

Peace and conflict studies as an academic field

Marcelo Silveira

Doutorando do Programa de Pós-Graduação Interdisciplinar em Ciências Humanas
(PPGICH/UFSC)

marcelo.silveira@icmbio.gov.br

Cerys Christiany de Oliveira Tramontini

Doutoranda em Estudos Internacionais sobre Paz e Conflito
Universidade de Otago / Instituto Nacional de Estudos de Paz

cerys@pazemente.com.br

Sérgio Luís Boeira

Doutor em Ciências Humanas, Professor Associado III
Departamento de Ciências da Administração (CAD)

Programa de Pós-Graduação Interdisciplinar em Ciências Humanas (UFSC)

sbsergio762@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1999-5373> 

Wolfgang Dietrich

Doutor em História e Literatura e em Direito
Pesquisador Independente

wolfgang.r.dietrich@gmail.com

Introduction

Issues of peace and conflict have been a perennial concern across cultures and throughout human history. We are primarily relational beings, and our complexity naturally gives rise to conflicts. Through our relationships, conflicts, and peace may emerge, and the transformation and realization of those derive meaning and understanding of our place in the world. The field of Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) is fundamentally a transdisciplinary field, which draws from a wide range of academic disciplines such as political science, sociology, history, anthropology, contemplative traditions, theology, psychology, philosophy, and other fields, theoretical approaches, and lessons learned through practice. In this sense, Peace and Conflict Studies is a discourse and practice that has become increasingly widespread in its scope and nuanced in its depth, as more disciplines have come to shape it. Through the application of research, education, and practice, PCS is concerned with the investigation into the nature of conflicts, violence, identity, security, power and training skills, and methods for applying it to the transformation of any conflictive processes to lead to a dynamic and inclusive peace.

As an academic discipline, the field of PCS is less than 100 years old and remains in a constant state of development. The ever-changing dynamics of the complexities of any conflict and the concerns of those who wish to transform it continue to shape and refine the field.

It is important to note that the development of the field of PCS has not occurred linearly with certain trends replacing previous conceptions, but instead, the perspectives and experiences that have shaped the fields of theory and practice overlap and coexist like threads in a loom. The development of PCS can be understood through large-scale shifts in understanding the nature and causes of conflict, the means to address it, and the primary actors responsible for addressing conflict.

Historically, PCS has been shaped by worldviews rooted in observations of the natural world and the understanding of human's place in it. Many of the oldest words for peace are rooted in an energetic worldview that holds fertility as the primary source of peace and well-being (Dietrich, 2019). The understanding of peace maintained in many traditional cultures, and other ancient traditions maintains a perspective of a dynamic harmony between the natural world and humans. This interview seeks to provide an overview of PCS as an academic field as well to bring some reflections on peace and conflict studies.

Professor Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich is our noble guest for this valuable interview, which aims to present and clarify important points in the academic field of Peace and Conflict Studies. It should be noted that Professor Dietrich is one of the most renowned academics in the field and among his vast contributions, the Many Peaces theory stands out, which is one of the most recent developments in the field of PCS, based on Transrational Peace Philosophy (Dietrich, 2019), which can be seen as an important epistemological twist in the field.

Dietrich holds dual PhDs in History and Literature and Law from Innsbruck University, where he began his tenure as an Adjunct Professor in 1990 and was honored with the title of Honorary Professor in 2015. During his career at Innsbruck University, he served as the Director of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences and led the Master's Program in Peace, Development, Security, and International Conflict Transformation. From 2008 to 2023, he held the position of UNESCO Chairholder in Peace Studies and was a member of the Austrian UNESCO Commission throughout that period.

Dietrich also had the opportunity to share his expertise as a visiting professor at several esteemed institutions, including the Institute of Political Science at the University of Vienna, the Center for Peace and Development Studies at the University of Castellón in

Spain, at the United Nations University for Peace (UPEACE) in Colón, Costa Rica and Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation program in Brazil (Paz & Mente). His deep commitment to peace research and conflict transformation is further underscored by his extensive fieldwork in Central America during the 1980s, as well as research conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean, India, East Africa, and Southeast Asia throughout the 1990s. He served as the President of the Austrian section of Amnesty International from 1989 to 1991 and directed the European Peace University from 1995 to 1998. Additionally, he was the Academic Director of the Austrian Institute for Latin America from 1995 to 2007 before focusing entirely on developing the Innsbruck School of Peace Studies, from which he retired in 2021.

Given his distinguished career and substantial contributions to the field, Dietrich is a remarkable guest for this interview. We conducted the interview online through email exchanges in July 2024, and we are profoundly grateful for his generosity and the precision of his responses.

This interview aims at bringing awareness about history and methods within Peace and Conflict Studies, clarifying the epistemological processes so that we can give visibility to this field of Peace Studies in the Brazilian academic context.

Interview

Interviewers – Professor Dietrich, first, thank you so much to be with us. It is really an honor to interview you. From what we realize that Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS), as an academic field that has been established for more than 50 years on several continents, has had its moment of flourishing in many parts of the world, but in other parts of the world, this field is barely known and has not yet been established. The first question is how do you define the PCS as an academic/scientific field? In which context this academic field was established? What is the nature/purpose of this academic field?

