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BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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The aim of this research is to expand the framework of contemporary conflict resolution by constructing a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and a Buddhist epistemology. Despite its evolution and development through self-reflexivity and self-critique, contemporary conflict resolution established upon Western epistemologies has confined the understanding of human mind to social/cultural orientations and left a comprehensive and qualitative analysis of the potential of individual human mind underdeveloped. Buddhist epistemology, the central theme of which is to address human suffering that is mainly psychological and subjective, makes a critical analysis of human subjectivity in terms of how it can be become a root cause of suffering including conflict and how it can be addressed by gaining an insight into the social/cultural construction of human subjectivity. The argument of the thesis is that when a socially/culturally-oriented view of human mind and a deeper and more profound view of human mind are combined together, we can engage in a qualitatively richer and deeper analysis of the psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict resolution.
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Introduction

Personal motive for research

As the title of this dissertation shows, my research is a critical and creative analysis to explore how Buddhist philosophy can contribute to contemporary conflict resolution, which is established upon Western philosophies. The motive that has made me choose this topic originates in my experience in the postgraduate course in conflict resolution at the Department of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford from September 2000 to September 2001. The study in Bradford enlightened me by broadening my views on conflict, violence and peace. By taking lectures and working on essays and my dissertation, I came to be aware of the diversity and profundity of the meanings of conflict, violence and peace: I was conscientized to know that we can build multiple meanings and understandings of conflict, violence and peace and consequently studied various approaches for that purpose.

However, while I enjoyed the study and learned a lot, I came to realize one thing that could be seen commonly throughout lectures and studies in peace studies. That is, contemporary peace studies including conflict resolution has been established upon predominantly Western philosophies and values. The proliferation of academic programs of peace studies at postgraduate and undergraduate level and the diffusion of ideas of conflict resolution beyond Western society and academia can be
acknowledged as a clear testament that peace studies and peace research have gained currency as a global discourse. Further, the scourges of war, conflict and violence of many kinds have blighted people’s lives around the globe. So, studying violence, conflict and peace is not a matter exclusively for Western society. Rather, it is a universal human theme, in which various actors with different and diverse cultural, racial and religious backgrounds at least have the potential to communicate, appreciate and cooperate with each other to examine and transform the world filled with violence and conflict into a peaceful and harmonious one. Moreover, as it is a universal human agenda, it is assumed that not only Western philosophies or wisdom but also non-Western philosophies or insight can make an invaluable contribution to studies of conflict and peace.

Nevertheless, contemporary conflict resolution has been framed by mainly Western philosophies and values: while the conflict resolution enterprise has come to be accepted as a global subject, its academic, intellectual and practical approaches are still within a purview of Western views. We are consciously or unconsciously examining peace and conflict within a Western philosophical framework and this disproportionate status quo of conflict resolution made me decide to explore the potential of a Buddhist philosophy in contemporary conflict resolution.
The reason I have selected Buddhism as my research topic is that, above all, I am a Buddhist. Although I am neither a Buddhist monk nor a Buddhist scholar, through the study of Buddhism under the guidance of personal Buddhist master, I came to have confidence in the potential of a Buddhist contribution to conflict resolution. As will be elaborated in detail in the later chapters, the aim of Buddhist philosophy is not to indulge in metaphysical speculations about universe, such as whether there is a beginning and end of the world, whether there is an afterlife or whether there is a reincarnation, although it does not necessarily deny those metaphysical arguments themselves. Rather, its central theme has always remained the same since the Buddha, Gautama, the founder of Buddhism: to address problems and troubles facing human beings, which inevitably include violence and conflict, on a deep and profound level, by gaining an insight into a root cause of them. This essential character of a Buddhist philosophy, I believe, can assume a valuable role in enriching contemporary conflict resolution conventionally based upon Western philosophies.

The aim of this dissertation

The aim of this dissertation is to make an epistemological critique of contemporary conflict resolution and explore how a Buddhist epistemology can complement limitations revealed through the critique. As can be broadly acknowledged, contemporary conflict resolution has been established and rested upon Western
epistemologies, which is inevitable given that peace research as an academic discipline and field of praxis was created and has been developed in the USA and Western Europe.¹

Why should a Buddhist epistemology be introduced into contemporary conflict resolution despite its evolution and development through self-critique and self-reflexivity? The principal reason is Western conflict resolution’s understanding on human mind. Despite its evolution and expansion, contemporary conflict resolution founded upon Western epistemologies has confined human mind to social or cultural orientation and subsequently underdeveloped qualitative analysis on the potential of human mind, which can be complemented by a Buddhist epistemology. Buddhist epistemology, the central theme of which is to address human suffering that is mainly psychological and subjective,² makes a critical analysis of human subjectivity in terms of how it causes trouble including conflict and how it can be addressed. Put differently, Buddhist epistemology has a deep and comprehensive understanding of the human mind, which differs from Western epistemological approaches, particularly as its principal focus is on the causes of human delusion and suffering.

¹ Chapter one provides an analysis of essential characters of peace research and how was established as an academic discipline.
² Chapters four and five provide a detailed analysis on human suffering from a Buddhist perspective.
However, what must be remarked here is that although its central subject is a deep and holistic study of human mind, Buddhist epistemology does not deny socially and culturally oriented mind itself. What it claims is that although socially and culturally oriented mind is essential for us, it is not a full picture of human mind. Rather, there is a deeper and broader dimension of mind, which enables us to engage in qualitative critique of social and cultural dimension of mind. In short, when both social and cultural dimension and non-social and cultural dimension of mind are acknowledged, we can have a qualitatively richer and deeper view on human mind, which could make a valuable contribution to the conflict resolution enterprise.

Therefore, this dissertation does not purport to negate contemporary conflict resolution based upon Western epistemologies and replace it with one founded upon a Buddhist epistemology. Rather, by exploring a complementary relationship between them, this dissertation seeks to enrich qualitatively Western conflict resolution itself and expand its framework. Their complementary relationship will enrich our understanding of dynamics of human mind in conflict and conflict resolution.

Rationale for the research

As we can see from the above outline, two themes constitute the research: an epistemological analysis of contemporary conflict resolution; and the construction of a
complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and a Buddhist epistemology within Western conflict resolution. Why should these two themes be examined? How can we establish a rationale for the research?

**Why should an epistemological analysis of contemporary conflict resolution be made?**

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that investigates the nature of knowledge, that is, what can be counted as valid knowledge and how it can be obtained (Rogers, 2003). We do not normally think and act inconsistently or haphazardly: rather, we understand and approach the phenomenal world according to a certain theoretical perspective. Steans and Pettiford define theoretical perspective as “an attempt to construct a coherent explanation for a certain phenomenon, which in turn rests upon a wider belief system, or upon certain basic assumptions, about the nature of the world” (2001: 7). Further, the theoretical perspectives that shape the way we understand and act in our phenomenal world are founded upon our epistemological assumptions.³ Put another way, epistemology is a foundation that makes any theoretical viewpoint coherent and logical as it underpins the validity of methods and criteria to produce reliable and verifiable knowledge (Chia, 2002). Without epistemological framework it

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³ Regarding the details on the relationship between theory and epistemology, Gray’s *Doing Research in the Real World* (2004) would be very useful and helpful.
is almost impossible to build theory and engage in praxis.

Contemporary conflict resolution is not an exception. As we can see, there are varieties of theoretical perspectives or views of conflict resolution and applied approaches. However, there is one subject that seems to have been underdeveloped in the conflict resolution enterprise, that is, a systematic epistemological analysis of contemporary conflict resolution. While many actors have contributed to contemporary conflict resolution in terms of the development of theories and approaches to praxis, a deeper analysis of what kinds of epistemologies have constituted contemporary conflict resolution, what limitations or problems those epistemologies have faced and how they can be overcome seems to have been underdeveloped. Truly, there are some literatures that make an epistemological examination of contemporary conflict resolution. Fisher (1990), Rothman (1992) and Vayrynen (2001) are good examples. However, as they are focusing on a particular epistemological assumption for their analysis, they do not provide us with a systematic understanding of the epistemological contribution to contemporary conflict resolution. Based upon this present circumstance, this dissertation adds a supplementary analysis to contemporary conflict resolution by engaging in a systematic epistemological analysis. However, this research does not negate or downplay the above works: rather, by incorporating them into a broader and more
organized epistemological analysis, we will be able to gain a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the relationship between epistemology and conflict resolution.

What should be remarked is that an epistemological examination is not irrelevant to peace research including conflict resolution that is essentially a praxis-oriented academic discipline. Rather, since epistemology bears mightily on the way we construct theoretical standpoints and put them into practice, an epistemological investigation of conflict resolution implies a deeper and fundamental analysis of theory and praxis of conflict resolution and accordingly can make a profound contribution to conflict resolution discourse. It might be highly difficult to be conscious of our epistemological assumptions as they tend to be tacit. However, when we are more highly and explicitly cognizant of our epistemological framework underneath our theoretical perspectives and practices (and the alternative epistemological frameworks and the theoretical and praxis implications of those alternatives), we could gain a broader range and creativity in critiquing existing approaches to conflict resolution and exploring new ones.
Why should Western conflict resolution and a Buddhist epistemology construct a complementary relationship?

In contemporary conflict resolution, an inquiry into the potential of a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and non-Western epistemologies including a Buddhist epistemology seems to have been left out as part of the main subjects. Truly, there was a sympathizer for Buddhism in Western peace research circle. Adam Curle, who was the founder of the Department of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford, is the best figure. As broadly accepted, he made a huge contribution to conflict resolution and worked on deep psychology and spirituality and peace in his later works. He also issued an article on Buddhism and peace in 1998. However, while the article elaborated well on the relationship between violence and peace and Buddhist teachings, a comparative analysis with Western views and exploration of the combined approach was underdeveloped.

There are even Buddhist contributions to the study of violence, conflict and peace. Rothberg (1992), McConnell (1995) and Der-lan (2006) are clear examples. They provide us with detailed examinations on how Buddhism understands violence, peace or approaches to conflict resolution. However, as they have analyzed them only within a purview of Buddhist doctrines, no combined approach with Western epistemologies

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4 To Tame the Hydra: Undermining the culture of violence (1999) would be a good instance.
has been explored: while both Western peace research circles and Buddhist circles have developed studies of violence, conflict and peace, they have done so in mutual isolation. This dissertation addresses this isolated circumstance and seeks to explore how contemporary conflict resolution can be reconceived and reframed when a Buddhist epistemology is introduced into the Western epistemologies that have shaped it. Both Buddhist doctrines and understandings of violence, conflict and peace and Western conflict resolution are founded upon distinctive epistemological foundations and when their epistemological assumptions are compared and their complementary relationship is established, we will be able to add fresh views to contemporary conflict resolution and expand the framework.

There is one thing that should be mentioned before embarking on an exploration of a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and a Buddhist epistemology to broaden the framework of Western conflict resolution. This dissertation employs ‘Buddhist epistemology’ as a generic term. As is well known, there are various branches and schools of Buddhism and each has built and developed its own distinct tradition and tenets. However, there is a certain commonality across all groups. That is the Four Noble Truths doctrine. As will be expounded later, the central theme of Buddhism since the Buddha, Gautama – the founder of Buddhism – is to attain liberation from suffering and the Four Noble Truths doctrine is the
foundation for the achievement. It is supposed that through the doctrine individuals can be empowered to understand the cause and nature of suffering, to know that the suffering can be overcome by their own efforts, and to acquire approaches to address suffering.

This dissertation recognizes but does not focus on the diversity and distinctive character of each Buddhist branch and school. Instead, it claims that while each Buddhist group has advanced its own particular faith and principle, each is built and relies upon a common epistemological foundation, that is, a critical analysis of human mind in terms of how it creates suffering and how it can be overcome, the ultimate aim of which is to achieve serenity of mind. Therefore, the character of Buddhist epistemology discussed in this dissertation will be acknowledged as that which represents and runs through all Buddhist groups.

Ramsbotham et al in their book *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, which is incontrovertibly acknowledged as one of the prominent textbooks in the field of peace and conflict studies, makes a brief analysis of the new generation of conflict resolution. According to them, conflict resolution now falls into five generations\(^5\) and we are now in the fifth generation (2005). They foresee that this new generation “will come

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\(^5\) Regarding each generation, see Ramsbotham et al (2005: 327).
from all parts of the world, and will draw from their own cultures in pushing shared human understanding of the costs of failure to manage conflict non-violently and of the benefits to be gained by strengthening non-violent conflict resolution capacity within and between societies” (2005: 329). While their hope for the new generation of conflict resolution should be respected, what must be explored is how we can give practical expression to what they suggest. Clearly, there are various approaches to that and the theme of this dissertation could be included as one of them.

What Ramsbotham et al propose regarding the new generation can be interpreted as an assertion that different values or wisdom from around the globe should be appreciated and, if necessary, a complementary relationship between them should be explored. As it is almost impossible to establish a single conflict resolution approach, what we must do is to be open to views different from our own and be creative to keep producing dialectically built understandings of conflict and conflict resolution while appreciating existing ones and exploring a complementary relationship between different epistemologies.

Structure of dissertation

This dissertation consists of six chapters besides this introduction and the research implications. Further, those six chapters are divided into three sections – chapters one,
two and three as the first section, chapter four and five as the second section and chapter six as the third section – to advance the argument and achieve the main goal of the dissertation, that is, establishment of a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and a Buddhist epistemology in contemporary conflict resolution and expansion of its framework.

The aim of chapter one is to examine how contemporary conflict resolution has been developed as an intellectual discipline and field of praxis. This chapter consists of three parts. In the first part, a fundamental nature of peace research will be characterized. In the second part, contributions of two figures – Kenneth Boulding and Johan Galtung – to the foundation of peace research will be assessed. Following these examinations, in the third part, historical analysis of the development of contemporary conflict resolution will be made. The examination will be carried out according to the three phases of development. In the first phase, the work of John Burton will be investigated. Here, how his introduction of basic human needs theory into conflict resolution contributed to the development will be evaluated. In the second phase, the contribution of Edward Azar and social psychology will be examined. This stage looks into how Azar’s concept of protracted social conflict influenced conflict resolution and how social psychology developed psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict and conflict resolution. The third phase deals with the development of conflict
resolution in the post-Cold War era. In this phase, four subjects – culture and conflict resolution, peace building from below, emergence of the concept of conflict transformation and reconciliation and justice – will be analyzed.

