Future Peace: Breaking Cycles of Violence through Futures Thinking

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Abstract

Why is it so hard to break out of cycles of violence? This paper focuses on the challenges associated with breaking out of cycles of violence and why futures thinking may provide a potential solution. Research suggests that people living in violence lack the ability to think about a peaceful future, or any future for that matter. Addressing this inability may hold a critical key to breaking out of cycles of violence. While there is mounting theory to support this idea, evidence based research is still lacking.

Keywords: Peace, conflict resolution, non violence, futures methodology, peacebuilding, prevention, Kenya

Introduction

As 2011 draws to a close not only do we face far too many violent conflicts—ranging from Israel/Palestine, to Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda and surrounding countries, to the Mexican drug wars to name just a few—there is also mounting concern over increased potential for future conflicts due to diminishing natural resources, increased inequality within nations, among other trends.

Galtung's famous conflict triangle (figure below) illustrates a conflict's logical lifecycle (1996). According to the conflict triangle, all individuals and groups have goals. When these goals are incompatible—like two states wanting the same land—and one group's goal is blocked by the other group's incompatible goal, a contradiction arises (point C). The contradiction leads to frustration. This frustration may turn inward causing attitude changes (point A) such as hatred, distrust, or apathy. The frustration may also turn outward leading to behavior changes (point B) of physical or verbal violence. The more basic the blocked goals are—such as access to grazing land and other fundamental needs—the more likely the conflict will turn violent.
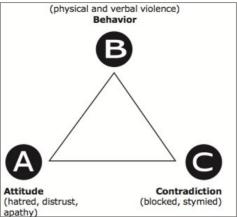
Figure 1. Conflict triangle. (Galtung, 1996)

Galtung's conflict triangle illustrates that people engage in conflict out of a desire to achieve a particular goal sometime in the future. Violent conflict becomes a logical attempt to create change when no other option seems possible. Efforts to end violence need to address the universal desire to be in control of our own futures—be that an individual, nation, state, or community's future. Further more, once conflicts become violent it becomes increasingly difficult to end the violence due to myopic and narrow behavioral patterning.

Futures thinking may hold the key to some of these challenges we face when attempting to break out of cycles of violence and create futures radically different from our present and our past. Futures thinking after all, "seeks to help individuals and organizations better understand the processes of change so that wiser preferred futures can be created (Inayatullah, 2008)." It also offers a systematic way to think about the future in order to break out of cycles of violence, and achieve change by peaceful means. The rest of this paper will attempt to showcase the specific ways in which futures thinking methodology may offer novel ways to break out of cycles of violence and help build peaceful societies.

This article is structured as such: A) *Past and Future: violence beget violence* discusses how the past, present, and future interact to reinforce cycles of violence. This section combines a look at global trends as well as how the past influences our future on a personal level. And ultimately highlights the need for futures thinking within conflict resolution efforts B) *Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Conflict Resolution: 3 leverage points for futurists* defines particular points of intervention for futures thinking within three different focus areas of creating peaceful societies. C) *Fieldwork* includes a case study on the Kenya Regional Youth Scenarios, a grassroots and pro-poor scenario building process. This section demonstrates how futures thinking methodology and conflict prevention techniques are being used to promote a stable Kenya D) *Practical Linkages* provides examples of prerequisites for successful conflict resolution paired with specific futures thinking processes. This section also highlights how futures thinking processes can help create a sustainable approach to conflict resolution that incorporates peacebuilding methodology. E) The *conclusion* sums everything up and hits at the next steps.

Past and Future: Violence Begets Violence

Kenneth and Elise Boulding wrote about the dangers of living within a paradigm of *preparing for peace through war* (1995). They theorized that because states prepare for the uncertainty of the when and how of future conflicts and the next generation of enemies by dedicating large portions of national research and technological advancement to create smarter and better war machines we lack images of peace. The continuous strategizing for war, as opposed to peace, may be affecting our ability to actually work towards peace. Similarly, parties in conflict strategize how they will beat their enemy; they build stronger weapons, increase the size of their troops, adopt new guerilla tactics—they are strategize for war and violence, not for peace (E. Boulding, 1988). Under this fame work, parties in conflict tend to reinforce the cycle of violence as they increase their fighting capacities with the aim to 'win' over their enemy.

