where & how it will play itself out in various arenas: exclusion from education opportunities, under-representation in parliament; unfair access to economic opportunities). Different strategies for addressing issue in various sub-systems: working at change in gradual manner

→ Sub-system particularly useful in light of accessibility (gives an entry point for getting started on structural, systemic concerns) - helps you lift intervention to higher level

CT: suggestion that most potential for long term change lies at intervening at these two levels, because of capacity to link short term responses with long-term change. Draw nested paradigm in full: always trying to go up (and down.)

- Examples: armed youth gangs in Mogadishu; torture in prison (NI example); conflict btw people living in IDP camp & local settlers (Uganda.)

Implications:

- Consider immediate, visible problems as a 'window' on larger, structural problems (ie crisis or immediate problems is an opportunity to look at deeper issues & try to impact on larger factors & conditions); search for ways in which immediate problem can be

addressed at higher level - example Nepal occupation of schools → agreement of schools as zones for peace, right to education for all (common goal, relationship building, image of a different future); looking for points of access where actions/ strategies can be proposed that move us into wider system

- Depth of change required - key are: national/local ownership (raises Q of role external agencies); long-term vision (where want to go in long term.) Reference to report (vision of where programmes want to be in five years' time); but not just vision for programmes & projects, but also for communities → how can one's interventions create space for dialogue about the future that is envisaged? Importance of vision in several respects: increases clarity of where to go (start with the end in mind); will sustain CT processes; guide people along; create hope (Zim example)
- Time frames: [add comment re nested paradigm on time axis; 'takes as long to get out of a conflict as to get in]: nature of changes proposed are longer than 1-3 yr project can achieve (expand time frames in thinking); JPL suggests - draw nested paradigm other axis
- Range of activities, strategies and interventions - importance of coherence, hanging together. Peace process (or peacebuilding) is not *one singular* process but number of processes going on at same time → coherence, hang together
- Notion of strategic yeast; vertical and & horizontal capacity [expand comment.]- strategic sectors of society (incl individuals) - notion of yeast in comparison to notion of 'critical mass' - it's not the quantity (ie the numbers) that count - but quality: ie who do you get involved, and how can that actor (individual/ organisation) tap into diverse networks, horizontally and vertically. [web approach]
- Highlight: not just choice of activity but also process of implementation (example design of training intervention - CDRM.); how you implement strategies or activities is as important as what you do

→ how make programs geared towards CT? (nb - not necessarily the same as making programs conflict sensitive; danger of conflict sensitivity notion: emphasis on do no harm - which is only the lower threshold, not the higher

→ set of questions [handout] (summary CT key ideas & principles & questions to ask)

3. Human rights & conflict transformation

- Intro: interesting that finding from report is that working on conflict so far has especially been done through thematic HRGG programmes and/or that these programmes have been able to take up working on conflict. Interesting because for long time HR & CM considered as quite separate fields that were more in conflict/ contrast with one another rather than complementary/ mutually conducive.
- Over last few years, our understanding of relationship between HR & CM has become more nuanced. Still recognition that methods and principles for operation may be different, and that objectives may be formulated differently (peace thru justice vs justice thru peace) but growing awareness of many connections and possibility of *synergy*.
- HR denial often structural cause of conflict because fundamental needs for identity, protection, subsistence, freedom, participation, etc frustrated; that state does not have

capacity or willingness to manage social tensions around issues in fair/ legitimate manner. Working towards rights protection on the long term → tool for CP; at same time, CM work can benefit HR activities.

○ Key lessons learned:

1. What matters is what is undertaken by way of human rights issues & how conveyed/ engaged with other actors

- Commo style: confidence building vs power-based approach; framing rights in terms of interests) &
- Making rights relevant: rooting rights in local context - avoid connotations of foreign imposition); how link with local practices and understandings; notion of needs (needs/satisfiers) or emphasis on human rights values and principles

2. in terms of *what* re HR programmes: in course of HRCMP work, started realising increasingly that much rights work done by HR agencies we worked with emphasised the 'rules' dimension of human rights: standards, and extent to which those are known; level & scope of abidance (upheld or not) → emphasis then on issues of accountability, etc. Importance: set parameters, legal framework, etc; also relevant in light of protecting people against abuse, assisting victims with seeking redress, etc. But limitations; often too abstract, people may not be able to relate.

- But not only way of looking at rights, and we realised that human rights protection & promotion also has other dimensions:
- structures and institutions (division of power & resources, how has it, how accessed, long-term consequences; institutions & mechanisms to support expression of rights & seeking remedies)
- relationships (state/ citizens; amongst citizens and groups - rights standards to create certain type of relationships in public sphere → interdependence, responsibilities, etc.; recognition of others' dignity, humanity, perspective)
- processes (type of processes required: inclusive, respect for minorities, respect for diversity, participation, equal, ownership.) giving effect to human rights values through process used for/in intervention assists parties in developing a practical understanding of rights

→ [expand commentary, explain, how relevant & useful, and how linked with CT] - example: Ni Parades Commission;

3. 3rd area become increasingly important for me is question of roles:

- What role(s) can one play, and which are not accessible? Which roles are complementary and which are contradictory?
- What are the consequences of taking certain roles in terms of one's ability (& legitimacy) to take up other roles?
- Example: Zim Churches; mentioning in report of HUGOU (Nepal) re question to what extent their HR work enables them to take up 3rd party role - or whether acts as an obstacle to playing such a role effectively -> think through in advance, make strategic choices

→ Notion of role integrity & role confusion. Example of exercise for strategising re roles → notion of no one role necessarily better or worse; but recognition of pros & cons that come with each & consequences that come with certain roles (strategic choice to be made)

4. Four types of advocacy: party advocate, outcome advocate, process advocate, values advocate (Kraybill, illusion of neutrality). How useful [comment];

NB: in polarised situation, speaking out on violence & atrocities, even if purely intended as values advocate, problem if violence especially going one way and not other → easily seen as supporting / linking with one particular party; similar, outcome advocate may be seen as partial

5. Relationship human rights/conflict more complex than merely dualistic (human rights violations as cause and consequence of violent, destructive conflict); HR protection can also cause conflict (Bolivia example from report; SA example land reform; SAHRC education) - issues of power involved, uprooting of status quo; and balancing various rights against one another; unmet expectations about rights can create tension

4. Issues & questions

1. What is it you do in thematic programmes HR&GG to work towards conflict transformation? (how do you do this?) nb - speak here to two dimensions: specific CT activities; and ongoing HR&GG work
2. What are the key lessons you've learned in your thematic programmes (ie doing HR &GG work) in a conflict setting? What works well, what works less well?
3. What's necessary for Danida to work more systematically towards conflict transformation in its development assistance? (in terms of what it does & how it does)
4. What should go in a working paper/ policy document?