Professor Dietrich – PSC as an academic discipline of its own rights is a result of World War II. It emerged from the “never again” thought after Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Naturally, this began on many places simultaneously with similar aims but from different starting points.

In Europe, Johan Galtung (Galtung, 1990), the so called “father of PCS”, was first impressed by Gandhi’s (Jainism’s) *ahimsa* principle, but also influenced by reform Christianity in the context of the Second Vatican Council and the then trendy philosophical

approach of structuralism, which is, among many, also related to constructivism in International Relations.

Adam Curle (Woodhouse, 2010) was another decisive figure, whose non-violence concept rooted in Quakerism. His merit was defining PCS as a trans-discipline comprising at least anthropology, international relations and psychology. Later this was enlarged to utmost all conventional disciplines because all of them deal with topics that are somehow related to the question of peace.

In the Americas it was slightly different. There, the old peace churches like the Quakers, Mennonites, Dukhobor and more played a crucial role, but their approach rooted more in natural sciences and economics. Therefore, they rely since their beginning more on system theories than on philosophical structuralism. This approach corresponds with principles of Buddhism, Taoism, Advaita-Hinduism and more Eastern Wisdom that became fashionable in the West precisely in the pioneer days of PCS. This had a strong impact on the further development. In the US, the role of diplomacy and psychology was from the beginning stronger than in Europe. In Asia, the emerging schools mostly were built on older philosophical traditions, while in Africa there was a competition between colonial approaches and liberating/revolutionary attempts, which had a hard time in institutionalizing themselves.

Interviewers – Many programs in PCS have been shutting down over the years. In your perspective, what is the phenomena behind it as PCS as an academic field is very important for the discussion of human relations? How do you perceive this phenomenon in which many peace studies programs are being closed? To what do you attribute the fact that these programs are being closed and withdrawn more and more at universities around the world? How do you view the fact that many peace studies programs are being closed at various universities, which in my view is an immeasurable loss to the academic discussion?

Professor Dietrich – This comes on the one hand from the power structures that made Universities over centuries what they are today. A clear-cut separation of disciplines is part of that, necessary for defining the epistemologies of each established discipline, marking the borders of the discipline's field and the personal power of its representatives. PCS is a methodological spoiler in this system, because it transgresses all those limits for the sake of its principal research interest – peace.

Since peace is a meta-physical singular tantum in all languages of European origin, it invites to “make”, “have”, “defend”, “build” ... it in the interpretation of any discipline. That is, the older disciplines claim to know what “their” one and only peace is, and they do not

want to be disturbed by this transdisciplinary spoiler. Since trans-disciplinarity does not promote the institutionalization within the bigger institution (University) it happens quite often that the spoilers are eliminated by power games. This structural phenomenon has been discussed for decades now, for example by philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard (Lyotard, 1979), Richard Rorty (Rorty, 1979; 1989), Ivan Illich (Illich, 1972), but also by personalities like Paulo Freire (Freire, 1970), Ruth Cohn (Cohn, 1971) and many more.

Thus, the point is that some of the older disciplines like political science, sociology, philosophy, international relations, law and alike often claim the ownership of peace research for themselves. They believe that the topic does not require a separate discipline like PCS, and they want to see it treated methodologically in their own terms. This might be correct as far as the topic as such is regarded, but it usually means a dramatic reduction of the epistemological and methodological range.

Another argument could be the so-called *Zeitgeist*. The generation after World War II, after Auschwitz and Hiroshima, had an almost natural interest in the question of peace(s). The change of circumstances, lifestyles, welfare and protected livelihoods at least in the economic centers of the world economy may also have contributed to a shift of the academic focus since then.

Interviewers – Another point we want to bring to our discussion is related to science. The word “science” comes from the Latin *scientia* which means knowledge. How do you define Science besides the mainstream? What are the misunderstandings related to the word Science that you perceive? Can you please elaborate on that? What does it mean to do human science from your perspective based on your research and professional experience?

Professor Dietrich – Like the word peace the term science suffers from the singular tantum that the European grammars impose on it. If you refer to the substantive science in a singular you insinuate that there would exist THE science that holds THE truth. You can observe this use of the word in media and politics quite often.

That is pretty much the opposite of what *sciencing* as an activity means for us academics. *Sciencing* is an ongoing struggle for knowledge, which never arrives at the metaphysic certainty of undoubtable truth. Thus, what we are doing at universities is a never-ending search for the best interpretation of academic knowledge, knowing that we will never hold the ultimate truth. We only construct more or less apt narrations on the possible reality of things and circumstances. If somebody refers to THE scientific truth as

an ultimate point of reference, for winning an argument, gaining power and reputation and reaching a goal, s/he misunderstands the meaning of the endeavor completely.

However, the grammars of European languages make it easy to claim such truth, and many of us do that ignoring that the claim as such is a highly un-academic statement. In the sense of Popper (1959), we can only say that the preliminary result of our *sciencing* is this or that, which is considered to be the best version of the truth until it will get falsified by new insights, findings or replaced by better narrations. For PCS this attitude is indispensable. If we are not aware of this, our *sciencing* will become imperialistic and violent, no matter how you call it.