Hannah Arendt posited that something deeper was happening on an individual level to make breaking out of cycles of violence difficult. While writing about the aftermath of WWII and pathways to healing Arendt struggled with the juxtaposition of being tied to our past and unable to control our future. According to Arendt, we face a problem between our "memory and potentiality" (as sited in Lederach, 2005, p.148). This dynamic between our memory and potentiality plays out in our daily choices inasmuch as "we sometimes use images of the past for rationalizing what we want to do now, for revising our ideas about effective behavior according to lessons we believe we have learned… Thus our beliefs about the past can help shape our beliefs about the future (Bell, 2003, p. 88)."

New neuroimaging technology has allowed us to begin to test these hypothesis previously grounded in anecdotal observations. Although this research is still very new and inferential, it seems to be supporting the ideas from Kenneth and Elise Boulding, and Hannah Arendt—that our past directly prevents us from creating a future widely different from what we already know. Through the use of MRI scans, we have discovered the area of the brain we use to remember past events is the same area of the brain we use to envision our future (Bar, 2009; Barbey et al, 2009; Buckner & Carrol, 2007). While the implications regarding our decision making process are yet to be determined, it is possible that individuals who live in violence have neurological pathways designed to plan for more violence based on the interconnectedness of the brain mechanisms that remember the past and imagine a future. In other words, breaking out of cycles of violence may be complex because of an actual neurological barrier to naturally design a future that is drastically different from the past.

While all this may be pointing us to conclude that the answer to breaking out of cycles of violence must be to forget our past in order to open up pathways to radically different futures. This cannot be the solution for a successful and sustainable conflict resolution initiative however. Addressing the past is a crucial step towards healing and justice. Additionally, the aim when thinking about the future is not to disconnect us from our past, but to utilize it to make a better future. According to conflict resolution expert John Paul Lederach however, within the Western dominated international frameworks for conflict resolution "we have no real tradition of frameworks that address the deepest questions of collective story, identity, and place nor an expansive view of time… We have rarely engaged

ourselves in the deeper search, which requires an imagination that explores narratives as long history, the location of whole peoples' place in local, national, and global history…this notion of spacetime requires that we recognize and build imaginative narrative that has the capacity to link the past and the future rather then force a false choice between them (2005, p.147)." Although Galtung and Boulding, both recognized as founders of peace studies, have provided numerous frameworks for bridging the past and the future within conflict resolution, these methods have not yet reached the mainstream conflict resolution practices which tend to be have a heavily westernized and linear design based on a military approach. Lederach is speaking to the disconnect between peace researchers and indigenous communities on the one side, and the overriding international conflict resolution infrastructure on the other side—such as the UN, the AU, NATO, and the US military as examples.

Thus far the focus of this article has been on how futures thinking can be used to reconcile the past with the future and to create a future radically different from the past in order to break out of cycles of violence. Futures thinking however also offers the seemingly obvious process for simply thinking about the future, any future. For people living in a current crisis—be it inner city gang violence, civil war, or extreme poverty (what Galtung calls structural violence) as examples—they are focused on one thing, survival. Surviving today takes precedence over planning or thinking about the future. During an Institute for the Future (IFTF) project at an underserved middle school in East Palo Alto, California, students were asked to create personal futures whereby they would utilize forecasts created by IFTF to create a story about where they would be in ten years. One student said he was not interested in thinking about his future when he lived in fear of being shot in a drive by shooting common to his area. Thinking about his long-term future did not make any sense under such a precarious situation, and this gap in his worldview will challenge his ability to build a future that is removed from East Palo Alto gang life and violence.