Following the historical analysis of conflict resolution, the purpose of chapter two is to map out a framework of contemporary conflict resolution. What must be remarked when we study conflict resolution is that development of conflict resolution as an intellectual discipline and field of practice never concludes: it keeps evolving and expanding its sphere. For instance, basic human needs theory, Azar’s protracted social conflict, and social psychological analysis of intergroup dynamics, all of which were introduced into conflict resolution decades ago, through dialectical and critical review, have been modified and reframed to be applied to the contemporary era. In short, what is presented and examined in chapter one is in constant evolution to meet the demands of changing circumstances that surround the conflict resolution enterprise.

The framework of contemporary conflict resolution is examined from five angles: the generally accepted constitutive elements of conflict resolution; the main actors in conflict and conflict resolution; dynamism of conflict; types of conflicts that have been prioritized for resolution; and dimensions of conflict. This comprehensive picture of contemporary conflict resolution will reveal two prominent features: the
proliferation of concepts, approaches, key terms, pivotal actors, and arenas of conflict resolution; and the diversity of approaches to conflict resolution, that is, that there is no single, universal or comprehensive way of conceiving and constructively addressing violent conflict or of making conflict resolution a matter of simple and objective analysis and the application of agreed procedures. This revelation produces further questions such as “What makes conflict resolution enterprise diverse?” and “Why are there various approaches to conflict resolution?” and these questions will eventually lead us to a more profound and fundamental consideration of conflict resolution, that is, its epistemological foundations.

Having unearthed the importance of epistemological considerations of conflict resolution, chapter three engages in a critical analysis of the epistemological foundations of contemporary conflict resolution: a critical examination of Western epistemologies that have shaped it. The main theme of this chapter is, by critically analyzing contributions of Western epistemologies to the development of contemporary conflict resolution and limitations that they have encountered, to explore what kinds of epistemologies can overcome the limitations, which eventually suggests Buddhist epistemology as a prominent candidate.

Since the Ancient Greek era, Western philosophy has evolved and expanded its
intellectual sphere, which gave rise to a variety of epistemologies. As it is impossible and beyond the scope of this dissertation to make a detailed analysis of each epistemological assumption, this chapter categorizes Western epistemologies into three types: objective epistemology; subjective epistemology; and critical epistemology. However, what must be taken note of here is that this classification has been done not to impair the significance and contribution of each Western epistemological viewpoint that has its own distinctive character. Rather, it has been done in order to enable us to engage in a systematic critique of Western epistemological foundations of contemporary conflict resolution more effectively and efficiently.

This chapter falls into three parts. The first part investigates the characters of objective, subjective and critical epistemologies and how they have contributed to contemporary conflict resolution. The second part critiques them and uncovers limitations they face in resolving conflict. Here, the pinnacle of critique is the discovery that Western epistemologies underpinning contemporary conflict resolution have confined human mind exclusively to social and cultural orientation and subsequently underdeveloped a qualitative analysis of mind. Consequently, a qualitative exploration of the potential of individual mind has been underdeveloped in Western conflict resolution. Following this revelation, in the third part, what kinds of epistemologies can be added to
contemporary conflict resolution based upon Western epistemologies is explored and a Buddhist epistemology is proposed. It is posited that since the main theme of a Buddhist epistemology is a deeper and more holistic analysis of human mind, it can complement Western conflict resolution that centers on social and cultural orientation of human mind in approaching psychological and subjective dynamics in conflict and conflict resolution. What must be emphasized in suggesting a Buddhist epistemology is that the aim is not to deny or replace Western epistemologies and contemporary conflict resolution established upon them with Buddhist conflict resolution. Rather, by building a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and a Buddhist epistemology, it is to enrich qualitatively contemporary conflict resolution per se and to open up the potential to expand its framework.

Following the critical analysis of contemporary conflict resolution and Western epistemologies, the main theme of section two, that is, chapter four and five, is to make an in-depth analysis of a Buddhist epistemology. Chapter four presents an introduction to Buddhism. As readers of this dissertation are not necessarily Buddhists or those who are familiar with Buddhism, explaining basic features of Buddhism, especially the fundamental goal and foundational doctrine to achieve that goal is intended to be useful and helpful. Therefore, Four Noble Truths doctrine, which is shared commonly by all Buddhist schools and sects, will be expounded. Through the
Four Noble Truths doctrine, how Buddhism understands our phenomenal world, why human beings experience suffering in the phenomenal world and how we can tackle the suffering will be examined. After elucidation of the Four Noble Truths doctrine, an implication of the doctrine for Buddhist epistemology will be analyzed. It is exhibited that the implication is that human mind is the source of knowledge to realize liberation from suffering. From a Buddhist epistemological perspective, human mind can be both a cause of suffering or trouble including conflict and a key to overcoming suffering. Put differently, a Buddhist epistemology can be characterized as a critical analysis of human subjectivity that examines how human mind causes suffering and how it can be addressed.

Following the introduction to Buddhism, chapter five provides an in-depth analysis of Buddhist epistemology. Firstly, a root cause of human suffering will be investigated. Especially, how “ignorance” or “avidya” in Sanskrit, which is recognized as the root-cause of suffering, gives rise to it and affects human mind will be examined. Then how ignorance can be addressed will be inquired into, which makes a study of three key elements or doctrines, that is, “dependent-arising” or “pratityasamutpada” in Sanskrit, “emptiness” or “sunyata” in Sanskrit and the Two Truths doctrine. The study will reveal that the key to overcoming human suffering caused by ignorance is to gain an insight into the nature of reality, more specifically, an insight into the nature of our
conceptual thought-constructions that shape our reality. This revelation will lead us to know that Buddhist epistemology can be characterized as an epistemology of epistemologies or a knowledge of knowledge of any sort. This means that, rather than advancing and holding certain distinctive knowledge, Buddhist epistemology takes a critical attitude toward all sources of knowledge. However, Buddhist epistemology characterized as a knowledge of knowledge of any kind does not negate knowledge or conceptual thought itself: rather, it claims that how knowledge or conceptual thought we hold to make sense of phenomenal world including ourselves is dealt with must be critically examined as it can cause suffering or trouble. Following the characterization of Buddhist epistemology as an epistemology of epistemologies, the ultimate state of mind in a Buddhist epistemology will be explored. Here, it will be explained that an ultimate aim of Buddhist epistemology is to attain a detached mind that has overcome an absolutization and extreme attachment to particular conceptual thoughts or views.

Based upon the arguments in the first five chapters, chapter six, which is the intellectual crux of this dissertation, explores a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and a Buddhist epistemology in contemporary conflict resolution. The main theme of this chapter is how a Buddhist epistemology that makes a deeper and more profoundly qualitative analysis of human mind can complement Western epistemologies that focus mainly on social and cultural orientation of human
mind in approaching conflict resolution.

Firstly, a Buddhist epistemological contribution to the theoretical and conceptual development of contemporary conflict resolution will be examined. It will be argued that Buddhist epistemology has contributed to incorporating individual deep psychology into the core elements of conflict resolution. Of course, social psychology has made an invaluable contribution to the development of psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict and conflict resolution. However, what should be emphasized here is that the introduction of individual deep psychology into the centre stage of conflict resolution allows us to make a deeper and more fundamental analysis of psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict resolution, which enables us to critically examine how socially/culturally-oriented mind itself can become a root cause of conflict. Further, it will be also claimed that the introduction of individual deep psychology allows us to explore qualitative enhancement of the potential of individual agency in conflict resolution.

Following the analysis of theoretical and conceptual development, how a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology can contribute to developing practical implications for contemporary conflict resolution will be explored. Firstly, more elaboration on socially and
culturally-oriented mind will be made. Here, as a generic term of socially and culturally-oriented mind, “conditioned mind” will be proposed, which can be defined as the mind that is oriented and trained by socially or culturally constructed views or conceptual thoughts to make sense of reality. It will be claimed that contemporary conflict resolution established upon Western epistemologies has centered on conditioned mind. In the second part, a critical analysis of the conditioned mind from a Buddhist epistemological perspective will be made. The critique of Western conflict resolution from a Buddhist epistemological viewpoint is that as it focuses on the conditionedness of mind, a deep and profound examination of a potential danger of the conditioned mind itself has been underdeveloped. As a result of the critique, the conception of “unconditioned mind,” which can be characterized as mind that has overcome an extreme attachment to a particular view or conceptual thought by gaining an insight into the nature of conceptual thought construction, will be proposed as an antidote to tackle a potential danger of the conditioned mind. However, what must be underlined is that the objective of proposing the unconditioned mind is not to negate the conditioned mind: it is to show that human mind has both a conditioned and an unconditioned nature; and when those two dimensions of mind are known, contemporary conflict resolution comes to be analyzed from the conditioned mind and the unconditioned mind viewpoints, which will enable us to approach contemporary conflict resolution with a fresh view and open up the possibility to expand its
After critical examination of the conditioned mind and the unconditioned mind, key elements in psychological and subjective dynamics of contemporary conflict resolution – culture, social identity and critical attitude toward socially or culturally constructed human subjectivity – will be re-examined from both the conditioned mind and the unconditioned mind perspectives.

Methodology

This research is a library and text-based study, the methodology of which comprises critical reading, comparative analysis (within and between literatures) and philosophical analysis, especially with respect to epistemology. The approach is a philosophical critique of existing literatures. The main concern of philosophical analysis is to understand and question common ideas that we use in our lives without usually thinking about them (Nagel, 1987). Engagement in reflection on conceptual thoughts and beliefs that we normally employ in an unreflective use can offer us an opportunity to examine how thinkers in different periods and with distinct backgrounds construct views and beliefs. This frees us from being limited by the unquestioned assumptions of those around us (Thompson, 2000). By making ourselves aware of and questioning thoughts or views we generally take for granted,
philosophical analysis suggests new ways of looking at questions and new ways of expressing ideas (Thompson, 2000).

Although several Buddhist texts are consulted and referenced in this dissertation, as the author of is not familiar with Chinese, Sanskrit or Tibetan, in which original texts were written, all of them are in English translations as referenced. There is one more thing that should be mentioned here regarding the analysis of Buddhism in the context of this dissertation. Although this research explores the potential of Buddhism to expand the framework of conflict resolution, its intellectual orientation is non-doctrinal. Although in chapter 4, the doctrine of Four Noble Truths is analyzed, the main theme of this analysis is neither to show its superiority over other religious doctrines nor to impose it upon non-Buddhists. Rather, the central aim is to make a critical analysis of its epistemological standpoint and to explore how it can contribute to expanding the framework of contemporary conflict resolution, which can be appreciated by and applied to even those who are not acquainted with Buddhism.
Chapter One: History and evolution of Contemporary Conflict Resolution

1-1 Genesis of Conflict Resolution

1-1-1 Peace Research: What is Peace Research? How are peace research and conflict resolution related?

According to Rogers and Ramsbotham (1999), it was in the years after World War Two that peace research, as a formal enterprise with its own institutions and professional journals, was constituted. One of the essential characteristics of peace research is the critical attitude towards traditional International Relations. Peace research came to the subject of trying to make the world better place with a set of methods and assumptions different from those of the traditional academic practitioners of International Relations (Roberts, 1991). Mack (1985) notes that in the first decade and a half after World War Two, Realism had been the dominant theory in the study of international relations,6 as a result of which, peace research took the critical stance on Realism. Wallensteen argues that one of the roots of peace research is a constant battle with Machiavelli and his legacy in the study of war and peace (1988).7

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6 Roberts defines realism as a view of the world that places emphasis on the importance of power politics, which stresses the inevitably competing elements in the interests of states. (1991).
7 According to Wallensteen (1988), there are six basic ideas of Machiavelli: Violence is omnipresent and inevitable; Violence is instrumental for a successful reign of power, but it should be used with judgment; In politics, violence is the ultimate source of power; even if there are laws and popular support, control of military power will be the ultimate determinant; Conflicts are resolved through power and violence; The state and the government are the primary actors of importance; and The state is
Galtung held that peace research should be “directed towards the understanding of conditions that may prevent international and intergroup violence and conditions for furthering harmonious and creative relations between nations and other groups of people” (1975: 167), which shows that in peace research the state is not the only significant actor: rather, in peace research, non-state actors should be also included. Wallensteen maintains that peace researchers seek to survey the conditions that would make the attainment of peace possible (1988). Peace research is not simply interested in empirically understanding the existence of violence but also aspires to contribute to the improvement of the human condition (Wallensteen, 1988).8

Jeong insists peace research should make an effort to transform a world filled with violence of any kind (1999). At the same time, he maintains that there are diverse views on how to do research on peace and war. How we define peace research leads to different implications for the nature, content and scope of theory as well as the methods of analysis (Jeong, 1999). So there is no one single meaning of peace: the plurality of the meanings of peace creates multiple perspectives on the research

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8 According to Galtung (1975), one of the mistakes of scientific peace research was to put too much emphasis on empiricist methods. Jeong (1999) also claims that scientific approaches in peace research can ignore substantive problems that are not amenable to quantitative analysis.
agenda. The diversity of approaches to peace implies that the adoption of interdisciplinary research is an important feature of peace research. However, Rogers and Ramsbotham also claim that while peace research has drawn from existing fields of study such as jurisprudence, philosophy, anthropology, politics and international relations, it has been distinct from them in its primary concern with issues of peace and conflict, its multi-disciplinarity, its holistic approach with quantitative and empirical methodologies and its normative commitment to inquiry into the conditions for non-violent social and political change (1999).

As Mack notes, it may be almost impossible to define peace research in a way which can command wide consensus (1985); and, as Rogers and Ramsbotham hold, it is unrealistic to hope for a single peace research methodology or grand theory (1999). Nonetheless, a conspicuous feature of peace research, broadly defined, remains “a methodologically pluralistic community with emancipatory interest in transformative

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9 Jeong (1999) for example, notes specific policy issues such as disarmament, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, preventative diplomacy, non-violent social change, development and environmental security are linked to peace research. Besides that, he says those issues are interconnected with globalization, identity formation, requirements for the satisfaction of basic human needs, regional developmentalism and civil society. The New Agenda for Peace Research edited by Jeong illustrates well that various people discuss peace issues from different angles.

10 For instance, Mack (1985) notes that political science, sociology, social psychology, economics and rational choice theory took precedence in peace research over diplomatic history, international law and classical strategy. Roberts (1991) also states the methods and assumptions in peace research were from social anthropology, sociology, economics and psychology. Further, he suggests that there were high hopes that those various approaches could play an important role in solving major world problems.
possibilities for the improvement of human well-being as well as the prevention of violence” (Jeong, 1999: 6).