Interviewers – Considering the academic debate about the difference between interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinarity. How do you understand and see the differences between these three terms in the PCS context? Do you consider PCS interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and/or transdisciplinary? Can you please elaborate on those differences and similarities/connections?

Professor Dietrich – I go here with Adam Curle (Woodhouse, 2010), the first full professor for PCS in Europe (Bradford University 1973), who defined PCS as a trans-discipline, which in the end embraces all the conventional disciplines as far as their findings and methodologies serve the research interest. According to him, a peace researcher should unite as many of these approaches in his/her own studies and biography because this allows the application of mixed experiences in the context of a concrete research question. This way both, the adaption to concrete requirements in the field and the promotion of the state of the art, work the best.

This is different to inter-disciplinarity when experts of different fields cooperate with their expertise for one common goal. Theoretically this is a high ideal but practically it often fails due to the lack of understanding of the approaches of the others, but also due to academic vanity and jealousy. In the worst case, they create rather wise dissent than a common insight that would help.

This is even worse with multi-disciplinary approaches, when the experts work independently and only unite their separate findings on a question in the end. This often delegates the interpretation and harmonization of the findings to political/administrative actors who are not trained for such exercise and follow their own agenda.

Interviewers – There is an author called Prof. Dr. Alberto Oscar Cupani. He has a degree in Philosophy - Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina (1967) and PhD in Philosophy - Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (1974). Post-doctorate at the University of Paris 7 (1994-1995). He has taught at various universities in Argentina and at Universidade

Federal de Santa Maria (Brazil). After a period as a full professor at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (Brazil), he retired in 2013. His area of teaching (undergraduate and postgraduate) and research is Philosophy of Science, mainly investigating the following topics: science and values, rationality and objectivity of science, science and control of nature, philosophy of technology, epistemology of the human sciences, and philosophy of history.

According to Cupani (2009) scientific knowledge has its validity supported by different factors, including objectivity, which is also understood as its trans-subjectivity.

...the trans-subjective validity of knowledge is reinforced when science is analyzed on the basis of metaphysical and epistemological realism. In other words, when it is assumed that reality is something that exists independently of our research, and that it has its own organization or structure. In this case, knowledge is conceived as approximately representing the structure of reality. The trans-subjective validity of knowledge suggests that this structure has actually been achieved.

...

The description I gave of scientific objectivity corresponds to the Realist stance, which is the stance of scientific common sense. However, there have been philosophers who have found this doctrine (Realism) problematic, mainly because they find it impossible to demonstrate that reality exists and that it is structured, independently of our efforts to know it, or, to put it more simply, independently of our thinking. This difficulty is the basis of the arguments of idealist philosophers (such as Descartes or Berkeley), who maintained that what we call reality is, in some way, a product of our thought, or our consciousness. For the idealist position, the challenge for the philosopher is to understand how the notion of an external world, to which our ideas correspond, arises from our consciousness. The idealist position is not as strongly defended today as it once was, but it does find its equivalent to what has come to be called constructivism. For various authors (especially those more familiar with or influenced by the role played in human life by factors such as language, culture, and power), the production of knowledge (especially scientific knowledge) should be seen as more literal and radical than in realist interpretation. It's not just that we produce ideas, languages, instruments, through which we "obtain" knowledge, but that what we take to be "real", "true" and "rational" is the product of certain human activity in certain circumstances. (interviewers' translation)

Based on that, we would like to stress the debate in the philosophy of science that says on the one hand that there is an objective reality to be described (Realism) and on the other hand they say the object is constructed according to the observer and his constitution (concepts, biological and cultural structures) (Constructivism).

We perceive your great contributions to Peace Studies on you mostly emphasize how important is the way peace agent sees and deals internally and externally to any circumstances. The attitude and training of the peace agent is very important for you. Our next question is: Do you think is it possible to position peace and conflict research and practice in any of those approaches: Realism and Constructivism? Or neither one nor something else?

Professor Dietrich – Prof. Cupani describes here roughly the generally acknowledged history of Western philosophy. This mirrors in the becoming of International Relations as an academic discipline after World War I. There you find a competition between Realist Schools and Idealist Schools, which is in a nutshell the concepts of Thomas Hobbes versus Immanuel Kant. For cutting a long story short, I would say that the Realist School dominates until today in the Anglo-Saxon world whereas the Idealists are stronger in continental Europe. In Latin America you may find this duality in good old Arielism as a tendency in literature: the Northern (realist) spirit of Caliban versus the Southern (idealist) spirit of Ariel.

For PCS this rivalry is not helpful because both concepts are based on unprovable presumptions on the humankind – anthropological pessimism, which considers the men as the men’s wolf, and anthropological optimism, which trusts human rationality. Still these concepts frame societies and have to be taken into consideration in the praxis of conflict work. PCS did this since the 1950ies with the help of structuralism, constructivism, and system theories, later with postmodern philosophy.

However, quite often people fell back into the old logic of realist or idealist argumentation. For example, the German peace movement of the 1980ies was driven by a highly idealist narration. Therefore, some of us in PCS, like my colleagues Vicent Martinez (Martinez Guzmán, 2001) and Paco Muñoz (Muñoz, 2001) in Spain and myself tried to twist that with an approach that respects all notions of peace that you can find in real livelihoods, tries to systematize them in order to understand, and find proper ways of communication between them. I called that Transrationality¹ (Dietrich, 2019).