Despite the grim picture being drawn, the above-mentioned research does not say it is *impossible* for people living in violence to create peaceful memories that can then be transferred into images of a peaceful future, and ultimately be used for peaceful strategic planning. Or that people living in extreme violence do not ever have the capacity to think long-term. The research does however highlight a potentially very real role for futurists within conflict resolution.

Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Conflict Resolution: 3 Leverage Points for Futurists[1]

A review of peace research highlights three particular leverage points for futurists— conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. Conflict prevention, as the term suggests, is the process by which we anticipate a conflict before it might happen and then implement projects to prevent the outbreak of violence. Peacebuilding is the process of "addressing structural issues and the long-term relationship between conflictants (Ramsbotham et al, 2005, p.30)." It aims to realign the contradictions that lie at the root of a conflict (Galtung 1996, p.112). Conflict resolution on the other hand refers to the direct engagement with conflicting parties to break out of cycles of violence. The research presented in the previous

1. The concept of leverage points is taken from Donella H. Meadows work on systems change (1999)

section suggested that conflict resolution offers a particularly powerful leverage point for innovative futures thinking solutions.

It is important to mention that although peace researchers agree that conflict resolution, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding are rarely completely distinct fields or timeframes within the arch of building peaceful societies, it is necessary to draw some lines in order to find potential points of intervention. While some people believe that violence has to end before you can engage in peacebuilding efforts, others believe that peacebuilding is the only process by which we can sustainably end long standing violent conflicts, and prevent future conflicts from arising (Ramsbotham at al, p.2005).

Although this paper aims to build a platform for conducting more futures thinking work within conflict resolution, we must first acknowledge the work futurists have conducted within the wider umbrella of building peaceful societies. This would include Adam Kahane (2010), Sohail Inayatullah (2008 and 2010), Ivana Milojević (2002 & 2008), Clem Sunter (1987 and 2001), Francis Hutchinson (1996 & 2010), and Kenneth and Elise Boulding (1995), to name a few. This is not to mention the growing list of futures thinking organizations working towards the same. The natural affinity between futures thinking and social change may in part be because "the overriding purpose of futures studies is to maintain or improve human well-being (Bell, 2003, p.111)." Additionally, futures thinking is a powerful tool when used to bring about change due to of its implicit aim to analyze and understand the structural issues at play within any system, thereby demystifying the root causes of current events and making it easier to find solutions when needed.

Below are brief examples of foresight work that has taken place within conflict prevention and peacebuilding. I have not been able to find futures thinking processes directly engaged with conflict resolution, despite the potentially very effective leverage point.

On prevention

Futures thinking based preventive interventions seem divided into two categories; the creation of early warning detection systems and the use of scenarios to show case what a war or violent outbreak might look like, thereby deterring violence. Below are examples from each category:

- The Integrated Conflict Early Warning Systems project at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is the US military's most recent attempt at helping military planners provide crisis forecasting. The sooner a crisis is anticipated, the more easily mitigation plans can be devised and resources mobilized. (O'Brien, 2010). It may be necessary to mention here that these early warning systems stem from a paradigm of *working towards peace through war* by beefing up security and readying for war, as opposed to getting peacebuilding based conflict resolution efforts underway.
- In his book On thermonuclear War: Thinking About the Unthinkable, Herman Kahn publicly considered "what most people were denying in the 1960s: that nuclear war might actually take place between the United States and the Soviets. By raising the possibility publicly, he helped

people see realistically what they had at stake, and arguably inspired many of the most successful disarmament initiatives (as cited in Schwartz, 1996, p. 36)."

On peacebuilding

Peacebuilding futures work appears to fall entirely within the process of scenario building. When these scenarios are revisited years later, we often see the preventive nature of this work as well. The Monte Fleur Scenarios and the High Road/Low Road Scenarios have both been credited for helping create a nonviolent transition out of apartheid.

○ Visión Guatemala, which ran from 1998 to 2000, was a scenario process that aimed to build on the Guatemalan peace accords that ended a 36 year civil war two years earlier. The project brought together people who had been involved in the conflict from all angles—including government ministers, former army and guerilla officers, businessmen, journalists, young people, and indigenous peoples. During the two years the project ran, Visión Guatemala brought deeply polarized people together and built a foundation of trust and lasting peace that cannot be found in a peace accord alone (Kahane, 2010).