While the criticism that peace research has no established and generally recognized methodology in research, nor guidelines or priorities in research is understandable, it can be also counter-argued that this is its very strength since its plurality in research methodology enables an expansion of the meaning of peace. As Tromp insists, reality keeps changing incessantly and the meaning of words describing reality in everyday life is also changing ceaselessly (Tromp, 1991), which is certainly true with the concept of peace. Restricting peace as the absence of inter-state war does not make sense (Tromp, 1991). This does not mean that the absence of inter-state war is not significant, but it is just one dimension of the meanings of peace that have been generated over decades.

The essential objective of peace research is to make a contribution to achieving a more just and peaceful world (Rogers and Ramsbotham, 1999) by making an effort to critically examine the status quo of the contemporary world and to enlarge the range of the meaning of peace. In other words, as Rogers and Ramsbotham propose, while peace research does not show specific solutions or end goals for society, its intellectual effort to explore non-violent processes of political change can have
profound implications for the transformation in existing asymmetric power structures
(1999).

As discussed, the prominent attribute of peace research is its multi-disciplinary
approach to transforming an unjust and violent world into a just and more peaceful
one in a non-violent way, as well as its effort to broaden the meaning of peace.
Accordingly, it comes to be recognized that conflict resolution is one of the essential
components of peace research.

According to Roberts, peace research does not deny the phenomenon of conflict itself
in human affairs (1999). The crucial point is the research into making the conditions
that enhance constructive ways of managing conflict and preventing destructive
conflict (Reychler, 1991). Here, conflict resolution comes into being.

Rogers and Ramsbotham argue that the purpose of conflict resolution is not to prevent
conflict but to transform actual or potentially violent conflict into peaceful and
non-violent processes of political and social change (1999). Furthermore,

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11 Rogers and Ramsbotham (1999) argue that while most peace researchers see violence in its various guises as the antithesis of peace, they agree that it does not apply to the concept of conflict. In general, it can be seen that conflict is recognized as the essential component of human beings.
12 Roberts (1991) says the important point is how we can adopt peaceful means to resolve conflict and attain lasting peace situations in which conflict can be resolved or
Ramsbotham et al assert that conflict resolution is a comprehensive term that is concerned with addressing and transforming the deep-rooted sources of conflict (2005). They hold that when behavior is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile and antagonistic, and the structure of the conflict has been transformed (2005). Thus a resolution entails “the transformation of the situation and relationship at a deep level in such a way as to remove the underlying reasons for the conflict” (Beckett, 1997: 68).

1-1-2 Johan Galtung’s work

As argued, the raison d’être of peace research is to broaden our understanding of peace, which owes much to Johan Galtung. Among his output since the early 1960s, studies in the meanings of violence and peace are seminal.

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transferred into peaceful change. Kelman (1991a), while recognizing that to some extent conflict is necessary and desirable in a social system, argues that it is critical to develop the mechanisms to carry out conflict by non-violent means, as well as means for managing and resolving conflicts.

13 It should be noted that there is no single definition of conflict resolution. As Ramsbotham et al mention (2005), some are critical of conflict resolution, suggesting the term of ‘conflict transformation’ since conflict resolution is not looking into transforming the structure that has created and prolonged conflict. However, it should also be remarked that there is no single clear relationship between conflict resolution and conflict transformation. This will be discussed more in later part of this chapter.

14 Johan Galtung was born on 24 October 1930. He is one of the founding fathers of peace research in Europe. He studied philosophy, sociology and mathematics. Gandhian philosophy is said to have had a huge influence on Galtung’s work in peace research. He also seems to have been influenced by Buddhism, which is demonstrated clearly in his Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization, which was published in 1996. He made a huge contribution to the foundation of the Journal of Peace Research in 1964, which was edited by him for the first ten years.
In one key article (1969), Galtung focused on six dimensions of violence: the distinction between physical and psychological violence; their negative and positive influences; the existence or non-existence of an object that is hurt; the existence or non-existence of a subject who acts; the distinction between intended and unintended violence; and the distinction between manifested and latent violence. According to Lawler, among those dimensions, the fourth is the most important since it is there that the distinction between personal (direct) and structural violence is introduced (1995). In both cases, individuals can be killed or hurt and subject to intimidation, but while direct violence can be caused by specific individual actors, in the latter case there may be no clear perpetrator, that is, the violence is built into social structures and shows as unequal power, resulting in uneven life opportunities (Lawler, 1995).

Structural violence can be defined as “the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is” (Galtung, 1969: 168). The potential level of realization is what is possible with a given level of insight and resources (Galtung, 1969). Accordingly, if insight and resources are dominated by a group or class or used for other objectives, there emerges an incompatibility between the potential and the actual and violence is present in the system (Galtung, 1969).\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} Mack (1985) states the suffering generated by structural violence does not result from any absolute lack of resources but rather from an inequitable distribution of resources, which is socially and politically determined.
Concretely, unjust accesses to resources, to political power or decision-making, to education, to health care, legal standing and so on are good examples. Put another way, the condition of structural violence can be referred to as social injustice.

The distinction between direct violence and structural violence accompanied the creation of two concepts of peace: negative peace and positive peace. Galtung insists that if peace means absence of violence, then action should be taken against structural as well as personal violence (1969). The absence of direct violence does not bring about a positively defined condition, which is negative peace, whereas the absence of structural violence is social justice, which is a positively defined condition, that is, egalitarian distribution of power and resources – positive peace (Galtung, 1969).\(^\text{16}\)

For Galtung, peace is not only an issue of control and reduction of apparent violence but also one of tackling the latent structures that cause social injustices.

Galtung notes that structural violence comes from the social structure itself – between human beings, between sets of human beings, between sets of societies in the world (1996). Put another way, structural violence is seen in every kind of human relationship. For this reason, as Ramsbotham et al (2005) observe, Galtung thought

\[^{16}\text{Mack (1985) notes that positive peace is a synonym for a particular conception of ‘the good society’ which is fair-minded and egalitarian and in which human beings can achieve their own true potential.}\]
that peace research should not be confined to the study of preventing war. Rather, peace research should be expanded to research into the conditions for peaceful and just relationships between the dominant and the exploited, rulers and ruled, men and women, western and non-western cultures, humankind and nature (Ramsbotham et al, 2005). The central theme here is exploration for realizing positive peace in the form of human empathy, solidarity and community, the goal being the eradication of structural violence by revealing and transforming structures of imperialism and oppression (Ramsbotham et al, 2005).

1-1-3 Kenneth Boulding’s work

While Johan Galtung is the main actor in founding peace research in Europe, Kenneth Boulding is the central harbinger of peace research in North America. One of the most important contributions to peace research made by Boulding, in particular, the conflict resolution field, is the publication of *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. In 1957, with a small group of academics, which included Anatol Rapoport (mathematician-biologist), Hebert Kelman (social-psychologist) and Robert Rapoport

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17 Kenneth Boulding was born in Liverpool in England in 1910 and graduated from Oxford University. He was a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). In 1937, he moved to America and was granted United States citizenship in 1948. In 1941, he married Elise Bjorn-Hansen. According to Kerman (1974), one of Boulding’s most faithful convictions was that war is one of the most urgent problems humankind must solve and the most awful aberration of the human spirit, which affected his work throughout his life.
(sociologist), he issued the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.  

According to Boulding, there were two conditions that promoted the publication of the journal. Firstly, there was the pressing problem facing humankind – the prevention of war on a global scale (1957). Secondly, if the study of international relations was to evolve intellectually, it had to be an interdisciplinary enterprise that would draw its discourse from all the social sciences and even further (1957). Conflict was a phenomenon that had been examined in various fields: by sociologists, by psychologists, by psychiatrists, by economists and by political scientists. It was imperative to integrate those mutually isolated studies that could create a general theory of conflict, which was based on the conviction that the behavior and interactions of nations were not an isolated and self-contained area of empirical material but part of a wider field of behavior and interaction (1957).

One of the Boulding’s most salient personal works for peace was his critical attitude toward the nation state system and international relations. He thought that the change in the technology of international war to a great extent eroded the legitimacy or the primacy of the nation state (1978). In other words, the prevention of war is not only a matter of individual nation states, but the fundamental issue for human beings. The

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18 This is the first time the term *conflict resolution* was used.
key to his hope was the proposition that “war as a specific human institution is the result not of conflicts, nor of human weakness, but of the political organization of the world into a number of separate, sovereign and irresponsible countries” (Kerman, 1974: 79). For Boulding, the prevention of war was based on two contentions: the notion that the nation state is obsolete; and the reliance on research, statistics and information as a way out of conventional dependence on military force (Kerman, 1974). If war was the result of the intrinsic nature of the sovereign state system, the reform of international organization and the development of a research and information capability would be the key to preventing war (Ramsbotham et al, 2005).

Through discussions with Quincy Wright, Boulding came up with the idea of “social data stations.” These would play a role like a global weather network, which collects and processes data on population, rates of economic growth, surpluses and shortages, attitudes, tension levels, shifts in power relationships of classes or groups within a country, voting trends, images nations have mutually – all kinds of social indicators that could be put together to detect social temperature and pressure (Kerman, 1974). Thus, for Boulding, as Ramsbotham et al note, conflict resolution meant the development of a worldwide knowledge base (2005).
1-1-4 The emergence of basic human needs and its application to conflict resolution

Basic Human Needs Theory

Besides Kenneth Boulding and Johan Galtung, John Burton\(^{19}\) should be recognized as one of the most significant figures in conflict resolution because without his work, the development of the field of conflict resolution would have been impossible.\(^{20}\)

Although John Burton did fundamental work on basic human needs theory and its application to understanding of protracted conflict, he did not create the theory. Rather, it was developed by the works of the American psychologist Abraham Maslow and the sociologist Paul Sites.

Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs: “physiological needs”; “safety needs”; 

\(^{19}\) Burton was born in Australia in 1915. He got a Masters degree at the London School of Economics in 1938 and his Ph.D in 1942. Then he joined the Australian civil service, participated in the foundation conference of the United Nations in San Francisco and served in the Australian Department of External Affairs and as High Commissioner in Ceylon (Ramsbotham et al, 2005). He was designated a post at University College London in 1963, which coincided with the formation of the Conflict Research Society in London (Ramsbotham et al, 2005).

\(^{20}\) This does not mean that Kenneth Boulding and Johan Galtung are not important figures in the field of conflict resolution. As argued, Boulding’s idea of the social data station was one type of conflict resolution. However, as will be discussed later, Burton proposed a more concrete approach to resolve conflict, which is represented by the adoption of basic human needs theory and controlled communication or problem-solving. This stance can be supported by Vayrynen’s contention (1998). She says Burton's idea of the relationship between basic human needs and the development of protracted conflict has brought in a set of new agendas and touched off a lively theoretical argument among conflict analysis and peace research. Further, she states even for those who do disagree on Burton’s idea of universal applicability of basic human needs, his theories have provided a beneficial starting-point for the advancement of new approaches to conflict. Hence, this thesis will take the following stance: while Boulding and Galtung are founding figures of peace research in general, Burton is the pioneering person in conflict resolution which is one of the specific fields in peace research.
“belongingness and love needs”; “esteem needs”; and “need for self-actualization” (1970: 36-46). Further, according to Sites, there are eight essential needs: “a need for response; a need for security; a need for recognition; a need for stimulation; a need for distributive justice; a need for meaning; a need to be seen as rational; and a need to control” (1973: 43). Maslow claimed that a conflict or frustration is not always pathogenic. Rather, it becomes so only when it threatens or prevents the gratification of basic needs. (1970). Sites also insists individuals are often willing to behave outside socially accepted rules in order to seek the satisfaction of basic needs (1973). The deviation of individual’s behavior based on individual basic human needs being frustrated by society provided Burton with a method of conflict analysis and resolution.

**Basic needs and critique of traditional approach to conflict**

In Burton’s view, the needs which are most essential to understand destructive conflict are those for identity, recognition, security and development (1986). Burton insists these basic needs are universal motivations and they will be pursued by all means available because from an ontological point of view, individuals or groups of individuals are conditioned by biology or by an intrinsic drive to pursue those needs.

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21 Maslow maintained once lower needs (physiological needs as a starting point) are satisfied, new and higher needs emerge, which would be repeated. Hence, he says, the basic human needs can be organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency.

22 Regarding the detailed contents of each need, see Sites (1973: 37-43).
If these needs are frustrated, they will behave outside the norms of society (1990). Further, Burton made a distinction between needs that are non-negotiable since they are primordial drives for survival and developments; and interests that are negotiable (1990). This distinction entailed his critical attitude towards the traditional approach to conflict.

The adoption of human needs theory revealed that protracted conflict was mainly over non-negotiable needs (Burton, 1986). This revelation led to the need to make a distinction between resolution which deals with the problems that are the sources of conflict; and the suppression or settlement of conflict by coercive means or bargaining and negotiation in which relative power decides the outcome (Burton, 1990). Burton insisted that in the traditional settlement approach, conflict can be prolonged unnecessarily when inalienable values – basic needs – are translated into interests merely to fit into the traditional processes of bargaining and negotiations (1986). The traditional approach focused on surface interests which are visible, and ignored basic needs that are the root causes of conflict. For Burton, the source of protracted conflict

23 Burton also mentions values. According to Burton (1990), values are ideas, habits, customs and beliefs which are a peculiar to particular social communities. Therefore, they are acquired and differ from needs since they are universal, inherent and genetic. However, at the same time, he states that in conditions of oppression, discriminations, unprivileged and isolation, the defense of values becomes critical to the needs of personal security and identity. Hence, in this sense, Burton says that values impinge on needs and can be confused.

Regarding interests, Burton (1990) states that they are the occupational, social, political and economic aspiration of the individual and of identity groups of individuals within a social system, are competitive and have a win-lose component.
lies in the expression of basic human needs. In other words, in order to resolve conflicts, how the basic needs of the parties to conflict can be satisfied should be analyzed.

**Controlled communication (Problem-solving) as conflict resolution**

According to Burton, conflict resolution means “terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem” (1991: 72). Problem-solving conflict resolution signifies a concern with the causes that create conflict: unless fundamental causes of conflict are tackled, there cannot be resolution of a conflict, let alone prevention of conflict in the future (Burton, 1990). Conflict resolution by problem-solving implies that in order to uncover the nature of conflict and the sources of conflict, the approach has to be analytical (Burton, 1990). The practice of problem-solving conflict resolution is established upon the theory of conflict as a universal response to frustrated human needs (Burton, 1991).