Interviewers – Pointing out some critics of the cartesian science worldview, Paul Karl Feyerabend with his seminal work *Against Method* (Feyerabend, 1975) became famous for his anarchist scientific view of science and his supposed rejection of the existence of universal methodological rules. He attacked the pure rationalist and objectivist posture in science and proposed an anarchic theory of knowledge where “rule” is the

¹ See my *Many Peaces Trilogy*. Volume 1 (Dietrich, 2019) and 2 (Dietrich, 2024) have been published already in Brazil, volume 3 (Dietrich, 2018) coming soon.

epistemic plurality. We would like you to comment on that related to his theory of knowledge where the “rule” is the epistemic plurality. What do you think about it? What would be the “epistemic plurality” on PCS?

Professor Dietrich – First, Feyerabend was a passionate critique of academic establishment and in so far, he would go with his contemporary authors that I quoted earlier. Some of them were at the same time as he in California. They were influenced by the same debate and the same atmosphere – which was also crucial for the development of PCS as an academic discipline. The system theory approach of the trans-discipline was started by the so-called Stanford Four already in the 1950ies, among them the Austrian Biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy,² the founder of the General System Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968). The Esalen Institute in Big Sur had an enormous impact on the further development of PCS until the 1980ies. And of course there was Berkeley.

I was not too aware of Feyerabend when I developed the Many Peaces concept and then Transrationality. I think that Vicent Martinez, who was a trained philosopher, had a better understanding of him than I did. Feyerabend was Austrian like I, but he was of the age of my father. Still, I guess that we were partly impressed and influenced by the same *Zeitgeist* so that you may find a lot of similarities, rather not real coincidences between his *Against Method* and the Many Peaces, which came 25 years later.

I was rather influenced by Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1993), Jean-François Lyotard, and most of all by Gustavo Esteva (Esteva and Guerrero, 2011). However, epistemic plurality is a sound element of the Many Peaces approach and Transrationality. Though it has not been taken explicitly from Feyerabend, his thoughts were already there and popular at the given time.

Interviewers – Edgar Morin as a thinker in the field of complexity studies is known for his approach of “complex thinking” or the “paradigm of complexity”. Morin denounced the simplistic paradigm of science which operates by the principles of disjunction, reduction, and abstraction, sorting out the thinker subject to the thing understood. He highlights the importance of complex thinking that embraces integrative and systemic principles and the inherent relationality between subject and object. He suggests in his work an epistemological opening as being “the place of both uncertainty and dialogic” (Morin, 2005). What do you think about it?

Professor Dietrich – Well, this is a constitutive aspect of system theories. Contemporary PCS works strongly with this approach and hence experiences this debate

² Further the economist Kenneth Boulding (Boulding, 1945), the mathematician Anatol Rapoport (Rapoport, 1989) and the physiologist Ralph Gerard (Gerard, 1942).

as an ongoing process in its own development. This is also true for the transrational orientation of PCS. I can go with it very well.

Interviewers – What are the epistemologies behind Peace Studies? How do you define epistemology on PCS?

Professor Dietrich – This question cannot be answered, because nobody is entitled to define that. There is a lot of disagreement on this topic in the whole world of PCS. I can just talk for myself and say that Transrationality thinks “peacing” like system theories in individuals, relations and communication. It embraces the whole human nature, not only the rational mind. That is, “peacing” happens on many human layers (as analytical figures for applied conflict work): the physical, the sexual-familial, the emotional-communal, the mental-societal and the spiritual-political (=global). The combination of these terms roots in the principle of correspondence, the presumption that inside equals outside. This stems from an immanent worldview, meaning that the whole Universe is one (divine) entity, and all existence is interrelated. There is no separation or beyond (which is there in transcendental approaches).

Interviewers – How do the “Many Peaces” and transrational approach in the PCS field relate to Morin’s view? Do you see any correlation?

Professor Dietrich – As I said before, I do. You cannot do transrational peace research without system theory and Morin fits very well in this approach.

Interviewers – Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of paradigms, which are sets of beliefs, values and techniques shared by a scientific community over a certain period. Paradigms define legitimate research problems and acceptable solutions. Eventually, anomalies or unresolved problems arise within the established paradigm, causing a crisis. The accumulation of anomalies can lead to a scientific revolution, where a radical change in the accepted scientific view (paradigm) occurs. During a scientific revolution, new theories, methods and approaches replace the previous paradigm. This change is not merely cumulative but involves a fundamental reinterpretation of problems and solutions within the scientific field (Kuhn, 1962).

In a broader sense of human science, do you consider the “Many Peaces” and transrational approach a scientific revolution that promotes paradigm shifts in the PCS? How does your theory represent a paradigm shift in peace studies and what are the practical consequences of this?

Professor Dietrich – I never wanted to start a revolution. In Kuhn’s sense, Many Peaces was rather meant as a “variation” of the mainstream. The word even appears in the book series’ original German title: *Variationen über die vielen Frieden*. The English

publishing house did not like the word. It thus disappeared, also from translations into further languages.