○ High Road/Low Road Scenarios took place in South Africa in the mid 1980s. The two scenarios were framed around 3 uncertainties; will the future power in South Africa take a winner-takes-all stance? Will whoever rules South Africa in the future be focused on national development or rule by ideology? How will the rest of the world relate to South Africa, will the sanctions be lifted? Two scenarios were developed—the High Road told the story of a negotiated and settled South Africa while the Low Road illustrated confrontation that would lead to violence and eventually civil war. The High Road/Low Road scenarios were an important precursor to the Monte Fleur Scenarios a near decade later (Ilbury & Sunter, 2001).

○ The Monte Fleur Scenarios were conducted in South Africa from 1991-92 in order to bring people from diverse backgrounds together to talk about the future of South Africa. They were created in the shadow of Nelson Mandela being released from prison and previously banned organizations like the African National Congress being legalized in 1990, but before the first all-race elections were held in 1994. 22 prominent South Africans, politicians, activists, academics, and businessmen, worked on four scenarios—Ostrich, Lame Duck, Icarus, and Flight of the Flamingos—to analyze how the transition out of apartheid might go. The Ostrich scenario illustrated a deeply divided South Africa that did not manage to gain a representative government. Once the scenarios were published in a local newspaper, then president de Klerk was quoted as saying he was not an ostrich, signifying the willingness of the white government to transition out of apartheid (eds. Beery et al).

○ The Dinokeng Scenarios of South Africa were developed in 2009. Three

scenarios were developed by 35 individuals from all walks of life and according to their website[2], "The purpose of the Dinokeng Scenarios is to promote open and frank dialogue, a 'flowing together' of diverse perspectives about the future of South Africa, within and beyond the Scenario Team." The scenarios—Walk Apart, Walk Behind, Walk Together—demonstrate what South Africa might look like in 2020 depending on how engaged the government is with the public, and vice versa. The scenarios represent an attempt to prevent South Africa from falling victim to the common trajectory of countries in transition, from euphoria to disillusionment, which often ends in violence.

Fieldwork

In the summer of 2011 I received funding while working on my M.A. to travel to South Africa and Kenya in order to gain further experience and exposure to futures thinking from within that region, and learn their approaches to utilizing futures thinking to create social change.

In Kenya I was able to join The Institute for Economic Affair's (IEA) Futures Programme while they worked on their groundbreaking work on regional youth scenarios. The multi year project, which was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, spent the first year publishing the Kenya Youth Fact Book (Njonjo, 2010). The book was later used to help facilitate nine regional youth scenario-building workshops. I was able to join IEA in time to both observe and facilitate some of their scenario building workshops. As I write this article, the scenarios have been completed, a documentary has been created, a final report has been written, and a process to continue to disseminate the information and increase dialogue is under way.

In this next section I will present a case study on the Kenyan Youth Scenarios in order to demonstrate how IEA combined futures thinking methodology and conflict prevention techniques in order to promote a stable and peaceful Kenya. I then draw some practical linkages between futures thinking and conflict resolution based on reflections from the case study as well as other research.

Preventive Case Study: Kenya Regional Youth Scenarios

Concerned about Kenya's youth bulge—78.31% of Kenyans are below the age of 35 (Njonjo, 2010)—and the associated potential for chaos, in 2008 Katindi Sivi Njonjo, Program Manager of IEA's Futures Programme, started working on the Kenya Youth Scenarios.

