

Chapter 11

What Does Professionalization Mean in Peace Research?

11.1 On Professionalization in General

Generally, the sociology of professions identifies three characteristics of a profession¹:

- [1] There is a range of *skills* with which a range of professionals will handle a range of problems for a range of clients, with proven competence. The clients have an idea of what to expect from the professional, and the professional of what to expect from a client.
- [2] There is a professional *code of conduct*, defining the relation of a professional to the clients, other professionals and others. The code of conduct may be supported by an oath.
- [3] There is a pattern of *accountability* of the professional to the clients, to other professionals, and to others.

Professionalization of peace work moves us beyond peace research and studies, both indispensable for skills. The purpose of peace research is to produce inter-subjectively communicable and verifiable *knowledge* according to the general rules of research. Thus, research is incompatible with secrecy, as research has to take place in public space. And one purpose of peace studies is the communication of the findings of peace research, in line with general rules for education, another public space activity. The free access of the rest of society to what happens is of the essence. As peace workers are not planning to hurt or harm, in other words to exercise violence, s/he has nothing to conceal.

In the following a person exercising the peace profession will be referred to as 'peace worker', like 'social worker', or 'peace professional' like 'health professional'. Others may find 'peace specialist' more dignified. 'Manager' must be avoided as active participation of the clients, those seeking professional advice, is of the essence. 'Facilitator' is much better.

¹ This text was first presented as a keynote, at the 21st Conference of the International Peace Research Association, in Calgary, Canada on 1 July 2006.

11.2 Government Realism Versus Peace Movement Idealism: *Tertium non datur?*

To understand better where peace research may be heading, let me juxtapose governments and one special non-government, the peace movement. The governments of the state system of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia in a Eurocentric view of history were successors to feudal lords, kings, emperors. They entered violence-war-peace with *ultima ratio regis*, the King's last argument, the gun, with frequent use; to he who has a hammer the world looks like a waiting nail. But that also holds for the negation of the government, the peace movement: to he who has a mouth the world looks like an attentive ear.

Realism as a doctrine is based on the 'ultima' above, force, not persuasion from basic principles, nor bargaining offering incentives, nor decision-making by authoritative bodies. A derivative of this thesis would be that the final word belongs to whoever has superior force, the big sticks of the big powers. In the present world Anglo-America; a peace proposal unacceptable to them is not 'realistic'.

The supreme goal of the realist will be security, meaning low probability of being hurt/harmed by the violence of any Other. The underlying philosophy is that Evil exists, ready to turn violent for violence's own sake, and that the only counter-measure is sufficient strength to deter and/or crush Evil; thereby producing security.

Idealism as a doctrine is based on persuasion from basic principles, particularly principles held to be universally valid, even self-evident. Such principles tend to be of the ought—rather than the is—variety, like the sacredness of (human) life, meaning (human) life should be considered sacred. But what if Other does not share that noble view? Or, 'in a war there are only losers'. But what if winning can be defined as losing least? An endless debate, with strong statements about human nature. Words, words, words.

Let us try to present the two positions along some dimensions, in no way claiming that the juxtaposition is complete, nor that there is not a solid range of variation. What we are looking for is, of course, a way of bridging the gap, even contradiction bolstered by solid hatred on both sides, and the use of violence, or nonviolence (Table 11.1).

This is a clear case of thesis versus antithesis, at least as presented in this Table, not denying that reality is more complex. It does not follow that the alternative, a *tertium*, has to be a synthesis. Dialectics offers three non-exclusive possibilities: a positive transcendence, synthesis, accepting basic features of both, a negative transcendence denying the validity of both, and a compromise picking some of this and some of that.²

We are talking about two world views, both of them found within the same societies, and not only in the West although we sense the contradiction between

² For more on this and most of the topics mentioned in this paper see the author's *Transcend and Transform*, London, Boulder CO: Pluto, Paradigm Press, 2004; published in many translations.

Table 11.1 The Government movement and the peace movement

1 Actors	Government movement Foreign office-military	Peace movement Permanent, conjunctural
2 Basic mode	Realism based on <i>ultima ratio</i>	Idealism based on ratio
3 Epistemology	Empiricism fact-based pragmatism	Criticism value-based moralism
4 Theory	<i>Security paradigm</i> based on strength Humans tend toward evil	<i>Persuasion paradigm</i> based on moral strength Humans tend toward good
5 Method I	Elite conferences	People's meetings
6 Method II	Negotiating harmonized national interests	Resolutions, advocacy
7 Method III	Demonstrations of – incentive power – threats of force	Demonstrations of –moral power –people power
8 Method IV	Violent action, like bombing	Nonviolent action like economic boycott

Source The author

(A Gandhian boycott of the USA might work, mass demonstrations not)

carry-overs from feudal faith in force and enlightenment faith in human *ratio* and appeals to reason.