The practice of problem-solving provides the following opportunities for the parties: “to analyze relationships to generate an accurate definition of the problem in terms of motivations and human needs; to cost their goals and policies once they are fully informed of all aspects of the conflict, including the motivations and values of the adversary; and to discover the possible options that may be available once there has
been a full analysis of the conflict in its elements” (Burton, 1991: 86).

Since parties in a conflict are unlikely to have adequate knowledge of the sources of their conflict relationships and of the options available to resolve them, a problem-solving approach to conflict resolution requires a most knowledgeable and skilled party (Burton, 1990). However, in Burton’s problem-solving conflict resolution, the role of the third parties is different from that of traditional arbitrators, mediators or negotiators who have the power to determine the results. According to Burton, conflict resolution pursued through problem-solving should be the examination by protagonists of the patterns of their own overt behaviors in an intimate and analytical interaction in which there can be detailed checking (1990). Therefore, the role of the third parties is supposed to be less active: it is not to persuade, not to verify or to judge the accuracy of statements made by the parties in conflict, or judge the reasonableness of argument (Burton, 1969).

Nonetheless, at the same time, the third parties play an active and influential role in the sense that they explain conflict, its origins, and its escalation by referring to other conflicts but within the context of a continuing discussion between the protagonists (Burton, 1969). The task of the third parties is to apply general theories about conflict and human behavior to the particular situation under consideration in order to help the
parties in conflict to analyze it (Burton, 1990). By obtaining new knowledge about conflict in general, the parties will be supported by academic tools of analysis to critically analyze their conflict and to understand its origin and its manifestation (Burton, 1969), that is, realizing the existence of basic human needs on both sides, which would make more creative resolution of conflict feasible.

1-2 Construction of Conflict Resolution

Following the era of the 1950s and 1960s, during which the foundation of peace research and conflict resolution had been established, the 1970s and 1980s saw the further elaboration of conflict resolution. In particular, Edward Azar’s work, represented by the concept of ‘protracted social conflict’ and the contribution of social psychology to conflict resolution are significant.

1-2-1 Protracted Social Conflict and Conflict Resolution

The background of the creation of the concept of protracted social conflict

Edward Azar\textsuperscript{24} held there are two competing images of politics. One is ‘real politics’ that engages in conflict over scarce goods and values (1990). Another is the view that

\textsuperscript{24} Azar was born in Lebanon in 1938 and moved to the United States where he studied international relations. He worked with John Burton in the 1980s and set up the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland. He was the director of the Center. It has been said his work was influenced by his concern with his native Lebanon.
politics is about collective security, community building and prosperity, with the goal of politics being the promotion of cooperation, development of conflict management, the pursuit of socio-economic development and the facilitation of peaceful interactions at all levels (1990).

Although Azar argued that since World War Two, most of the conflicts in the Third World had been ethnic or identity-related conflicts (1986)\(^{25}\), as Ramsbotham (2005) states, during the Cold War era, international relations and strategic studies had been mainly preoccupied with Clausewitzean war.\(^{26}\) In other words, the main concern during that era was with the former dimension. However, for Azar, the latter perspective of politics was much more important, which resulted in his creation of the idea of ‘Protracted Social Conflict.’\(^{27}\)

**Protracted Social Conflict**

According to Azar, protracted social conflict is “the prolonged and often violent

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\(^{25}\) Azar insisted that as of 1986, around 60 cases of conflict in the Third World had been counted as ethnic conflicts.

\(^{26}\) Ronald Fisher (1997) also states that Azar’s analyses of international conflict demonstrated that since World War Two, almost all of conflicts had occurred in the Third World and many of them were ethnic conflicts. Fisher also argues that during the Cold War era, interventions by the superpower and their allies made the situations of those conflicts worse.

\(^{27}\) Fisher (1997) argues that for Azar the shift in international relations was imperative – from a superpower discourse that had put a huge emphasis on strategic interaction, deterrence, crisis management and coercive containment to an acknowledgment that two-thirds of states in the world are small, poorly defined, in poverty and vulnerable to both ethnic fissures and negative international influences.
struggle by communal groups for such needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions, and economic participation” (1991: 93). For Azar, as Ramsbotham argues, the traditional preoccupation with relations between states had obscured a precise understanding of these dynamics (2005).28

The hypothesis of protracted social conflict is that there is the denial of the elements essential for the development of all people and societies and that the pursuit of them is an imperative need for peoples (Azar, 1986).29 Thus, it can be clearly seen that Azar’s protracted social conflict owes much to Burton’s work, that is, adoption of the concept of basic human needs to conflict resolution. However, the distinct contribution of Azar was his analysis of the structural roots of the denial of basic human needs, which cause and prolong social conflict.

Azar’s protracted social conflict theory takes four variables as its preconditions: communal content; human needs; governance and the role of the state; and international linkages.

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28 Azar (1990) proposed three characteristics of many conflicts that occurred in developing countries. They are: a blurred demarcation between internal and external sources and actors; multiple causal elements and dynamics that are reflected in changing goals, actors and targets; and no clear starting and terminating points of conflict.

29 According to Azar 1986), those needs are security, identity, social recognition of identity and effective participation in the process that decide the conditions of security and identity and other such development requirements.
First, the critical factor concerning a protracted social conflict is the communal content of a society. In protracted social conflict, a key actor is the communal group such as religious, racial, cultural and so on (Azar, 1991).\textsuperscript{30} Since the communal group tends to be more responsive to the basic needs of its members than does the national government in underdeveloped countries, societies will often be divided along communal lines (Azar, 1991).

Second, as argued, the deprivation of basic human needs is considered as the root cause of protracted social conflict. However, it is also of great importance to understand how basic human needs are sought: in protracted social conflict, the basic unit is the communal group (identity group or immediate identity group). Accordingly, people will seek their basic needs in terms of communal perspective: individuals take any effort available to achieve their developmental needs through the formation of identity groups (Azar, 1990). Deprivation of physical needs and denial of access are rooted in the refusal to recognize the communal identity of another group (Azar, 1990).

\textsuperscript{30} Azar and Moon (1986) insist protracted social conflict differs from the conventional idea of inter-state or social conflict since it takes as its principal elements each individual member of society, as well as groups internal and external to the country to which each individual belongs. Further, they maintain that both individuals and groups are interconnected in terms of racial, ethnic and religious identities.
Third, since the state is provided with authority to govern and to use force when necessary to regulate society, to protect citizens and provide collective goods, the extent of satisfaction or deprivation of basic needs is affected by the intervening or mediating role of states (Azar, 1990). Political authority in a country with protracted social conflict, Azar notes, tends to be controlled by one group or a coalition of a few groups and they use the state as a tool to maximize their interest without gratifying the needs of others (Azar, 1990).

Fourth, formation of domestic social and political institutions and their effect on the role of the state is heavily influenced by the patterns of linkage with the international system, in particular, political and economic dependency. Economic dependency within the international economic system not only limits the autonomy of the state, but also distorts the pattern of economic development, which hampers the gratification of security needs (Azar, 1990). In political and military client relationships with strong states, the patron state provides protection for the client state in return for loyalty, which sacrifices autonomy and independence of the recipient state (Azar, 1990). This causes the client state to seek domestic and foreign policies that do not reflect the needs of its own public (Azar, 1990).

In addition to the four preconditions, Azar proposed process dynamics on which the
The four preconditions above will or will not activate overt conflict. They are: communal actions and strategies; state actions and strategies; and built-in mechanisms of conflict.

First, a trivial event may touch off protracted social conflict, it becomes a turning point at which individual victimization is collectively registered (Azar, 1990). Collective recognition of individual grievances can lead to collective protest, which is in many cases met by repression or suppression (Azar, 1990). Second, if the state understands communal grievances and takes steps to ameliorate the gratification of communal needs at the early stage, a protracted social conflict can be prevented or kept latent. Nonetheless, it is not the case in many instances mainly because the norm of winner-take-all still prevails in multi-communal societies (Azar, 1990). Therefore, coercive repression is often employed. Third, conflicts that are concerned with communal identity and fear of marginalization or loss of communal integrity are inclined to involve a lasting hostile set of perceptions and interactions between and among communal groups and the state (Azar, 1990). In this situation, the interaction will be limited or proscribed, which perpetuates and even worsens communal hatred and solidifies protracted social conflict. Further, the mutual distrust and antagonism gain velocity with the deepening of the deprivation of basic needs (Azar, 1990).
Conflict resolution from Azar’s viewpoint

The structural roots of the antagonistic interactions that characterize protracted social conflict can be understood only after examining the interdependent nexus of underdevelopment, structural deprivation and communal or identity cleavages (Azar and Moon, 1986), which made Azar stress the facilitation of problem-solving approaches and the promotion of balanced socio-economic and political development as keys to conflict resolution (1990).

As explained, since the source of protracted social conflict lies in the struggle over human needs for security, identity and social justice, problem-solving can be proposed as an initial step.31 Azar claimed what is needed is a framework in which the parties can analyze and explore their perception of the origin and nature of protracted social conflict and realize that they are seeking similar needs such as recognition and security through adversarial tactics (1991). The process, according to Azar, involves bringing together representatives of the parties in conflict to engage in honest, face-to-face, analytical discussions about their grievances, interests, perceptions of problems and possible solutions (1990).32

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31 Azar (1990) called problem-solving “Track Two Diplomacy” that aims to search for and promote the peaceful relation between warring parties without relying on official efforts.

32 Azar and Moon (1986) insist that once the basic needs of the various communities can be discovered and once each group recognizes the validity of the fears of the others, a constructive process of accommodation can begin and the groundwork for future
However, for Azar, problem-solving is not the only approach to conflict resolution. Rather, it should be regarded as one important tool among several to resolve conflict. As Azar himself asserts, effective resolution of protracted social conflict must go beyond the face-to-face forum stage and pursue structural development (1991).33 Successful management of conflict needs political and economic development that can promise to rectify communal grievances and gratify communal identity needs (Azar and Moon, 1986). Nevertheless, Azar insisted that the traditional concept of development does not match the concept of development in dealing with protracted social conflict (1991).34 For Azar, “the goals and objectives of national economic development need to be redefined from the perspective of the basic needs of contending communal groups, especially those which have been previously marginalized” (1991: 102). Further, Azar argues that the state should not be taken as the sole actor that determines the nature and direction of development. Rather, he claimed that inputs from the grass-roots level involving various communal actors should be included into an overall decision-making process, which entails the decentralization of political power and decision-making process (1991).

33 Ramsbotham (2005) in his examination of Azar’s work maintains that for Azar, principled negotiation, facilitative mediation or problem-solving approaches are not the only ways to resolving conflict.

34 Azar (1991) identifies traditional development with economic growth measured in such terms of gross national product, industrialization and exports of manufactured goods.
Azar’s work and contemporary conflict resolution

Since structural inequality that causes the uneven gratification of basic needs among different communal groups is the most pressing issue in protracted social conflict, structural reform through sound development is essential, the aim of which is to breakthrough marginalization and discrimination (Azar and Moon, 1986). In short, it is essential to promote reform in sociopolitical structures and a redistribution of power. In structural transformation, the decentralization of political systems is the prerequisite. Since the central government that does not reflect the communal plurality in its policy is the main problem in protracted social conflict, it is crucial to promote decentralized political structures that empower the local authorities to run their educational system and address social concerns endemic to their areas (Azar, 1986). Further, Azar insists that the international community should make sure each individual and community is empowered to resolve protracted social conflict. For Azar, conflict resolution needs to understand the importance of open, participatory and decentralized political structures as opposed to centralized, dominant and exclusive structures (1986).

Thus, conflict resolution from the viewpoint of protracted social conflict has revealed

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35 Azar and Moon (1986) claimed that the aim of development diplomacy must be inducing economic participation in the same way political reform emphasizes political participation. Besides that, they insisted that individuals and communities need to believe that their participation is assured and makes a difference.
that Azar’s approach is comprehensive and has much bearing on new conflict resolution approaches that have gained currency since the end of the Cold War. Communal pluralism, structural transformation, and empowerment of local structures have been important agendas for conflict resolution since the end of the Cold War. But, there is a clear line of development rather than discontinuity between conflict resolution in the Cold War era and that in the post Cold War era.

1-2-2 Social Psychology and Conflict Resolution

What is social psychology? Why is social psychology needed in conflict resolution?

It is very difficult to offer an exact definition of social psychology (Kremer et al, 2003). However, it can be described as the scientific study of social behavior and thought (Pennington, 1986). According to Hogg and Vaughan, social psychology as a discipline of general psychology is concerned with analyzing human behavior in terms of processes that occur in the human mind and concerned with face-to-face interaction between or among members of groups, while general psychology focuses on people’s reactions to stimuli that are not necessarily social (1995). Thus, social

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36 Pennington (1986) notes it is arrogant to define precisely social psychology since it could impose restrictions on what ought and ought not to be appropriate areas of inquiry.

37 Hogg and Vaughan (1995) note social psychologists are interested in not only behavior, but also in feeling, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, intensions and goals.

38 Further, Hogg and Vaughan (1995) note that in dealing with groups, social and
psychology examines how different individual or groups influence each other in terms of their changes of thought, feelings and behavior.

Social psychology focuses on the study of intergroup relations in terms of how people in different groups are affected by other people who are physically present or who are imagined to be present. Social conflict presupposes the presence of at least two different groups of people: social interaction is the prerequisite. The characteristic of social interaction is that the participants take into account not only mutual behavior, but also each other’s purposes, perceptions and intentions and the structural constraints within which they are constructed (Kelman and Cohen, 1979). This general feature of social interaction demonstrates that the basic assumptions of social psychology can be applied to understanding conflict and its resolution.

**Problem-solving as a step toward resolving inter-group conflict**

Since interaction process is pivotal for social psychology, face-to-face, interactive methods of de-escalating and resolving inter-group conflict become important (Fisher, 1990a). An approach to conflict resolution from social psychological perspectives cultural norms and intergroup behavior, social psychology has much bearing on sociology that analyzes how groups, organizations, social categories and societies are organized, how they function and how they change, and social anthropology that does the same with sociology but puts more focus on non – industrial, tribal societies that exist or have existed mainly in developing countries.
focuses on interaction and on an analytic view of conflicts, encouraging parties in conflict to pay attention to the other, to try to grasp other’s perspective and to examine subjects’ own impact on the other – to analyze how both parties perceive themselves as well as their antagonists (Kelman and Cohen, 1979). A basic assumption of interactive approaches is that creative possibilities for conflict resolution can emerge when the parties treat their conflict as a shared dilemma that requires some common effort for its resolution (Kelman and Cohen, 1979), and this is the area in which the problem-solving approach is focused.