Njonjo and her team (which included a camera crew and an assistant) traveled to eight different provinces via nine different workshops and gathered ten to fifteen youth leaders in each locale for three to four day scenario-building workshops. The scenarios are unusual due to their highly grassroots and pro-poor approach. During the workshops Njonjo walked the youth leaders, none of whom had previously been exposed to scenario building or futures thinking before, through the creation of their own scenarios. Utilizing a version of the SRI scenario-building model each workshop created four scenarios utilizing bi-polar vectors (Ralston & Wilson, 2006). Before the scenarios could begin, IEA compiled a youth fact book that for the

2. The full scenarios can be found on their website, www.dinokengscenarios.co.za

first time in Kenyan history gathered all available data on youth under one roof, and then disaggregated the data according to age, gender, religion, region, and so on in order to provide a more in depth understanding of youth in Kenya. The fact book was used early in the scenario processes to distill rumors, confront assumptions, and expose mental maps in order to ensure that everyone in the room had the same understanding of the problem. After reviewing and discussing the fact book, the participants were taken through a *rooting exercise,* a process whereby participants looking at the historical events and trends to explain the present day. Both the fact book and the rooting exercise are important steps in a scenario-building process because they help create a common language and mutual understanding among participants that aids effective communication and makes talking about a shared future more possible.

Once the foundational pieces were in place, participants were then taken through a process to pull out local and global drivers that have been affecting youth in their region, both negatively and positively. This process provided a space for every province and individual to share their own stories, and ensure that their voices were being heard. In Western province we heard about retrogressive cultural practices including polygamy, early marriage, and witchcraft, as well as stories of gender inequality and broken marriages. Eastern province participants discussed the underdevelopment and marginalization of north Eastern province, as well as their retrogressive cultural practices like female genital mutilation. In Ukambani they dwelled on the struggle of being characterized as witches as opposed to traditional healers, and for the Mount Kenya region they shared stories of farming challenges in the face of climate change and increasingly smaller farmland due to population increases. The Coast province workshop spoke about drug abuse issues, and a widely believed theory that the government is providing drugs to the region—either directly or indirectly by not doing enough to keep them out—in order to keep the population sedated. Northeastern province told stories about the difficulty associated with getting national ID cards and their extreme sense of separation from the rest of Kenya. Homosexuality was a very common topic in all workshops. Participants were generally looking forward to a future where everyone is free to be as they wish.

Having participants freely and openly share their local and global drivers unveils issues, concerns, or potential conflicts that might not have been obvious before. It also has the potential to allow two conflicting parties to better understand others side, and thereby work towards a mutually agreeable solution. Lederach's discussion of the web pinpoints this idea (2005). When entering a conflict from the outside it is important to first build an understanding of the web of social change that is already in place. As he puts it, "the greatest missed potentials of change are not those far-off things we missed because we could not envision them but those things we missed because our movement bypassed and made them invisible (Lederach, 2005, p.105)." Discovering the web and resolving little disputes first gets the momentum and feeling of goodwill going between conflicting parties, and making bigger steps more likely later on. Sharing local and global drivers can unveil those easy targets of change and illuminate 'innovative' solutions that are right under our noses.

The Kenya Youth Scenarios have proven to be successful in their main goal of encouraging a nuanced conversation about Kenyan youth among both civil society as well as people from within policy-making circles. IEA and Njonjo have received positive feedback and increased interest in discussing youth from educators who

have begun to use the fact book in their classrooms, to a workshop participant who registered his own NGO to look at education issues within Kenya and the lasting negative effects this broken system has on the development of youth and by extension a better Kenya, to Kenyan government ministers saying they need to make sure the Kenyan youth are on their radar in order to avoid future crisis, to the secretary general of the East Africa Community suggesting a similar project be undertaken throughout East Africa so they can more fully consider the voice of the East African youth as they work towards an economic and political federation. The scenario process has influenced Kenya, and the East Africa Community, to pay attention to the powerful yet often forgotten youth sector. This alone may help prevent any potential youth based conflict, but only time will tell.

Practical Linkages

What are the practical linkages that the futures community has already put to a test? Below is a review of prerequisites for successful conflict resolution and examples of how futures thinking can directly address these prerequisites. As we move from theory to practice you may notice that the use of futures thinking in conflict resolution allows us to put our efforts towards stopping violence while at the same time building cooperation where there was conflict. This helps create a more sustainable conflict resolution framework that incorporates peacebuilding methodology.