I perceive myself as a country boy. Based on my practical work experience I contributed to the academic debate. I wanted to do that in a constructive manner. Coming from a refugee family and being strongly impressed by the violence that I witnessed in Central America in my early years I just wanted to tell my story of experienced plurality, of many (possible definitions of) peaces. I expected that it would be respectfully welcome as one among many valuable stories in the broader field of PCS, international law, human rights, international relations, anthropology, sociology, psychology. As a variation, maybe an anomaly, a deviation or irritation, but definitely not as a revolution.

At that time, I did not understand what academic revolutions mean for the revolutionary. I was not aware of the power structures and mechanisms of exclusion in academia. Through the reaction from some sides, I had to experience and learn the mechanisms that Jean-François Lyotard described in his famous 1979 book. He was contemporary with Kuhn but very pessimist when it comes to your question. He perceived the mechanisms of paradigm shift as a war fought – literally in his words – with terrorist methods (Lyotard, 1979, p. 63-64).

Only in retrospective, I can identify some of that as reaction to my proposals, which could insinuate that the transrational proposal was kind of a revolution. Still, this was not my intention. Most of the philosophical and methodological considerations were already there, just waiting to be used. I tried to combine and structure them in a meaningful way. Thus, if this was a revolution, it was carried by many before and with me. Beside the already mentioned colleagues in Spain we have to refer here to John Paul Lederach (Lederach, 1995) as the probably most important one. I was (and I still am) strongly influenced by his writings. And how much do we owe to earlier icons of the discipline like Galtung, Curle, Bertalanffy, Kenneth and Elise Boulding (Boulding, 2000) but also John Dewey (Dewey, 1931), Gregory Bateson (Bateson, 1972), Carl Rogers (Rogers, 1951), Virginia Satir (Satir, 1972), Ruth Cohn, Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 1943), Clifford Geertz and so many more who did not consider themselves first as peace researchers. In Brazil, do not forget Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal (Boal, 1995), Clodovis and Leonardo Boff (Boff e Boff, 1982) or to an extend Darcy Ribeiro (Ribeiro, 1998). Without all of them, no whatsoever revolution would have been thinkable!

Well, what were the practical consequences of this paradigm shift? The probably most important is the methodological turn to what Lederach called “elicitive conflict transformation”. I follow him in this regard enthusiastically. That is, turning away from the

prescriptive methods that predominated until the millennium from the UN system on the global scale to many psychotherapeutic methods on the individual level.

It was a radical turn that reached many social fields such as diplomacy, UN peace operations, development cooperation, economy and lately also the climate debate. One could say that the revolution rather started with the practical application of “elicitive” methods and dripped from there into the academic/philosophical debate, where I happened to call it transrational. It was not the inverse.

There is a Babylonian confusion regarding the terminology and today appears every now and then old wine in new bottles, but in general, I see a tendency towards transrationality and elicitive conflict transformation in the field. If you want to call it revolution, be my guest. Living systems radiate in impermanence and there is always change in these systems, but no individual can “make” these changes at will. Nobody determines individually their character and direction.

Interviewers – In your book *Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture* you mentioned Johan Galtung as the “father” of Peace and Conflict Studies. Thinking about how the PCS as an academic field has unfolded and developed. What are the differences or proximities you could share with us about Galtung’s approach and the Transrational approach? And how does transrationality go beyond Galtung’s approach?

Professor Dietrich – First, I think that Johan Galtung deserves this unofficial title for the enormous legacy that he left for us. Taking into consideration that he was active in the field for more than 60 years we cannot refer to Galtung as if he was a “one hit phenomenon”.

The young, wild structuralist who stunned the world with concepts like “structural violence” or the discrimination of “positive and negative peace” (which he inherited from Gandhi) is rather different to the mature post-structuralist who coined “cultural violence” and tried to systematize all of that in his seminal book *Peace by Peaceful Means* in 1996 (Galtung, 1996).

Like many, I could not follow his ideas in the last phase of his life.

In order to answer your question, I would refer to the famous triangle of physical, structural and cultural violence, which he proposed in his mature phase. I think, this is fundamental for most of us in the scene. Then, John Paul Lederach stressed the individual (internal) and the relational (external) aspects of peace(s), which refined the analytical understanding of physical violence and thus converted the triangle into a square. And here you have the fundament, on which the layers of the transrational approach are built: individual, relation, communication and structure, or call it: attitude, behavior, culture and

structure; or: harmony, security, truth and justice as you find it in my books on history and culture of peaces (Dietrich, 2018; 2019; 2024).

All that goes beyond Galtung but does not contradict him fundamentally. It is rather the enlargement of his concepts that shall facilitate the practical application of elicitive conflict transformation in the place of prescriptive methods that pretty much relied on Galtung's earlier concepts.

So, this development mirrors changes in the practical application since the 1970ies that feedback on the theoretical debate. By the way, this finds its correspondence in psychology if you look at the debate on behaviorism, psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology in the same period. If you want, you can compare the Galtungian revolution of the 1960ies to the Freudian revolution in psychology. Then, elicitive conflict transformation and transrational peace philosophy would be the equivalent to the emergence of humanistic psychology in its field. If you like to put it this way, Lederach's revolution of peace and conflict work corresponds with Roger's revolution of psychotherapy. I guess we have to understand this all as a very broad and global intellectual process.