According to Kelman, interactive problem-solving is “an unofficial, academically based, third-party approach to the analysis and resolution of international and ethnic conflicts, anchored in social-psychological principles” (1996: 501). Interactive problem-solving approach is a small-group discussion between/among unofficial representatives of an identity group in destructive conflict, which is principally supported and facilitated by an impartial academically based third party (Kelman, 1996). The main objective of a problem-solving workshop\(^\text{39}\) is to produce changes in the participants themselves: changes in the form of more differentiated images of the

\(^{39}\) According to Kelman and Cohen (1979), the basic idea of workshop is to bring together representatives of conflicting parties in a relatively isolated situation – preferably an academic context – in which they can engage in face-to-face communication in the presence and under the guidance of social scientists knowledge about group process and conflict theory.
other side, greater insight into the dynamics of the conflict and new ideas for resolving
the conflict and for overcoming the barriers to a negotiated solution (Kelman, 1996).

The changes at the level of individual participants are not ends in themselves, but
driving forces for promoting changes at the policy level (Kelman, 1996).40 Another
goal of workshops is to maximize the possibility that the new information, insights
and proposals elaborated in the workshops are fed back into the political debate and
the decision-making process within each community (Kelman, 1996).41

In order to achieve those two purposes, the selection of potentially influential
participants from the parties in conflict is an important matter. According to Kelman
and Cohen, participants should be “individuals who are generally influential within
their respective societies, who speak for some significant segment of opinion, and who
have potential access to political leaders” (1976: 84). Since those are the persons who

40 Tajfel and Turners (1979) note that the intergroup interaction consists of
interactions between two or more individuals that are determined by their respective
memberships in various social groups or categories and not at all affected by the
inter-individual personal relationships between the people involved. Further, they
hold that the more intense is an intergroup conflict, the more likely it is that the
individuals who are members of the opposing groups will behave mutually as a
function of their respective group memberships, rather than as individuals with their
own specific characteristics. In short, individuals will act not as individuals, based on
their own individual characteristics or interpersonal relationships, but as the
members of their groups standing in defined relationships to members of other groups.
And it can be seen that this is the basic assumption for the problem-solving workshop
approach form social psychological perspective. The individual representatives in
workshop are not independent individuals from their own parties, but are individuals
who are representing their respective parties’ idea, feeling, thoughts. In other words,
it is assumed that change at the individual level can reflect the change at the group
level. The micro-level change can lead to the macro-level change, that is, group in
general. That is why the individual change is expected to have influence on the change
at the policy level.

41 This idea also seems to derive from the above basic assumption.
can make a difference in the policy process, they are the ideal candidates for an approach that is directed at changing individual perceptions, attitudes and formulations of problems and solutions (Kelman and Cohen, 1976).

The role of the third party is essential to the success of problem-solving workshops and it has to be strictly facilitative (Kelman, 1996). Although the third party can promote the learning process, it should not give or impose an answer. One of the fundamental principles of the approach of problem-solving is that the most constructive ideas for conflict resolution are those that have emerged from the interaction between the parties in conflict themselves (Kelman, 1991b). The main task of creating novel ideas and infusing them into the political process in each party should be carried out by the participants themselves. Thus, the role of the third party in problem-solving workshops is similar to Burton’s approach in that it is clearly different from traditional mediation and arbitration.

However, Kelman and Cohen caution that conflicts are not simply the products of

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42 Cairns and Hewstone (2001) maintain while in conflict situation, conflicting groups are unlikely to have contact, unless attempts are made to bring about contact, the situation will be exacerbated. They hold the absence of contact is likely to reduce the likelihood of future contact, strengthen the assumption that the conflicting groups have different or irreconcilable beliefs, keep intergroup anxiety and reinforce the boundary between or among them. In that situation, without intervention of third party there is almost no chance for contact, which can be the rationale for third party to get involved in problem-solving workshop.
misunderstanding and misperception that can be overcome in face-to-face communication: rather, they maintain, most conflicts involve actual clashes of interests, ideologies centering on incompatible goals and structural commitments to the perpetuation of the conflict (1976). Consequently, the problem-solving approach should not be seen as a substitute for official diplomatic or political negotiations; rather the problem-solving method should be regarded as a supplement to or preparation for negotiations (Kelman and Cohen, 1979).

**A contingency and complementarity model of third party intervention**

The introduction of a social psychological approach into conflict resolution revealed the phenomenological aspect of conflict, which is expressed in the perceptions, emotions, interactions and social structures of the parties in conflict (Fisher, 1997). A social psychological point of view puts an emphasis on the subjective side of escalation, de-escalation and resolution of conflict. However, at the same time, social psychologists engaged in conflict resolution acknowledge that conflict should be understood as a dynamic process of the mixture of objective and subjective elements. As a corollary of this understanding, it is claimed that both objective and subjective dimensions should be addressed to resolve conflict.

Fisher and Keashly proposed that conceptualizing conflict as a mixture of objective
and subjective factors that change over time could lead to the assumption that different
types of third party interventions might be most suitable and effective at different
stages of a conflict (1991). Different interventions at different phases can be chosen:
while consultation and conciliation will take a subjective approach in some cases,
mediation and arbitration will be employed for objective elements (Fisher, 1997).43

The acceptance of the objective-subjective mixture in conflict can be complemented
by the corollary that subjective elements increase and take on added importance as a
conflict escalates (Fisher and Keashly, 1991). Since third party interventions vary in
the emphasis given to objective or subjective dimensions, the potential of matching
the intervention to the level of escalation must be focused and effective (Fisher and
Keashly, 1991). The potential of a contingency approach is based on a conviction that
all approaches have their limitations and in order to overcome or complement those
shortcomings, we need to establish a cooperative and interdependent relationship
between/among them.

The main significance of psychological elements is that they play a critical role in

43 For example, Fisher and Keashly (1991) proposed that when objective elements
such as resource scarcity or the structure of the situation are predominant in conflict,
third party intervention that promotes compromise would be relevant. On the other
hand, if subjective factors such as misperception, miscommunication and the different
valuing of real interests are predominant, third party should take steps that promote
collaborative outcome between the parties in conflict would be suitable.
escalation and perpetuation of conflict by creating barriers to both the occurrence and
the perception of change that are necessary to promote mutual dialogue
between/among conflictual groups (Kelman, 1990b). Kelman notes that while
overcoming psychological barriers does not in itself resolve conflict, if such barriers
can be overcome, new possibilities may be created for negotiations on the basis of
objective conditions and current interests (1990b).

1-3 Further Development of Conflict Resolution

The distinctive feature of conflict resolution in the 1990s onwards has been the
self-reflective critique of conflict resolution approaches in previous eras. By this
period, conflict resolution had achieved sufficient standing and substance to become
self-critical, in general terms as well as between the various perspectives that
comprise it. Critiques of conflict resolution from a cultural perspective, the
exploration of peace-building at the grass-roots level, the argument over conflict
transformation, and the exploration of the restoration of broken human relationships
have been the important aspects of conflict resolution in the contemporary era.

1-3-1 Culture and Conflict Resolution

From the start of the post-Cold War era, the culture question has been one of the
imperative agendas in the conflict resolution field. More concretely, there has emerged
the question of whether conflict resolution is a globally applicable enterprise as its founders assumed, or whether is it based upon some hidden cultural values that are not universally shared (Miall et al, 1999).

Paul Salem’s critical examination of conflict resolution from non-Western perspectives

One of the most prominent critiques of conflict resolution from non-western viewpoints is the work of Paul Salem. In his work, Salem tried to present a comprehensive critique of some hidden assumptions in the Western approach to conflict resolution.

Salem claims that the Western community of theorists and practitioners of conflict resolution operate “within a macro-political context that they may overlook” (1993: 361). He asserts that the context overlooked by them colors their attitudes and values, which has much bearing on the West’s dominant status in the world (1993). Further, he argues that the ideology of peace “reinforces a status quo that is favorable to the dominant power” (1993: 362). In other words, it could be inferred that conflict resolution, which has been based on western values, while making effort to resolve conflict, tries to forestall challenges to the existing framework in which the world system – in an economic and political sense – is controlled by the West.
The centrality of the idea that peace is good and war is bad is, to some extent, peculiar to the Christian worldview, which, Salem insists, might not be necessarily suitable to other cultural contexts in which war in itself is not necessarily shameful (1993). Salem also pays attention to the philosophy of utilitarianism as the foundational assumption of conflict resolution. He also notes that Western conflict resolution is established upon the idea that pain is bad and pleasure or comfort is good. It is clearly admitted that the suffering, physical or otherwise, associated with conflict is one of the main outcomes that conflict resolution practitioners try to eradicate, which derives from the task of the 19th century utilitarian philosophers like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill (1993). However, according to Salem, how suffering is defined or how it is dealt with differs from culture to culture (1993).

This is a brief summary of the critique of conflict resolution by Paul Salem, but the significance of his work is that he tried to show that serious diversity exists at the deepest level of different cultural and social formations (1993). What should be appreciated is that “value judgments only make sense from within one cultural framework or another” (Salem, 1993: 368). His critique gives us a warning that conflict resolution has been based on some hidden western values and often this is not explicitly acknowledged, which allows Western conflict resolution theories and

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44 For example, Salem (1993) notes the Prophet himself and all the Rightly Guided Caliphs were proud warriors.
techniques to be applied to the non-Western world without cultural consideration. His critique tells us that we should take cultural adaptation into serious account.

**Critique of John Burton’s basic human needs and its application to conflict resolution**

It can be seen that the critical work of Paul Salem is looking into the overall framework of conflict resolution, the aim of which, by critically examining the fundamental assumption of conflict resolution, is to show that conflict resolution has been mainly based on Western culture or values and applied to the non-Western world. Therefore, his critique is not so much the proposal of concrete theories or techniques for conflict resolution from cultural perspectives – especially from his own background of the Arab world – as a warning that conflict resolution overall dominated by the Western cultural values has been carried out as if it were universally applicable. From these points of view, he can be considered as the key person who has played an essential role in opening the door for discussions of the importance of cultural perspectives in conflict resolution.

While Salem’s work is the critical examination of conflict resolution from non-Western perspectives, there has been cultural examination of conflict resolution between Western conflict resolution theorists and practitioners. In particular, critical
analysis of John Burton’s basic human needs theory, which Burton believed, is universally applicable, is distinctive.

Burton’s theory of conflict is based on a set of basic human needs that are held to be universal (1990), and accordingly it is believed that conflict emerges from the frustration of those basic needs. Burton assumes that those who participate in conflict are struggling in their institutional circumstances at all social dimensions to fulfill primordial and universal needs (1991). Further, he insists since basic human needs are universally applicable to each individual, no society can be harmonious or survive unless it gratifies basic human needs (1979).45 In short, from Burton’s perspective, people of all races possess some common values and similar objectives: achieving basic human needs, the frustration of which causes conflict.

From that point of view, it has been claimed that the theory of conflict resolution should be treated as a generic (or genetic) that constitutes or influences theories in every behavioral discipline and therefore should be taught and practiced as it is assumed that it is applicable to all social system levels (Burton and Sandole, 1986).

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45 Burton notes (1979) that individuals will use the norms common within society and push against them to ensure that they work in gratifying human needs, but if the norms inhibit and frustrate the achievement of basic needs, he/she will employ methods outside the norms or codes that are expected to be observed by all. In doing that, he/she will be regarded as deviant, but the deviance from societal norms, Burton insists, is the reflection of the frustration of needs satisfaction, which should be resolved.
Consequently, Burtonian problem-solving at the social level – be it the small group, the nation-state or the interactions between states – is possible only when the basic human needs of the individual are taken as the basis for analysis of the problem (Burton, 1979). For Burton, to make the parties in conflict aware of basic human needs common to all human beings as the root cause of conflict is fundamental. Burtonian problem-solving conflict resolution is not uniquely part of any regional cultures (Burton, 1990). In fact, culture is not an important element in the Burtonian analytical problem-solving conflict resolution process, the aim of which is to get to the realization of universal basic human needs.

The concern with the role of culture in conflict arises from “a conception of social life in which culture is seen to be a fundamental feature of human consciousness, the sine qua non of being human” (Avruch and Black, 1993: 132). Culture is the assumption and presupposition that individuals and groups hold about the world: shared common sense that is usually local (Avruch and Black, 1991). In short, “culture as consciousness is organized around the understanding that human beings use locally received or constructed common sense to perceive, interpret, evaluate and act on and in both external and internal reality” (Avruch and Black, 1991: 31).

Cultural patterns shape how a person understands the world. Put another way,
typifications are intersubjective – they are created by cultural patterns that prevail in social groups (Vayrynen, 1998). Accordingly, questions such as “What is conflict?”, “What is the cause of conflict?”, “How are basic human needs defined or understood?” and so on will be answered in different ways according to each culture. If shared typifications break down, a common reality, the underlying framework of shared reality collapses (Vayrynen, 1998). The implication of this is that “conflicts are characterized by a breakdown of shared reality” (Vayrynen, 2001: 117). What is at stake is not the denial of basic human needs common to all. Rather, at the center is a breakdown of shared interpretation of a reality or an underlying clash of typifications (Vayrynen, 1998).

From cultural perspectives, the basic idea of conflict resolution will be that relevance system and typifications need to be altered, and a new definition of a reality found, which makes cooperation between/among the parties in conflict possible (Vayrynen, 2001). Therefore, the role of conflict resolution problem-solving workshops, from the cultural perspective, should be to create a framework for mutual cultural adaptation. Such problem-solving workshops deal fundamentally with the interpretative schemes of the participants by giving them a chance to negotiate a shared reality (Vayrynen, 2001). Consequently, if problem-solving workshops succeed, it is not because the workshops achieve the realization of universal basic human needs, but because they
enable the parties in conflict to appreciate each other’s standpoint, gaining insight into each other’s concerns, priorities and constraints (Avruch, 1998), which could open the door for exploring a shared understanding of conflict.

1-3-2 Peace-building from below

What is peace-building from below? Critique of traditional conflict resolution approach

According to Ramsbotham et al, much of the growth of the idea of peace-building from below came during the course of experience gained in supporting local groups trying to preserve or nurture cultures of peace in areas of armed conflict in the 1990s (2005). Lederach notes one of the characteristics that can be commonly seen in the majority of the armed conflicts since 1990s has been that people seek their own sense of security in smaller or narrower identity groups such as ethnic, racial, religious, cultural and so on (1997). Further, Lederach argues while the identity of people in those armed conflicts is not exclusively tied to citizenship in the state, the paradigm that informs the approaches for comprehending and dealing with those conflicts has remained that of international or interstate diplomacy (1997).