Confronting mental maps and personal biases: Confronting mental maps is particularly important for conflicting parties who need to come to an understanding as to what has caused the conflict in order join together towards a mutually peaceful future. In 2003 Reos Partners[3] went to "find and implement initiatives to reduce child malnutrition [what is called structural violence] in India." From the work Reos Partners discovered that "The child malnutrition situation [much like all conflicts] was dynamically, socially, and generatively complex, and the people we met had many different understandings of what the essence of the problem was and therefore of where the solution could be found." (Kahane, 2010, p.58)

Reflecting on the Royal Dutch/Shell scenario—an early processes in using scenarios as part of business strategizing—Schwartz wrote, creating foresight "brings each person's unspoken assumptions about the future to the surface. Scenarios are thus the most powerful vehicles I know for challenging our 'mental models' about the world, and lifting the 'blinders' that limit our creativity and resourcefulness (Schwartz, 1996, p. XV)."

After Njonjo presented her on the Kenya Youth Scenarios to UNICEF, UNICEF decided to reassess their Kenyan projects. They realized they had been designing projects based on their own assumptions and perception of poverty in Kenya.

Allowing everyone's story to be told: According to Galtung's conflict triangle discussed in the introductory section of this paper, conflicts arise when different groups desire different futures. Conflicts of identity are often caused in part by a marginalized group (be they a minority or majority) feeling unable to properly express their group identity. That is to say, there is a contradiction of goals regarding whose culture and tradition should shape the future of that region. This can easily be the case argued within Somalia where the country has not been allowed by the

3. An international social change and foresight organization.

international community to design their own government, and therefore express their own national identity. This has lead to years of violence—in particular towards any foreign presence, even complicating food aid during crisis.

Although creating unity is an important piece of creating peace, we don't want to create unity at the expense of personal expression and wants. Such a situation will eventually devolve into conflict as people begin to feel oppressed. According to Soloman Asch, a social psychologist, "Consensus is valid only to the extent to which each individual asserts his own relation to the facts and retains his individuality. There can be no genuine agreement unless each adheres to the testimony of his experience and steadfastly maintains his hold on reality (Kahane, 2010, p.49)."

Futures thinking in general recognizes that there is not one, but many futures that unfold at the same time. Scenarios in particular are designed to allow for discussion and exploration of multiple futures (Bell, 2003). Recognizing all possible futures means that each person present in a scenario process is able to express their views and needs without fear of negative responses. This processes also allows for the group to playtest many futures, hopefully choosing to avoid the more conflictual and violent futures.

The Kenya Youth Scenarios has already seen impressive success on this end. The Secretary General of the East Africa Community (EAC), after seeing a 20 minute presentation on the scenarios, remarked that a must be undertaken throughout East Africa. What's significant here is the Secretary General realized EAC needs to pay attention to the youth voice (and all the different facets of that demographic) if they want to achieve a successful and peaceful transition into an economic and political federation.

Diminishing conflict polarities: Increased polarization between conflicting parties, means finding nonviolent solutions becomes more difficult. This is because "polarization means reducing a conflict formation to the most basic level… All positive, cooperative relationships are within the camps and all negative relationships between them (Galtung, 1996, p.90)."

The South African High Road/Low Road Scenarios were credited in part for bringing a polarized nation—remember this was during apartheid—together through the creation of a common language. "[T]he names gave the polarized people of South Africa a common language for talking about their common future (Schwartz, 1996, p. 202)."

Uniting a group under a common vision: According to scenario planner and social change expert Adam Kahane, "leaders trying to create new realities [or different futures from the ones they see unfolding naturally] require the capacity to unite the separated (2010, p.36)"

Within futures thinking, the processes of *visioning* or *transforming the future* (Inayatullah, 2007) both aim to create a realistic vision of the future that all people can contribute to creating. This is not as easy as it may seem however. Often times aspirational visions become unrealistic like the Kenya's Vision 2030 (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2007) which is an ideal or preferred future, unlikely likely to become real as it describes a Kenya which is disconnected from its past and present reality. Kenya's Vision 2030 does not provide an actionable vision that all Kenyans can get behind.