Realism, as spelt out above, would make allies of the carrier of Anglo-American world dominance in today's world, the United States of America, say Yes–Yes–Yes to Washington DC. And idealism would make the peace movements in the same countries say No–No–No to whatever comes out of their foreign offices. The world views are so contradictory that they become each other's antithesis.

And yet we see in the present concrete case of the 'US-led Coalition' in the war in and over Iraq one government after the other defecting. Without necessarily saying so, they actually do what their peace movements have demanded, they pull out. But this is more an act of protest than an alternative peace policy.

The best way of exploring these two peace discourses further is probably not by elaborating them, but by asking the question: how can this contradiction be transcended, if at all? There are eight jobs according to the Table, so let us look at all eight.

But first permit me a little note from my own autobiography. I refused military service and became a conscientious objector in 1951 because I found the governmental approach unacceptable; and in 1954 refused the alternative 'civilian service' because it was only a way of saying No, not a way of serving peace. The outcome was half a year in prison winter 1954–1955 for a more extreme No. I have lived this contradiction, at one time (early 1960s) being both some kind of consultant to the Norwegian foreign office, a member of the board of *War Resisters' International* (in London) and president of its branch in Norway. And unhappy with them all; one essentially built on bullets and bombs, the others on words.

So I will try to guide the reader toward a peace profession as something arising out of this contradiction because that is how it came about in my case. As an effort to bridge the gap.

Obviously we are looking for an actor, the peace professional, who could transcend this government-peace movement dichotomy. The idea that governments are somehow on Track 1 and non-governments on Track 2 freezes this dichotomy in its present form. And begs the question whether governments are not often on Track 1 hoping that non-governments could compensate and bring about Track 0 as a resultant. Given the damage governmental diplomacy is capable of doing this is a highly optimistic view. We need a better answer.

Some features of that answer are clear.

First: a peace professional will have governments and non-governments as clients and dispense advice to both. Like the health profession the skills would be available not only to friend and foe alike, but also to uniformed (government) and civilian (non-government). The peace professional would not think of friend-foe or uniformed-civilian, but of actors desperately in need of any advice that might move the actor system closer to peace. Peace is a relation among actors, a system, not a property of one actor alone. The peace professional would engage in dialogues with the actors, but have the actor system on top of his or her mind.

Second: the peace professional rejects violence as does the peace movement, based on the idealism of the heart, but combines that with the realism of the brain. Concretely, this leads to *peace by peaceful means*, rejecting violence less on moral grounds than on pragmatic grounds. Violence does not work. Shedding blood in a battle-field is like leeches sucking blood: not only that it does not work; it may even make matters worse. While not denying some preventive and curative effects of minimum (threat of) violence, the approach would exclude violence from the peace-creating repertory, building more on *ratio*, less on *ultima*.

Third: the basic difference is here. Without rejecting empiricism linking theory and data, and criticism linking data and values as basic modes of intellectual activity, the focus will be on the third possibility: *constructivism*, linking values and theory. The values emerge from the legitimate goals of the parties to a conflict, and the theory from viable realities. The idea would be to search for a new reality where the parties might feel that their goals can be sufficiently comfortably accommodated.

Imagine a child busily adding and subtracting integers, establishing that $5 + 7 = 7 + 5 = 12$, moving on to $7 - 5 = 2$, and then running the head against the wall when trying to tackle $5 - 7$. The contradiction between being mathematically correct and handling $5 - 7$ dissolves the moment negative numbers, a *new mathematical reality*, has been introduced. And, the child is no longer stuck.

The task is not to be stuck between the pragmatism of linking data to theories and the moralism of linking data to values. The peace professional will look for something new, like a physician who has realized that if the 'system' had sufficient self-healing capacity then it would already have produced health. Neither single-minded empiricism, nor single-minded moralism will help although they should not be disregarded. An intervention bringing in something new is needed, for peace as well as for health.

Fourth: both the security and the persuasion paradigms fall short of the desirable. The former fails because efforts to deter by violence may stimulate an arms race, and efforts to crush by violence may produce trauma and stimulate a violence

race with a vicious cycle of retaliation. And the latter fails, being based neither on ideas, nor incentives, nor threats. Neither facts, nor values, are sufficient guides for action. The parties get stuck.