Against this background, it has come to be recognized that simple one-dimensional intervention, whether by traditional mediation for formal peace agreements or
peacekeeping operations placed to observe ceasefires or monitor elections cannot secure a comprehensive and long-term resolution (Woodhouse, 1999a). In the traditional approach to conflict resolution that mainly relied on small group problem-solving workshops, it has been uncommon for the consequences of a workshop to be transferred in any meaningful way to the conflict (Rupesinghe, 1995).\textsuperscript{46} In other words, even though the main victims of conflict are ordinary people or citizens, they are often marginalized in conflict resolution.\textsuperscript{47} A new means to depict the complex dynamics and processes of conflict resolution has been developed, which includes the idea that effective and sustainable peacemaking processes should be based not merely on engineering peace agreements made by elites, but more importantly on the empowerment of communities devastated by war or conflict to build peace from the bottom (Woodhouse, 1999a). As the significance of post-conflict peacebuilding has been recognized as a critical part of conflict resolution, there has arisen the idea that formal agreements at the top leaders’ level need to be complemented by understandings, structures, and long-term development frameworks that eliminate cultures of violence and sustain peace processes on the ground (Woodhouse, 1999a).

\textsuperscript{46} It should be also noted that the limitations of problem-solving had been recognized before the end of the Cold War. Kelman and Cohen (1976), for example, cautioned that problem-solving should not be viewed as panacea.

\textsuperscript{47} Ryan argues that most of the literature in the conflict resolution field has been concerned with inventing approaches to help the parties in conflict resolve their conflicts through face-to-face talks and the problem of that is ordinary people have been marginalized in conflict resolution theory (1995).
Comprehensive conflict resolution approach: expanding the range of participants

Ryan (1995) argued that peace-making initiatives can address the fears and perceptions of people at the decision-making level. While they are the main victims, ordinary people at the grass-roots level have been provided with few opportunities in the process of resolving their own conflicts. Traditional approaches to resolving conflict were focused on the Track One approach represented by negotiation or mediation that involves elites or decision-makers and Track Two approach represented by problem-solving workshops in which unofficial but politically influential persons were main actors. Under these circumstances, a shift in our thinking has been required, which sees that the setting and the people in a conflict situation are not problems and that outsiders are not the only agents necessary to resolve conflict. Rather, people from the setting and their taken-for-granted knowledge about the setting, including the conflictual situation are key resources (Lederach, 1995b).

John Paul Lederach argues that an infrastructure should be established that legitimizes and integrates multiple levels of the population affected by violent conflict so that everyone can be empowered to participate in rebuilding a war-torn society (1995b).

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48 Ryan notes peace-making is concerned with third-party intervention in the negotiation process between decision-makers. It is concerned with interventions at the elite, decision-makers level. Ramsbotham et al (2005) note peacemaking means moving towards settlement of armed conflict. They also say in peacemaking parties are induced to reach agreement voluntarily.
49 Nordstrom (1995) argues that elite agencies lose the insights available at the grass-roots level and tend to develop policy that does not gratify the ground reality.
Therefore, he categorizes the population into three levels. The first level is top-level leadership, which comprises the key political and military leaders in the conflict, who represent a few key actors within the broader conflict setting (1997). The second level is the middle-range leadership that is composed of persons who function in leadership positions within a setting of conflict, but whose position is defined, but not necessarily controlled by the authority or structures of the formal government or major opposition movements (1997). According to Lederach, the important figures in sectors such as health, education, business and so on are included in this category. The third level is the grassroots level, which represents the vast majority of the affected population: the common people, displaced and refugee, local leaders, elders, church groups and locally based NGOs (Woodhouse, 1999a). What should be highlighted regarding these categorizations is that each group engages in respectively different business or plays a particular role in the peacebuilding process.50

From this model, Lederach proposes that in order to resolve contemporary conflict, there should be mechanisms for integrating and coordinating high-, middle-, and grassroots level strategies, in which all of those who have been affected by conflict are

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50 For example, Lederach (1997) explains the top level peacebuilding approach is focused on achieving a negotiated settlement, that is, ceasefire or a cessation of hostilities. The typical peacebuilding at the second level is the problem-solving workshop. And at the third level, the peacebuilding is not a matter of political accommodation done at the top-level, but focus is on how to deal with interdependent relationships in the everyday lives of significant numbers of people. See more detail Lederach.
given space and legitimized (1995b). The Lederach model is neither a final answer nor panacea. However, as Miall (2004) acknowledges, the significance of Lederach’s model is that it broadens our view of conflict and the conflict parties and draws peacebuilding resources from the wider society. Structuring a peace process in deeply divided societies needs a framework that takes into account the legitimacy, uniqueness, and interdependency of the needs and resources of the grassroots, middle-range and top-level groups (Lederach, 1997). Thus, the approach of peacebuilding from below shows that no one must be marginalized from conflict resolution process. Rather, as Ramsbotham et al argue, in the peacebuilding from below approach, keys to achieving lasting peace are derived from and built from local resources (2005). Put another way, people in a conflictual situation should be made aware that they are not merely the recipient of external help but that they can be the essential actors who decide the direction of conflict resolution.

However, as Woodhouse cautions, the approach of peacebuilding from below does not mean that a role for external third parties is denied, but it proposes that their roles should be reoriented (1999a). External third parties are not the only answers to resolve conflict; rather, their roles should be empowering the people in a conflict setting to transform the situation into peaceful one. However, this does not impair the importance of outside intervenors who wish to help resolve conflict. As Ramsbotham
et al insist, peacebuilding from below is not the panacea (2005). \[51\]

1-3-3 The emergence of Conflict Transformation

What is conflict transformation?

Although it is generally accepted that conflict is an all but inevitable part of human life, as Lederach notes, conflict can affect and change things both in destructive and constructive directions (1995b). In other words, how we understand conflict and how we approach conflict are crucial.

Transformation gets involved with wide-ranging social structures, moving toward a social space open for cooperation, for more sound relationships and far more nonviolent mechanisms to deal with conflict (Lederach, 1995b). Although it is almost impossible to have single definition of conflict transformation, Mitchell argues that there is one key thing about which most would agree: the conflict transformation approach copes with destructive conflicts beyond the cessation of violence, the attainment of compromised settlement or even the joint creation of an acceptable solution to the issues in conflict between/among the adversaries, in other words, “beyond resolution” (2005: 2).

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51 Regarding the possible problems of peacebuilding from below approach and the reorientation of outsiders’ role, See Ramsbotham et al (2005: 222-229).
Critical view of conflict resolution

Since the 1990s, there has been critical review of conflict resolution, which prompted the emergence of the concept of conflict transformation as part of contemporary conflict resolution discourse.

Nordstrom argues that the tendency to take a Western epistemology of time as a linear process and the resolution of conflict as a finite point on that line perpetuates both the cycle of conflict resurgence and a blindness to its nature (1995).\(^5\) Based on this linear concept, Lederach holds, the language of resolution implies finding a solution to a problem, which results in regarding some set of events or matters that are experienced as painful to an end (2003). Accordingly, for conflict resolution, the presentation of problems is the main focus. From a conflict transformation angle, conflict resolution is inclined to concentrate on the substance and content of the problem, which indicates that conflict resolution can be understood as content-oriented undertaking (Lederach, 2003).

Conflict resolution in many cases has been understood to be focused on mediated dialogue that seeks to address the fundamental needs of both or all parties to a conflict.

\(^5\) Galtung (1995) also argues that the underlying assumption of the resolution perspective is that conflict as a formation has a finite life, which is followed by an eternal afterlife either as resolved or as intractable. And he claims this attitude is clearly Occidental.
(Francis, 2002). For this reason, the problem-solving workshop has been taken as the central approach to resolving conflict.\textsuperscript{53} One of the critiques of conflict resolution based on problem-solving is that the main focus has been on the role of the third parties – in particular, outsiders – as intermediaries and the relatively little attention has been paid to the role of inside actors (Francis, 2002). Besides that, problem-solving conflict resolution has tended to deal with conflicts by operating close to official efforts and deal with decision-making elites or at least with opinion leaders and influentials (Mitchell, 2005). Further, Reiman (2004) insists that a problem-solving approach cannot critically examine the underlying frameworks it assumes such as a status quo, social order, or to question its assumption about universality and objectivity. Conflict resolution approaches based on problem-solving that do not get to the structural analysis of conflict can have an overall result of maintaining an existing unequal social system and the conflict it creates (Rubenstein, 1999). Consequently, the approach to transforming the structures that create and sustain conflict is required.

\textsuperscript{53} Fetherston (2000) notes in analytical problem-solving workshop a rational distancing is needed, which the participants come to see their conflict as frustration of basic human needs and learn how to deal with conflicts of interests. Besides that, Rupesinghe (1995) maintains that large number of literature on conflict and conflict resolution has been in the form of theoretical reflection that originates in the USA and Europe and this presupposes a domain of rationality in which all the parties share certain central values based on rational argument. Based on this assumption, he insists that the focus in conflict resolution is to get the parties in conflict to the table and through negotiations it will be possible to find a positive-sum solution acceptable to them.
Approaches to conflict from conflict transformation

While conflict resolution is conceived to be content-oriented, emphasizing tackling the manifested problems in conflict, conflict transformation can be understood to be process-oriented. Lederach insists that a peace-process is not just the short-term business of getting people to the negotiating table, nor of accomplishing a cease-fire, but includes tasks such as broader transformation, reconciliation, social reconstruction and so on (1995). In other words, conflict transformation, as Miall notes, is “a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses, and if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict” (2004: 4), the ultimate aim of which is to achieve the non-violent struggle for social change and justice.

The critical first step in the transformation approach is the belief that there is nothing sacrosanct about a status quo since it is the source of the conflict, so that the process of transformation begins with an inquiry into and critique of the existing system and an assumption that it is fundamental to create new systems, structures and relationships (Mitchell, 2005).

Rupesinghe holds that transformation can bear fruit if it is not merely a transfer of power; but only if sustainable structural and attitudinal changes are also achieved.
within the society and new institutions emerge to tackle outstanding issues, the achievement of which requires the empowerment of local people (1995). This shows that conflict transformation and the approach of peace-building from below are interconnected, which has much bearing on founding constructive conflict handling mechanisms within the setting. Constructive conflict handling requires the society’s confidence in its civic institutions, culture and capacity to manage conflict peacefully and productively, which lies in the hands of people in its society. Therefore, as Francis argues, the development of good governance and political participation, including pluralism and the public expression of various points of view on public policy, can be recognized as essential for the foundation of stable and prosperous societies in which conflict will be dealt with in non-violent and constructive way (2002). Empowerment, participation and the idea of fair-minded relationships can be acknowledged as cardinal elements in conflict transformation.

**Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation: What is the relationship between them?**

While there has been an increasing critique of conflict resolution from the conflict transformation perspective, it also should be noted that there is some critical engagement of conflict transformation from a conflict resolution perspective.
Ramsbotham et al argue that conflict resolution is a more far-reaching term that implies the deep-rooted sources of conflict are tackled and transformed (2005). Further, they maintain that conflict resolution indicates that behavior is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed (2005). From these points of view, conflict transformation is the deepest level of the conflict resolution tradition rather than a separate venture (2005). If their definition of conflict resolution is employed, conflict resolution can be understood as an imperative part of work for development, social justice, and social transformation. Their idea of conflict resolution does not put exclusive emphasis on addressing the visible manifestation of conflict, rather it also takes efforts to transform the underlying structure that has created conflict and make hostile relationships between former antagonists just and sound to prevent the resurgence of conflict.

Kanisin also claims that conflict resolution is a process-oriented enterprise whose aim is “to address the underlying cases of direct, cultural and structural violence” (2003: 2). He also argues that tackling the causes of cultural violence entails a change in the belief/value system and if addressing cultural violence is part of conflict resolution, that indicates strategies for engaging at the level of mass people, not just among the

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54 According to Galtung (1996), the function of cultural violence, which is expressed in any kinds of symbol such as religion, ideology, language, art, science, law, media, education and so on, is to legitimize direct and structural violence.
few participants in problem-solving workshops (2003). Thus, Kanisin’s idea of conflict resolution is also a comprehensive approach to conflict that goes beyond the critical idea of conflict resolution from conflict transformation perspective. Further, as explained in the preceding sections, it should be remembered that those who had contributed to conflict resolution before the end of the Cold War acknowledged that the problem-solving workshop is not a panacea.

Thus it can be seen that there are various ways to define the term ‘conflict resolution,’ which means that while some are focusing on tackling its manifestations, in other cases, as represented by Ramsbotham et al and Kanisin, conflict resolution also goes beyond addressing visible issues, deeper into tackling invisible structural sources of conflict. Put another way, conflict resolution and conflict transformation are not necessarily antithetical, but as Kanisin notes, if there is a difference between conflict resolution and conflict transformation, “it lies only in our perspective” (2003: 14).

1-3-4 Spiritual dimension in conflict resolution: restoring human relationships

The argument over human nature

One of the prominent characteristics of contemporary conflict resolution is its religious engagement. As broadly argued, religion has two faces: religion as a legitimization for violence and war; and religion as deep source for mutual
understanding, promoting non-violent conflict resolution and peace. As Ramsbotham et al note, religion can be used to reinforce exclusive identities – the sharp demarcation between “us” and “them” – and to justify destructive political programmes (2005). However, at the same time, religion can give us a deep insight into human nature that transcends secular divisions, which could enable us to achieve unity as human beings.

The most essential human nature from a spiritual perspective can be seen as the divinity of every human being. For example, Adam Curle insists spiritually irrefutable knowledge of the existence of God within each individual, which must form the foundation of our attitude towards ourselves and towards others to whom we are joined, being all children of God (1981). Montville also maintains that the three Abrahamic faiths focus on the dignity and rights of the individual as central to all religions (2002). Further, he insists that “the moral compulsion to inclusion of all God’s children is clear and inescapable” (2002: 107).

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55 For example, Montville (2002) holds that religion reinforces the human psychological construct, where human beings can be capable of love and creativity but also hatred and destructiveness.