Interviewers – The misunderstandings academically and in practical terms about the difference between conflict resolution/solution vs. conflict transformation is still very present. Most people are looking for resolution/solution, not transformation, seeking for applied methods which can “solve a problem” for good, instead of looking for applied methods which could focus on relationships, which is a continuous process. Can you please elaborate a bit about the difference of resolution/solution x transformation? And what are the epistemologies in each of them? Why do you think most human beings tend to look for an immediate solution instead of focusing on the relationship itself based on relational methods? How in the practical sense solution/resolution is functional in a specific context and how can it become like an “illusion” in some other context?

Professor Dietrich – Well, now you are really talking about epistemological frameworks. In the transcendental traditions we – the humankind - were taught to believe in a linear relation between conflict/problem and solution. We were told to believe that the solutions of our earthly problems would come directly or indirectly from THE creator God in heaven. This is still alive in our deep culture.

Enlightenment claimed to overcome these Jewish/Christian/Muslim believes by rationality, but it was fairly caught in language rules that conserved linguistically many of the transcendental notions in allegedly modern forms. Very often modernity simply replaced God by reason and started to worship it like an idol. When and where this happened, no real epistemic change could be achieved.

Therefore, I talk in my book of “transcendental-modern” notions, which is a contradiction in itself for all systematic philosophers. They usually state that modernity is precisely the intellectual turn away from transcendence.

However, if it comes to the question of transformation and resolution you see to which extend the modern mind still operates with meta-physical and hence transcendental notions in order to promise “heavenly” solutions.

You cannot have them in an immanent world that lives naturally with new conflicts, challenges, problems that raise each morning for all of us with the sun. In an immanent world, conflict is a natural aspect of life. We actually welcome the conflict as evidence of life. The conflict is not the problem in an immanent world. The problem is how we deal with it.

In such a world of life there are no final solutions to any kind of problems, challenges, conflicts, but we only transform them. That is, we twist them in the sense of the German word *aufheben*, which has a threefold meaning: to neutralize, to store and to lift. Thus, if successful, we transform our conflicts in order to neutralize their destructive energy, we store and memorize this energy in our relations (because in immanence this energy cannot escape to any beyond) and by doing so we lift our relational life conditions to a higher status, one that we perceive a little bit more comfortable than the previous.

Hence, we cannot expect or aspire anything more than the transformation of our conflicts in this threefold sense. However, in stressful moments, we tend to rely affectively on the conventional notions of our transcendental deep culture. E.g. we pray to God. I fear, in this deeper sense of immanence our consciousness did not progress too much in the last, say, 200 years. Or shall I say since Baruch de Spinoza³? I guess that this has a lot to do with the modern grammars of European languages, in which our minds are mostly framed.

Interviewers – Many academic theories and ideas which are developed based on the driving force of human matters such as: environmental, gender, race, (de)coloniality, and politic-economic models, underlie structures and processes of interest to the PCS. How can PCS directly contribute to dealing with these human matters on a practical term?

Professor Dietrich – Well, I finished my previous statement exactly with this point. PCS, at least in its transrational variation, will be aware of the epistemological framework of science in general. It may unmask the transcendental remnants in the respective discourses of modernity, and it may call for academic accuracy.

³ Baruch de Spinoza was the first author who detached the idea of immanence from the scholastic tradition and hence prepared the field for postmodern thought and system theories.

Most of the fields that you mentioned are currently discussed on universities in allegedly post-structuralist ways. Michel Foucault is omnipresent. However, if you have a closer look, you see that their existentialist roots, as we know them since latest World War II, have been strangely re-charged with essentialist notions in order to keep them handy for the respective political campaigns.

This may be politically legitimate if you want to advocate for the rights of the marginalized, the subaltern, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Spivak, 2004) says, but I would argue that a tactical combination of existentialism and essentialism is academically not accurate. In the end, this can easily result in a neo-conservative reproduction of transcendental values and beliefs. This essentialist blur will rather hamper attempts of liberation. I fear, we observe this right now in the field of global politics. Donald Trump and Judith Butler (Butler, 1987) interact more than one would expect on the first glance, if you forgive me the symbolic sarcasm.

Interviewers – Nowadays, many people talk about the climate crisis. There are many approaches related to that, and of course, many different discussions around this subject. Related to the climate crisis, and the discussion around it, some of them are really mainstream, some others are not. How could you elaborate on this topic based on transrationality? How do you see it with the lens of transrationality? How transrationality could contribute for the discussions of climate crises? How could we think about the climatic crisis, for instance, from the perspective of the PCS?

Professor Dietrich – Well, Friedrich Nietzsche (Nietzsche, 1967) referred not to the climate, but to the weather when he tried to describe systems based on the knowledge and the language of his time. “It” can peace as much as “it” can rain. We can still learn from that for our current debate on climate change.

Epistemologically it makes a fundamental difference whether you discuss this topic within an immanent framework – which allows the acceptance and application of all scientific knowledge that we hold – or whether you approach it from a – often hidden – transcendental approach.