A government confronted with insecurity—a risk of violence—derives an action agenda from the security paradigm. Neither the most brilliant analysis a la Noam Chomsky, nor the most stinging moral admonitions a la Pope John Paul II, provide guides for action beyond the status quo of No, No, No. This is where the peace professional enters, focusing on unresolved present conflicts, unconciliated trauma from past violence, and unresolved conflicts in the past, for constructive action. A rich action agenda.

This calls for *mediation* for the conflicts of the present, and *conciliation* for the conflicts of the past, dropping the ‘re’ as it has a connotation of restoring a not necessarily desirable past. This is the essence of the *peace paradigm*. Deep conflicts exist. They may lead to violence. There is a way out: *solve the conflicts*, present and past. If done well, we get peace, and with it security.

But these are only two of the tools in the tool chest of the peace professional. Here is a longer list of remedies:³

- [1] peace research and peace studies
- [2] basic needs satisfaction, peace culture, peace structure
- [3] goal restraint and consequence analysis
- [4] mediation for conflict transformation by peaceful means
- [5] anger control
- [6] peace-building, with peace education and peace journalism
- [7] nonviolence and soft peace-keeping
- [8] conciliation for the removal of past traumas from the agenda
- [9] creating virtuous peace cycles.

This is not the place to spell them out. The challenge is to stick to “peace by peaceful means”, neither succumbing to violent governmental pragmatism nor to the status quo of “not in my name” peace movement moralism. Points 1–4 above are preventive therapy, points 5–8 curative therapy, and point 9 builds positive peace into the system, releasing the creative and constructive potential of conflicts rather than the potential for violence and destruction. All based on diagnosis and prognosis of social ills. Much to do.

What, then, corresponds to Methods I, II, III, IV? Given the general idea that direct violence is the smoke that comes out of the fire of conflicts not resolved, or from past violence with no conciliation? Generally speaking through the power of the word, *dia logos*, by helping the parties to deeper insights rather than by bribing them, threatening them or telling them how bad they are.

This, of course, is very similar to one basic assumption of psychotherapy: the talking method. Or sociotherapy rather, as violence, like conflict and peace, is a

³ See Johan Galtung: “Conflict Transformation By Peaceful Means” in Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, eds., *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, London: Routledge.

relation. A system of actors, not only single actors, is in need of change. The peace professional has to talk with all actors; *how* can be disputed. There are schools here as elsewhere, all with some valid points.

Like the Table, The TRANSCEND approach has four phases:

- *Method I*: Meeting all parties, one-on-one.
- *Method II*: Empathic dialogues to elicit creativity.
- *Method III*: Demonstrations of
 - transcending goals, positively or negatively
 - creating a new system reality, capable of accommodating the legitimate goals of all parties.
- *Method IV*: Joint action to transform the conflict, always checking whether it works. If not, Methods I–II–III–IV again.

This approach differs substantially from both conventional, mainstream government and peace movement action. The moral impulse, the (almost absolute) No to violence, is shared with the peace movement, but the pragmatism of step IV is shared with governments. There is no apodictic position, no a priori truth. Everything is tested for its validity and everything has to pass that test.

The focus is no longer on one party winning, like ETA or Madrid; nor on all parties winning, the famous win–win. The focus is on the relation, the system, on Spain moving forward, into new and better realities. *Those who rest on carpets of gold, carpet bombing, or fly moral carpets are often short on ideas.* Peace professionals have the opposite profile. *Tertium datur.*

11.3 There is a Demand Out There: A Trip Around the World

Half a century after the tiny beginnings of peace research after World War II—including founding IPRA, the International Peace Research Association, 42 years ago, those foggy autumn days in London—some of us think we have a solid supply to offer. But, there is always the nagging question: is there a demand out there?

There is, and the listener/reader will pardon me for giving as cases what I know best: what I myself have been asked to do, say, this spring 2006, from mid-February to mid-June to be precise. Twelve cases, twelve processes to be more precise, some more, some less successful, all with a certain promise. The initiative often came from a go-between capable of organizing a direct encounter with one or more of the parties in the conflict. In no case did any of the parties cover any travel expenses. There was no honorarium. But the trip was combined with workshops on mediation, conciliation etc., and that balanced the budget. One formula, among several?

Before delving into the cases: from where would we not expect any such demand, directly, or indirectly, via a go-between?