56 According to Montville (2002), one of the core values of Christianity is the recognition that human beings are created in the image of God, which leads that all human beings have been given sacred quality as birthright and deserving of dignity and respect in all relationships. Regarding Judaism, he holds God's compassion is universal, not just for Jews since all human beings are children of the same Father and are created in the image of God. Further, he argues the unique characteristic of
Curle argues that non-Abrahamic religions have the same essence as Abrahamic ones. He insists that in Hinduism, the concept of Atman represents both the sources of all being, Brahman, the Absolute and its individualized expression (1981). Besides that, he explains, the Buddhists recognize in all the existence of the Buddha nature (1981). In short, all religions have the same fundamental teaching, that is, the inherent divine nature of all human beings and the achievement of unity with others is the aim of the religious life or the purpose of all human existence (Curle, 1981). All the wisdom traditions that have emerged through human history reflect a desire to heal broken relationships among human beings and to find ways of acceptance that enable them to live together in peace (Petersen, 2002).

**Why is restoring human relationships needed in conflict resolution?**

Contemporary conflict can be broadly characterized by deep-seated, severe enmity, fear and serious stereotyping. Although we see tremendous pain and deep-rooted antagonism in any war, as Lederach argues, the nature of armed conflict, where neighbor fears neighbor and in some cases family member fears family member and each sheds blood, makes the emotive, perceptual, social-psychological and spiritual perspectives core matters (1997). Further, Lederach insists that the immediacy of

Islam is the conviction that belief in the oneness of God unites the Muslim with all humanity since God is the creator of all human beings, irrespective of their religious backgrounds.
hatred and prejudice and of racism as important elements and motivations of conflict demonstrates that its transformation should be rooted in social-psychological and spiritual dimensions, which has been left out of international diplomacy (1997). In addressing contemporary conflict, not only dealing with the causes of conflict, but also making an effort to accomplish peaceful relationship or restoring human relationship between/among the former antagonists should be included as the essential component of conflict resolution.

**Reconciliation as a way of restoring human relationships**

Ramsbotham et al (2005) argue that reconciliation, that is, restoring broken relationships and learning to live non-violently with radical differences, can be regarded as the ultimate objective of conflict resolution. Besides that, they also insist that it is the long-term process of reconciliation that constitutes the essence of the lasting transformation which conflict resolution seeks – the hallmark of the integrative power that binds disparate groups together into genuine societies (2005).

According to Lederach (2001), reconciliation can be characterized as dynamic and variable processes that purport to reconstruct and restore the broken framework of interpersonal relationships and community lives.  

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57 Volf (2002) maintains reconciliation is mainly a process whose objective is not so
relationships and relationships are about real people in real situations who have to find a way forward, which means that the relationship that made possible the interdependent co-existence of former adversaries should be built in reconciliation processes (Lederach, 2001).  

In order to prevent a resurgence of the cycle of hostility, how the history of conflict relationships can be overcome becomes the cardinal matter. Establishing trust between/among former antagonists should follow overcoming past wounds of victimization by such means as acknowledgement of past crimes and expression of remorse (Jeong, 1999). Lederach (1997) insists that reconciliation should find ways to deal with the past without being entrapped in a vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness. People need opportunity and space to express mutually the trauma of loss and their grief at that loss and the anger that accompanies the pain and the memory of injustices (Lederach, 1997). In this process, acknowledgement is the decisive element. Lederach (1997) holds that acknowledgement through one another’s stories can validate experience and feelings and become the first step to restoration of the person and the relationship.

much the integration of citizens into a political unity as the creation of a community in which each recognizes and is recognized and in which all mutually give themselves to each other in love.

58 Fisher (1999) argues in a situation in which violence has become a social norm, promoting a mutually conciliatory accommodation between/among the antagonists and establishing a peaceful relationship is of great importance.
In relation to reconciliation, the issue of forgiveness should be also considered. Staub and Pearlman (2002) claim healing, reconciliation and forgiveness are deeply interconnected. They maintain that while forgiving is very difficult, it can open the door for reconciliation and further healing (2002). They also hold that offering forgiveness can improve the psychological well-being of victims – forgiveness can lift the burden of anger and the desire for revenge (2002). However, Volf insists that forgiveness should not be confused with acceptance of the other (2002). To offer forgiveness means at the same time to condemn the misdeed and accuse the doer, and to receive forgiveness means to admit the deed and accept the blame (2002). Hicks cautions that although it might be true that forgiveness not only helps free the victimizer of and shame and the burden of wrongdoing, but also frees the victim, the problem is that forgiveness must not be forced (2002). Rather, he insists, it is unethical to push forgiveness onto those who are not ready to forgive (2002).

**Justice and reconciliation**

Reconciliation has been assumed by some to be an essential element in achieving a peaceful society after devastating conflict, but there are some issues that should be considered in relation to reconciliation.

Pankhurst (1999) argues although the process of public truth-telling can make a
contribution to reconciliation and long-term positive peace, in which former enemies live peacefully, in truth commissions or the similar processes of revelation and recording of the past tragedies, there emerge the issues of amnesty versus prosecution, which raises an importance to discuss the issue of justice.

While justice is essential to reconciliation, it is also important to know that there are several forms of justice. The first type of justice can be called retributive justice. Lederach explains retributive justice assumes that the violent offense that has taken place against a person or a group is best coped with as if it were a crime or violence against the laws of states or against humanity (2001). This can be also termed criminal justice, which involves the inquiry, prosecution and punishment of the leading figures and executors of gross human rights violation (Chapman, 2002).

While individual responsibility is important, this type of justice can be problematic. For instance, Volf claims that although the enforcement of punitive justice might rectify past wrongdoings, it cannot create communion between victims and perpetrators since the matter of positive relationships that need to be constructed between the former antagonists is left out (2002). The main problem of retributive justice is that it cannot heal broken relationships.
The second type of justice can be called restorative justice. According to Staub and Pearlman, restorative justice tries to show through actions that the perpetrators are sorry, understand the pain they have inflicted and want to make amends (2002). The aim is for the community to acquire a sense that justice has been done, that the offenders and their offenses have been denounced and held accountable, that a sense of peace and community healing have been restored and that a process of establishing safety and trust has begun (Staub and Pearlman, 2002). Thus restorative justice seeks to repair an injustice, to compensate for it and affect corrective changes in relationships and in future behavior (Chapman, 2002). It can be seen that while it does not deny the punitive actions, restorative justice gives priority to the restoration of human dignity to both the victims and those who have done damage to them so that broken human relationship could be healed.

Further, there is a third type of justice, which can be called distributive justice. A main theme of distributive justice is to address the underlying causes of conflict that in many cases lie in real or perceived socio-economic, political or cultural injustices (Mani, 2002).\[^{59}\] The central concern of distributive justice is how post-conflict societies overcome grievances such as unjust distribution of and access to political and

\[^{59}\] Mani maintains that while issues of distributive justice are not necessarily the fundamental cause of all contemporary conflicts, they emerge as prominent facilitating factors in the terrain of internal political conflicts (2002).
economic resources that underlie conflict (Mani, 2002). The rationale for addressing distributive justice as Mani argues, can be of help to prevent a relapse into conflict and future conflicts, which can consolidate peace (2002).\(^{60}\)

Thus justice does not have only one dimension; rather there are several possible approaches to justice in conflict. It would be missing the point to question which justice is best to deal with conflict. The most important thing to be kept in mind is that justice is multi-faced, which can be shown by the various approaches such as truth commissions, tribunals or reparation, rehabilitation steps and the long-term effort to build sound governance that enables the fair distribution of or access to political and economic participation, which would promote and achieve reconciliation. It should be remembered that what kind of justice will be employed relies heavily on the situation in the country in question.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has traced the history and evolution of conflict resolution. Since its genesis as an important component of peace research, conflict resolution has seen the all but inevitable interplay between theoretical development and practice. Secondly, a rich body of literature continues to develop from within its own tradition, both in an

\(^{60}\) Regarding the more detail of distributive justice, see Mani (2002: 126-157).
ordinary developmental sense and in a reflexive, self-critical way. Thirdly, conflict resolution continues to draw on the insights of many academic disciplines and traditions. It can be seen that the concept of conflict resolution has been expanded in terms of the causes of conflict, who the main actors are in both conflict and conflict resolution, the meaning of peace and so on. Having looked back at the historical evolution of conflict resolution, the next chapter will map the framework of contemporary conflict resolution.
Chapter Two: The Scope of Contemporary Conflict Resolution

The previous chapter has examined the history and evolution of conflict resolution, which concluded that the concept of conflict resolution has been broadened in terms of causes of conflict, the important actors in conflict resolution, the concept of peace and ideas on the appropriate and effective methodologies and levels of action. However, what must be remarked is that, as a field of praxis and as an academic discipline, the development of conflict resolution never ceases. Rather, it keeps progressing and broadening its sphere. For example, basic human needs theory, the concept of protracted social conflict, and social psychological analysis of intergroup dynamics, which were introduced into conflict resolution decades ago, have been subject to critique and reframed according to the demands of changing circumstances.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to map out the framework of contemporary conflict resolution as it now stands by extending the history and evolution of conflict resolution outlined in chapter one, and by incorporating the most recent theoretical debates and applications. This requires re-visiting a number of the subjects examined in chapter one; and since some of the foundational work of the early pioneers of conflict resolution continues to be debated, reappraised and practiced, there is inevitably some repetition. It does not serve the purpose of this dissertation to take an
argumentative position on any of these issues. Rather, the presentation of these established and critiqued theories and practice is in terms of their broad acceptance (or otherwise), not as original judgments of this dissertation.

2-1 The generally agreed constitutive elements of conflict resolution

2-1-1 Basic Human Needs

As explained in the previous chapter, basic human needs theory was introduced by John Burton into the conflict resolution field and that has made a huge contribution to conflict resolution in its theory and praxis. Although several decades have passed since basic human needs theory was introduced, it can be maintained that basic human needs theory is still one of the most important elements in conflict resolution.61

According to Jeong, the gratification of basic needs is required for human development as well as the survival of human beings in both physical and social terms, and, therefore, the struggle for the satisfaction of basic needs is a crucial motivational factor behind human behavior and social interaction (2000).

Further, Jeong claims that in basic human needs there are primary emotional

61 For instance, Jeong (2000), in his book which is characterized as an introductory guide to peace and conflict research, discusses the importance of basic needs as the root-cause of conflict. Also, in 2001 The International Journal of Peace Studies presented a special theme issue on John Burton and basic human needs and in that volume, several authors, including Burton himself, explored critically and constructively basic human needs and conflict resolution for the future.
perspectives, represented by fear, anger, depression, happiness and so on as well as physiological dimensions (2000). Sites argues that animals including human beings possess the need for conditions that will reduce the negative emotional states of fear, anger and depression and enable them to achieve the positive emotional state of satisfaction (1990b). Emotions and corresponding needs are present in humans though they are intertwined and very complicated as they are related to the survival of the self as well as survival of the physical organism (Sites, 1990b). Therefore, it can be assumed that emotions and corresponding needs are present in humans in all societies, and consequently, the satisfaction of basic needs becomes essential for human beings since fulfilling basic needs plays the critical role for them to grow in society.

**Basic needs and conflict transformation**

If basic human needs are widely, if not universally, recognized as a root cause of conflict, it can be presumed that aggressions and conflicts are the direct result of some institutions and social norms being incompatible with inherent human needs (Burton, 1998). As Burton insists, “conflict resolution and prevention would be possible by removing the sources of conflict: institutions and social norms would be adjusted to the needs of persons” (1998: 1).

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62 Sites (1990b), by using Kemper’s theory, holds that expressions of the same primary emotions appear in every human infant at early stage and these emotions are often identified in cross-cultural research.
Burton assumes that throughout history, philosophers, social scientists and policy makers seem to have prioritized the need for order and stability and the preservation of the institutions of society over the lives and the needs of the individual person (2001a). However, from conflict resolution perspectives based on basic human needs theory, societies should be modified to meet the needs of people. In other words, when societies or the institutions in society fail to respond to the basic needs of people, which causes violent conflict, they should be transformed into ones that can gratify those needs of members of society.

Thus, it can be seen that Burtonian conflict resolution ultimately aims at changing a political-social system in order to satisfy the basic needs of everyone in the society. Preserving the existing social systems that validate the inequality among members is the critical element that causes and prolongs violent conflict without solution. For the Burtonian approach, the key to resolving violent conflict is to transform societies as a whole so as to become less wasteful of resources, more long-term oriented and more cooperative in decision-making (Burton, 2001b). This demonstrates that structural transformation becomes the focal point so that inequality among people in terms of political and economic opportunities is to be overcome and more harmonious relationship among them will be achieved. Subsequently, basic human needs theory and its application to conflict resolution, in particular, the Burtonian one, has much
bearing on conflict transformation that is one of the main themes in contemporary conflict resolution.

2-1-2 Social Identity

As explained in the preceding chapter, social psychology has contributed to theoretical and practical elaboration and development of conflict resolution. An essence of social psychology is not to examine individual difference: rather, the main focus of research is “on the collective aspects of conduct, the socially shared, derived and systematic, on how social forces shape the many, not the individual exception” (Turner, 1996: 20). Rather than individual behavior, analysis of intergroup relations is a central concern for social psychology (Turner, 1996).

At the heart of intergroup dynamics lies identity. Deschamps and Devos assert that identity is an essential element in social psychology since it is one of its central concerns (1998). Furthermore, Jussim et al claim that various disciplines of contemporary social science research and theory have indicated that self and identity play the central role in understanding human thought, feeling and action as they are crucial in establishing correlation between individual human beings and larger socio-cultural groups and systems (1998). For this reason, the examination of identity should be taken into serious consideration in approaching phenomena in the human
world. Since human beings are bound to be social beings, analysis of social identity is of particular importance to grasp dynamics of the human world; and the phenomenon of conflict is not an exception.

Black insists that it has come to be broadly recognized that many contemporary, deep-rooted, protracted and intractable conflicts are those between/among identity groups (2003). One of the outstanding characteristics of contemporary conflict is that identity groups in conflictual situations “live as neighbors and yet are locked into long standing cycles of negatively defined interaction” (Caritas International, 1999: 3), which incrementally aggrandizes mutual fear, anger and antagonism and falls into vicious cycles of violence. Therefore, it can be reasonably seen, as Rothman dwells on, that “although the analysis of identity groups, or collectivities based on ethnicity or nationality, religion or ascriptive traits, has not replaced the nation-state as the dominant conceptual and organizing vehicle for international relations, it is clear that identity as an analytic tool and focus of global peacemaking continues to grow” (2001: 284).