This becomes quite obvious when you observe the moralistic fervor in the argumentation of some climate activists. You can see some of them coming from the frustration about failing to fulfil the expectations of their auto-created, individual and somehow narcissistic Ego-Ideal. Paraphrasing Nietzsche, you could say that they internalized the mythological gods and deities of weather such as *Ra, Baal, Zeus, Jupiter, Jahwe, Donar, Indra, Raijin, Tlaloc or Shango*, for naming a few, and claim THE truth, what “it” is, based on the mere authority of their individual Ego.

I know that is confusing, because here you have a perfect mix of classical immanent content expressed in transcendental form. I think that PCS can help to clarify. At least transrational peace philosophy would call for an immanent discourse on immanent topics. This could be helpful for this debate.

In other words, the climate debate is currently lacking a clear epistemological framework and hence methodological stringency. This leaves it prone to moralism and narcissism. Without neglecting the scientific and political urgency of the topic we have to be aware of this liability and deal with it in a decent way. And we need a proper language for this goal.

Interviewers – To end our interview, it would be interesting if you could provide a general overview of the PCS. What are the major challenges nowadays do you perceive for the consolidation of the PCS as an academic field with the presented complex relational scenarios? In your research language plays a big role on PCS. The complexity we are facing nowadays is clear to me, even linguistically speaking. How do you think it can influence or be problematic for PCS? Do you think PCS can survive under those challenges and complexities?

Professor Dietrich – I do not see PCS disappearing. I rather see it going mainstream at many places, which means losing its transdisciplinary character and converting into another political science, international relations, sociology and philosophy or law branch.

The legitimacy of its very existence as trans-discipline of its own rights will be questioned if it does not produce specific insights, methods, didactics, approaches and perspectives. I personally opt for clearly visible profiles of PCS, be it in relation to the neighboring disciplines, or be it among the different schools in the field. The more clearly profiled the approaches, the better for the field as a whole, and the better for its standing in the academic world.

This leads us again to the previous discussion on Kuhn and Lyotard. If PCS becomes an endeavor of clerks, it will probably not be exposed to too many attacks of the kind that Lyotard described. It will formally survive, not do any harm and not contribute much of significance.

I understand PCS rather as a task for heroes, not in the sense of military or nationalistic warhorses, but in the sense of people who dare to think freely, dare to look for the famous crack where the light comes in and thus inspire others.

Yes, the linguistic aspect of *peace*, *peaces*, *peacing*, of converting the singular substantive *peace* linguistically into a procedure and activity, expressed in a verb, may be

one among many promising attempts to enlarge our human consciousness. We could benefit from identifying and understanding the relational aspect of *peacing* better. This could be the starting point of a highly attractive philosophical approach in PCS, which regards languages of no European origin more, because many of their grammars allow the verbal expression of *peacing* as a procedure perfectly. This could be a post-colonial endeavor of another kind, which respects an ability of so far discriminated idioms and teaches the dominating ones *to peace* properly. I know that the current *Zeitgeist* between right wing populists and woke academic mainstream does not favor this idea.

But 60 years ago, Bob Dylan stated barefaced that “the times they are a-changing”. This encouraged me throughout my academic career. It turned out to be right, and I hope for the next generation of peace researchers that they inherit some of the pioneers’ spirit of those days, when PSC was created.

References

BATESON, Gregory. *Steps to an ecology of mind*. San Francisco: Chandler Pub. Co., 1972.

BERTALANFFY, Karl Ludwig von. *General system theory: foundations, development, applications* [1968]. New York: George Braziller, 1976.

BOAL, Augusto. *The rainbow of desire: the Boal method of theatre and therapy*. London: Routledge, 1995.

BOFF, Leonardo; BOFF, Clodovis. *Libertad y liberación*. Salamanca: Sígueme, 1982.

BOULDING, Kenneth. *The economics of peace*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1945.

BOULDING, Elise. *Cultures of peace: the hidden side of history*. Syracuse: Pugwash, Online, 2000.

BUTLER, Judith P. *Subjects of desire: hegelian reflections in twentieth century France*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

COHN, Ruth. Living-learning encounters: the theme-centered interactional method. In: BLANK, Leonard; GOTTSEGEN, Gloria B.; GOTTSEGEN, Monroe G. (eds.). *Confrontation: encounters in self and interpersonal awareness*. New York: MacMillan, 1971. p. 245-271.

CUPANI, Alberto Oscar. *Filosofia da ciência*. Florianópolis: FILOSOFIA/EAD/UFSC, 2009.

DEWEY, John. *Philosophy and civilization*. New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1931.