Increasing the size of the pie, creating non-zero-sum relationships with conflicting parties: Zero-sum solutions create a one sided win. These scenarios

eventually divulge into lose-lose situations (Paroport & Chammah, 1965) During the Monte Fleur process in South Africa they "only discussed the domain that all of the participants had in common: the future of South Africa. The team then summarized this shared understanding in the scenarios (eds. Beery et al)."

Kenya's Vision 2030 has been challenged by the Kenya Youth Scenarios as the scenarios highlight how improbable realizing the vision by 2030 will be when the social sector is taken into consideration. Within Kenya, the government has a reputation of acting without listening to the needs of the people, even perhaps acting against the will of the people. As such, the government and the citizenry are often times in conflict. This is why when Njonjo and the Institute of Economic Affairs were shocked when Vision 2030 approached them to help incorporate the social sector into their vision in order to create a more realist and inclusive Vision 2030. What this illustrates is the power of the scenarios methodology to bring parties often in conflict together. What the Kenyan government must be realizing is that unless they begin to work with civil society, as opposed to against them, they will never be able to progress. The Kenya Youth Scenarios illustrated this by showing many different dark futures in which the people rebel against a corrupt and selfish government.

Gaining peripheral vision: "Peripheral vision, or what I have come to call the *art of serendipity in social change*, is the capacity to situate oneself in a changing environment with a sense of direction and purpose and at the same time develop an ability to see and move with the unexpected. Without peripheral vision change processes are fragile because they are rigid (Lederach, 2005, p.118)." The opposite of peripheral vision then is tunnel vision, which tends to show itself in the form of fighting violence with violence. "What we fail to recognize is that deep-seated patterns of violence are not controlled or overcome by that which creates them. They are brought asunder by changing the environment within which the pattern is given life (Lederach 2005, p.119)." And this process requires peripheral vision. The United States' response to 9/11 is an example of the ineffectiveness and danger of tunnel vision. "The most expensive and greatest logistical response to this event under the rubric of a 'war on terrorism' fell pray to the trap of tunnel vision, to a rigid unidirectional understanding of war, which resulted in the waging of traditional battles of landed warfare against an enemy that is not land-based (Lederach, 2005, p.119)."

For scenario planners and futurists, peripheral vision is about being open to, and able to see the unexpected solutions. "As Pierre [Wack] said, the horse has a built-in width of vision that we lack. Even though it moves forward its attention is towards the side. Scenario researchers train themselves to look at the world as horses do; because new knowledge [and solutions] develops at the fringes (Schwartz, 1996, p.69)." Futures thinking methodology contain within it many exercises for building up peripheral vision. Whether the intention is to build scenarios, forecasts, personal futures, or any other sort of foresight, any person going through these processes will build peripheral vision pertaining to the specific subject they are concerned with. Once the foundation for peripheral vision is built, this skill can be developed independently from the guidance of an outside 'expert.'

Peripheral vision helps us gain perspectives form outside the overriding paradigm of looking for peace through war. It helps us see what alternative frameworks exist.

Making alternative choices possible: "We often believe that there is only one future. We cannot see the alternatives, and thus we make the same mistakes over and over [and reinforce cycles of violence]. But by looking for alternatives, we may see something new. We are not caught in the straitjacket of one future and we prevent our minds from becoming inflexible (Inayatullah, 2008)." Rooting exercise, or what Inayatullah (2008) calls *shared history*, "elicits choices. One of the premises of scenario thinking is that the future is not predetermined and cannot be predicted, which means, therefore, that the choices we make can influence what happens. In a situation where people feel swept along by overwhelming, inevitable currents, this is an empowering worldview. During its transition, South Africa was haunted by apocalyptic visions; the scenario stories helped people rationally think through their options (eds. Beery et al)." These Alternative choices help us break away from our neurological pathways that possibly convert past experiences into future behaviors. Such exercises reshape our mental landscape making old pathways less inflexible.