- DIETRICH, Wolfgang. *Elicitive conflict mapping*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- DIETRICH, Wolfgang. *Interpretações de paz na história e na cultura*. Florianópolis: Paz e Mente, 2019.
- DIETRICH, Wolfgang. *Transformação elicitiva de conflitos e a virada transracional na política sobre paz*. Florianópolis: Paz e Mente, 2024.
- ESTEVA, Gustavo.; GUERRERO, Arturo. Guelaguetza and Tu Chha'ia: a zapotec perspective of what others call friendship. In: DIETRICH, W.; ALVAREZ, E.; ESTEVA, G.; INGRUBER, D.; KOPPENSTEINER, N. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2011. p. 352-372.
- FEYERABEND, Paul. *Against method: outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*. London: New Left Books, 1975.
- FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder. 1970.
- GALTUNG, Johan. Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, v. 27, n. 3, p. 291-305, 1990.
- GALTUNG, Johan. *Peace by peaceful means: peace and conflict, development and civilization*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1996.
- GEERTZ, Clifford. *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays [1973]*. London: Fontana. 1993.
- GERARD, Ralph Waldo. A biological basis for ethics. *Philosophy of Science*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 92-120, 1942.
- ILLICH, Ivan. *Deschooling society*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
- KUHN, Thomas. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago. 1962.
- LEDERACH, John Paul. *Preparing for peace: conflict transformation across cultures*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
- LYOTARD, Jean-François. *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979.
- MARTÍNEZ GUZMÁN, Vicent. *Filosofía para hacer las paces*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2001.
- MASLOW, Abraham. *A theory of human motivation*. *Psychological Review*, v. 50, n. 4, p. 370-396, 1943.
- MORIN, Edgar. *Introdução ao pensamento complexo*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2005.

MUÑOZ, Francisco. *La paz imperfecta*. Granada: Editorial de la Universidad de Granada, 2001.

NIETZSCHE, Friedrich. *The birth of tragedy* [1872]. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

POPPER, Karl. *The logic of scientific discovery*. New York: Basic Books, 1959.

RAPOPORT, Anatol B. *The origins of violence: approaches to the study of conflict*. New York: Paragon House, 1989.

RIBEIRO, Darcy. *O processo civilizatório: etapas da evolução sociocultural*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998.

ROGERS, Carl. *Client-centered therapy: its current practice, implications, and theory*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951.

RORTY, Richard. *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

RORTY, Richard. *Contingency, irony and solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

SATIR, Virginia. *Peoplemaking*. Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, 1972.

SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty. Can the subaltern speak? *In*: CAIN, Peter H.; HARRISON, Mark. (eds.) *Imperialism: critical concepts in historical studies*. Volume III. London: Routledge, 2004. p.171-219.

WOODHOUSE, Tom. Adam Curle: Radical Peacemaker and Pioneer of Peace Studies. *Journal of Conflictology*, v. 1, n. 1, p. 1-8, 2010.

NOTAS

AUTORIA

Marcelo Silveira

Doutorando em Ciências Humanas

Programa de Pós-Graduação Interdisciplinar em Ciências Humanas da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade / Núcleo de Prevenção e Mediação de Conflitos Interpessoais – Mediare

marcelo.silveira@icmbio.gov.br

www.icmbio.gov.br

Cerys Christiany de Oliveira Tramontini

Doutoranda em Estudos Internacionais sobre Paz e Conflito


Universidade de Otago / Instituto Nacional de Estudos de Paz

Instituto Paz & Mente

cerys@pazemente.com.br

www.pazemente.com.br

Sérgio Luís Boeira

Doutor em Ciências Humanas, Professor Associado III
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina/Departamento de Ciências da Administração
e Programa de Pós-Graduação Interdisciplinar em Ciências Humanas
sbsergio762@gmail.com
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1999-5373>

Wolfgang Dietrich

Doutor em História e Literatura e em Direito
Pesquisador Independente
wolfgang.r.dietrich@gmail.com

Concepção e elaboração do manuscrito: M. Silveira, C. Tramontini, S. Boeira

Coleta de dados: M. Silveira, C. Tramontini, W. Dietrich

Análise de dados: M. Silveira, C. Tramontini, S. Boeira

Discussão dos resultados: M. Silveira, C. Tramontini

Revisão e aprovação: W. Dietrich, M. Silveira, C. Tramontini, S. Boeira

CONJUNTO DE DADOS DE PESQUISA

FINANCIAMENTO

Não se aplica.

CONSENTIMENTO DE USO DE IMAGEM

Não se aplica.

APROVAÇÃO DE COMITÊ DE ÉTICA EM PESQUISA

Não se aplica.

CONFLITO DE INTERESSES

Não se aplica.

LICENÇA DE USO – uso exclusivo da revista

Os autores cedem à **INTERthesis** os direitos exclusivos de primeira publicação, com o trabalho simultaneamente licenciado sob a licença *Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 International*.

Esta licença permite que **terceiros** remixem, adaptem e criem a partir do trabalho publicado, atribuindo o devido crédito de autoria e publicação inicial neste periódico.

Os autores têm autorização para assumir contratos adicionais separadamente, para distribuição não exclusiva da versão do trabalho publicada neste periódico (ex.: publicar em repositório institucional, em site pessoal, publicar uma tradução, ou como capítulo de livro), com reconhecimento de autoria e publicação inicial neste periódico.

PUBLISHER

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Programa de Pós-graduação Interdisciplinar em Ciências Humanas. Publicação no Portal de Periódicos UFSC. As ideias expressadas neste artigo são de responsabilidade de seus autores, não representando, necessariamente, a opinião dos editores ou da universidade.

EDITORES

Daniel Serravalle de Sá

HISTÓRICO

Recebido em: 23-09-2024 Aprovado em: 17-10-2024