Providing space for creativity: The role of creativity in conflict resolution is widely discussed. Galtung believes that "people see no alternatives [to violence] because conflict illiteracy limits the outcome repertoire, and because creativity is blocked (2000, p. 47)." Lederach extols the power of creativity to be able to get to the essence of a conflict, and find solutions. He warns that when we focus too much on the technical side of conflict resolution, at the expense of art and intuition our processes become too rigid and fragile (2005).

Futures thinking is grounded in the use of creativity, intuition, and logic to help us see the world and associated uncertainties with more clarity (Bell, 2003). Although the general trend throughout most areas of social change has been to increasingly rely on data in order to get funding and show progress towards a specific goal, futures thinking is still very much grounded in the creative process. "It is a common belief that serious information should appear in tables, graphs, numbers, or at least sober scholarly language. But important questions about the future are usually too complex or imprecise for conventional language and science. Instead we use the language of story and myth. Stories have a psychological impact that graphs and equations lack. Stories are about meaning; they help explain *why* things could happen in a certain way. They give order and meaning to events—a crucial aspect of understanding future possibilities (Schwartz, 1996, p.38)."

Rigid processes don't create space for a free enough thought pattern to allow people living in violence to begin thinking in terms of radically different futures. But because there are no facts in the future, when we enter the realm of the future, we are forced to enter our imagination.

Induce 2nd order thinking: Sociocultural systems have underlying assumptions that keep the system stable even if members change. These assumptions are called *default values* and when problems or conflicts occur they are addressed through default values—which lead to individuals forgetting they have individual agency to move outside of the system and invent new solutions. 1st order thinking then is when reactions to conflicts are formed from default values, and 2nd order thinking is the ability to challenge assumptions. Converting conflict to cooperation requires 2nd order thinking (Ramsbothem et al, 2005).

As demonstrated throughout this paper, futures thinking forces us to think about the alternative perspective and not rely on our default values. This is achieved by allowing for alternative futures and everyone's ideas to be heard, by providing a

space to for creativity and innovation, and by building peripheral vision among other things.

A pathway towards peace: In the end, all of these things "create the conditions for a paradigm shift (Inayatullah, 2008)," and from that, a pathway towards peace.

Conclusion

People living in violence face many challenges when trying to break out of that cycle—from being faced with a global paradigm of fighting violence with violence, to having to struggle against their own memories of violence and the natural instinct to recreate what we know best, from simply lacking the luxury of being able to think into the future and strategize for something different than their current surroundings—futures thinking may hold the key to diminishing these particular challenges. Futures thinking consists of praxis that can be used to address the dilemma between a desire for a peaceful future and past images of violence.

Although new neuroimaging technology allows us to better understand how our brain may actually reinforce some of these challenges we have been observing for a millennia—being unable to think about a future drastically different from our past—further research needs to be undertaken better understand the implications for breaking out of cycles of violence.

While three leverage points—conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution—seem optimal for futures thinking methodology, conflict resolution in particular appears to be the leverage point where futures thinking might be able to have the most impact. Why then, do we lack evidence-based research in this field? This begs the question if we, as futurists, face the same challenges nonviolence movements face when working against the global paradigm of fighting for peace through war. If so, how do we break through that barrier? As we continue to document the work that has been done—from the Kenya Youth Scenarios to the Monte Fleur Scenarios, and Vísion Guatemala to name a few—we need to keep pushing for direct engagement with conflicts and conflict resolution.

The next step could be to create a methodology directly related to applying futures thinking to conflict resolution. This should be done through collaboration with conflict resolution organizations. The scope of this work could be as broad or as finite as need be. There is space for futures thinking within negotiations between heads of state, between political leaders and their guerilla factions, among grassroots communities who are primarily victims of violence and want to find a way out, or gang leaders. Any methodology pertaining to conflict resolution needs to be as flexible and open as possible in order to meet the needs of this area of work.

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