According to Northrup, identity can be defined as “an abiding sense of self and of the relationship of the self to the world” (1989: 55). It can be also delineated as “a system of beliefs or a way of constituting the world that makes life predictable rather than
random” (Northrup, 1989: 55). However, what must be remembered in understanding
the construction of identity is that as we are essentially social beings, groups are
indispensable components of self-identity. Put another way, as Brown states, “we join
groups to help define ourselves” (2006: 319) and social identity comes to the fore.

Black explains that social identity signifies public aspects of the individual self that
are important for group membership, the construction of social bonds and the
formation of collective action (2003). In other words, social identity can be
understood as the social dimensions of an individual’s self-image that derives from
belonging to a certain social group and the emotional and evaluative significance that
results from such group membership (Fisher, 1990b). It is through this belonging to a
certain social group that enables individuals to define their specific positions in
society (Deschamps and Devos, 1998), which gives them an answer to the existential
question of “Who they are.” Consequently, it can be seen that social identity makes an
important contribution to the establishment of an individual’s self-esteem or positive
self-concept, that is, “a quality that it is assumed people are generally motivated to
increase or maintain” (Fisher, 1990b: 95). In this line of thinking, social identity
inheres in our identity as its central component.

However, there is one more thing that must be mentioned regarding construction of
social identity: in the process of identification with a certain group, there emerges the
division between “in-group” or “us” and “out-group” or “them.” Although, as Black
states, the distinction between “us” and “them” is a universally seen phenomenon
(2003), this division has a huge impact upon the dynamics of conflict. Therefore,
in-depth analysis of social identity in terms of how it affects subjective and
psychological dimensions of contemporary conflict characterized as a social/collective
identity-based phenomenon needs to be examined, which will be delineated later in
this chapter.

2-1-3 Culture

As examined in the preceding chapter, culture has been one of the critical elements in
contemporary conflict resolution.

Human beings cannot live alone: rather, we are essentially social beings and tend to
belong to some groups. LeBaron argues that human beings are intrinsically creatures
who assign meaning, seeking to explain, to understand and to make sense of their
worlds and themselves in the worlds (2001), which makes culture an indispensable
element for human beings.

According to Kyrou et al, culture is the customary way in which groups form and
understand their behavior in relation to others and to their environment (1999). Francis defines culture as “the patterning of assumptions about life, its realities and requirements and intrinsic or accompanying values and norms” (2004: 2). In short, as Vayrynen notes, cultures provide a grammar for acting and interpreting the world, and they refer to shared practices and to commonly held premises and presuppositions members of groups hold about the world that involves the social structuring of both the world outside the self and the internal world. (2001).

Through socialization within their culture, individuals receive an understanding of what the world is like, adopt a particular set of values and gain an understanding of the cultural meaning of events and actions (Fry and Fry, 1997). Culture can be referred to as the systems of knowledge shared by large numbers of people (Gudykunst, 2004). Further, as Avruch argues, culture is conceived as an evolved element of human cognition and social action (2003). From these depictions, conflict can be understood as a cultural phenomenon since the ways in which conflict is perceived and dealt with reflect a culturally shared set of attitudes and beliefs (Fry and Fry, 1997).

From a cultural perspective, it can be assumed that the different understandings of reality play the important role in conflict. As Vayrynen hypothesizes, when one group member belonging to group is an important motive for behavior since it removes ambiguity about ourselves and others (2004).
tries to impose its idea (of reality) on the other, that could give rise to a counterattack from the other, as a result of which violent conflict could arise (2001). The crucial point is whose definition of reality will be taken seriously and acted upon (Vayrynen, 2001). Accordingly, as Avruch states, “although culture is rarely by itself the cause of conflict, it is always the lens through which differences are refracted and conflict pursued” (2003: 143).64

Why are the different views of reality a focal point? Why does the struggle for the imposition of one’s definition of reality upon the other become a crucial theme? These questions are closely related to the identity problem. According to LeBaron, from infancy on, we receive cultural messages. They have a huge impact on who we are, who we believe it is acceptable and unacceptable to be, and how we perceive others and ourselves (2001). They also form our views on conflict, our efforts to establish and sustain relationships and communities and shape our common sense (LeBaron, 2001). Therefore, deep-rooted or intractable conflict entails more than visible material resources and communication; rather it is closely connected with the symbolic level of identity and meaning-making and identity and meaning are so fundamental to our sense of self and position in the world (LeBaron, 2001). Therefore, the breakdown of

64 LeBaron also claims that conflict ensues when our need for security infringes upon another’s territory or the meanings we assign to behavior or events are different from others’. (2003).
shared reality or the struggle for the validity of one definition or view of reality could be crucial in understanding violent conflict.

According to Avruch, from a cultural viewpoint, the analysis of psycho-cultural interpretations will be of importance (2003). The examination of the pertinent cognitive representations, such as the images, encodings, schemas, metaphors in each cultural group would be important (Avruch, 2003). In particular, the essence of conflict resolution from a cultural viewpoint is how a shared reality can be created – changing the psycho-cultural interpretations of one another: transforming metaphors and schemas. Therefore, as LeBaron insists, the effort to try to look through others’ lenses to see what they magnify and what they minimize is essential (2001). Besides that, it is important to adjust one’s own lenses to address conflict (LeBaron, 2001).

When the effort is taken to try to understand another’s viewpoints and to modify one’s own assumptions, it might be possible to create a third culture. Broome notes that the third culture is characterized by unique values and norms that may not have existed prior to the dyadic relationship (1993). Further, he claims that third culture can only develop through interaction in which parties in conflict are willing to open themselves to new meanings, to commit themselves to honest dialogue and to respond to the new

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65 LeBaron explains metaphors are windows into the terrain of a culture: they uncover how we see our relationships to each other and ideas (2003). Metaphors show us starting points and reveal something about the images we hold of ourselves and others (2003).
demands that emanate from the situation (1993).

2-1-4 Power

As Haugaard states, there is no single agreed definition of power (1999). Rather, Lukes argues that different theories offer different definitions of the concept of power and ordinary language allows for a wide variety of distinguishing, overlapping and inconsistent usages of the term (1977).  

However, Bell insists that whilst we have little agreement on a single, right definition of power, most of the available discourses on the topic are similar in that most authors take power as if it were a thing to possess for the purpose of achieving one’s will over others (1999). Karlberg also argues that power tends to be associated with competition at best, coercion or domination at worst (2005). Thus, it seems that power, which has been defined as a form of domination, is generally examined in the context of its impact on others (Bell, 1999).

Truly, the concept of power as domination or so-called “power-over” is useful to understand conflict given that the structural dimension, which will be analyzed in

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67 Haugaard also mentions that in general, most social and political theorists conceive of the study of power as both the analysis of the capacity of individuals to make others do things that they would not otherwise do and as the study of the social relationships that sustain that capacity (1999).
detail later, has been recognized as one of the fundamental components of contemporary conflict resolution. As Francis explains, there are various vehicles for the exercise of power over others: “wealth; control of resources and terms of trading; language; education; fashion; political structures and practices; laws; imprisonment and physical violence or the threat of it, on whatever scale, including military systems or wars” (2004: 3). Violence – the harmful and destructive use of power over others – is both the means and results of domination (Francis, 2004). Put another way, “a culture of domination is a culture of violence” (Francis, 2004: 3).

Haugaard states that social structure and the truth that is generally recognized in it play the pivotal role in maintaining the relations of domination.⁶⁸ Perceptions of truth are what reinforce some worldviews, which shape the ordering of the world (Haugaard, 1999). Power constructs social organization and hierarchy by creating discourses and truths, by enforcing disciplines and order, and by shaping human desires and subjectivities (Karlberg, 2005). Furthermore, the rules of ordering the world sustain and promote certain relations of domination over others and create

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⁶⁸ Michel Foucault argues that there can be no possible exercise of power without some economy of discourses of truth. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth (1986). He also claims that we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands in order to function: we must speak the truth; we are constrained or deemed to confess or to discover the truth. (1986). Power does not cease its interrogation, its inquisition, its registrations of truth – its institutionalization, professionalization and rewards of its pursuit are inevitable (1986).
conditions of empowerment and disempowerment among different groups of individuals (Haugaard, 1999). Thus, it can be seen that power as domination or “power over” that accompanies the creation of certain truth discourses in society is intimately connected to structural inequality between/among different groups.

However, the central aim of conflict resolution is addressing the root causes of conflict, transforming the structures that promote or exacerbate conflict and changing the antagonistic relationships between/among the conflictual groups into constructive and cooperative ones, so that conflict can be resolved in non-violent ways. So, what we should seek is not merely the cessation of domination by one party over another, but the transformation of dominatory and destructive relationships and structures and the manifestation of violence (Francis, 2004). Therefore, sticking to the concept of power as domination or “power over” will be missing the point: rather, power should be also understood in a positive way.

For instance, Miller insists that the concept of power should be broadened to include the capacity to produce change, which embraces activities such as nourishing and empowering others (1982).  

Bell also argues the alternative theory of the traditional theories of power distinguish “power over” seen as domination from “power to” that enlarge the concept to include various kinds of individual and communal empowerment and “power to” can be characterized as ability, capacity, competence, potentiality and so forth (1999).
the idea that the dynamics of power relations should include not only those who have power over others but also those who are seen as powerless and excluded from the study of power (Bell, 1999).

As Bell claims, power entails a relationship between individuals and groups in an interactive social context (1999). Power is relational and cannot be exerted by one in isolation from others. Alternative theories of power are based on the wish to produce views that include the experiences of all people involved in power relations, and the aim of constructing them is to argue that the frequently dismissed weak are acknowledged and become important players in power interaction (Bell, 1999). Therefore, while the power with domination involves the maintenance of existing social structures, challenges from below or from grass-roots levels can be expressed by transforming those structures and by creating novel patterns of interaction that could enable the powerless to resist the requirements and norms of those who try to control them (Bell, 1999).  

Finally, Kenneth Boulding categorizes power into three facets – threat power,

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70 Haugaard holds the reliance on structural power carries with it its opposite, that is, a new type of resistance. And since the reproduction of social systems presupposes the participation of those over whom power is exerted, the system is not reproduced if the supposedly powerless refuses to take part in the reproduction (1999). This leads to the loss of legitimacy of the existing social structure and could open the for the transformation of it.
economic power and integrative power – and each idea correlates respectively, with
the power to destroy, the power to produce and exchange and the power to integrate -
that is, the power to create such relationships as love, respect, friendship, legitimacy
and so on (1989). Among these three, integrative power plays the cardinal role in
conflict resolution and transformation. Boulding holds that a main source of the
integrative power of a community or organization is the extent to which the personal
identity of the members involved is bound up with their perception of the identity of
the community or organization as a whole (1989). He maintains that peace is
fundamentally dependent on the growth of a larger sense of community, an integrative
power that transcends the existing boundaries and begins to spread (1989). As
mentioned earlier, transforming hostile relationships into peaceful or harmonious ones
is recognized as one of the keys in contemporary conflict resolution or transformation,
and therefore Boulding’s integrative power is very important. Thus, power, in the
context of conflict resolution and transformation, should be taken as a complex and
multi-dimensional phenomenon.

2-2 Significant actors in conflict and conflict resolution

2-2-1 Shift from state to human being

According to Dunn, Burton’s thought, especially the adoption of basic human needs
theory, has revealed “a progressive move away from the conventional wisdom of
international relations as a discipline” (1995: 199). Traditionally, in international relations, the central actor has been state. For example, Dunn claims that although Realists and Idealists approach the implications differently, they share the fundamental paradigm of state-centricity (2001). Further, according to Broadhead, the traditional argument of International Relations maintains that states are central entities, the world is as it is, and should be sustained. (1997). In other words, there is little possibility envisaged for transformation of the existing order based on state sovereignty as its centre. (Broadhead, 1997). On such a view, human beings both as individuals and as groups, are subordinate to state.

However, from basic human needs theory, the above assumption should be problematized. Rosati et al insist that since individuals strive to satisfy basic needs, social systems must respond to individual needs if they are to keep their legitimacy and survive in the long term (1990). They also claim that human social relations, including international relations, at the heart of which the state exists as its cardinal entity, will remain incomplete unless human needs are recognized as an essential source of political and social interaction in world society (1990). Their view, as Dunn (2001) mentions, demonstrates that the adoption of basic human needs in conflict

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71 Dunn explains while Realists stress the perennial nature of political power and means to it, Idealists believe that the system can be reformed, improved and managed better (2001).
resolution, which has been mainly promoted by Burton, reflects the recognition of the shift to human rather than institutional priorities.

This does not mean that states are no longer needed. Rather, as Wedge argues (1990), from a basic human needs perspective, the manner of operation of the national and international levels of human organization including states ultimately hinges on the participation or consent of the individual persons whose aggregated behavior constitutes organized actions including conflict and war.

Rosati et al insist that there is a dialectic interplay between individual human needs and larger social values and interests that society promotes (1990). Further, they emphasize that there are strong links between the pursuit of human needs and the conventional concepts of power, values and interests (1990). While the human needs viewpoint acknowledges the importance of power and the related concerns of traditional political Realism, it analyzes the concepts within a larger framework that directs attention to the underlying sources of human motivations (Rosati et al, 1990). Accordingly, the focus should be not on the features, capabilities and interests of states, but on human beings themselves because they act as agents of or in the name of states (Dunn, 2001). Thus, the primary level of analysis, or the starting-point for examining conflict is the human being.
2-2-2 Groups

Human beings have mainly two faces to their existence: individuality and collectivity: we are social beings as well as individual beings.

As Austin and Worcel state, we live most of our lives “in and around groups of one kind or another” (1979: 1). Human beings, through their history, have survived by bonding together in groups (Brown, 2006). Brown maintains that, in the beginning, human beings formed groups for hunting and gathering food and for fending off predators and enemies, and then, with the advent of farming and herding, human beings needed to create more complex group structures for the division of labor (2006). Finally, groups have expanded and evolved from clans and tribes to forge states and nations (Brown, 2006). Thus, it can be seen that “there is no humanity outside the framework of society” (Sites, 1990a: 136) or human life revolves around making groups. According to Aronson et al, a group “consists of two or more people who interact and are interdependent in the sense that their needs and goals cause them to influence each other” (2005: 284). In other words, a group can be defined as “an interdependent collection of individuals who interact and possess a shared identity” (Brown, 2006: 317).

Since human beings are social creatures, many needs as they relate to self can be
satisfied only in interaction with others (Sites, 1990a). For instance, as Aronson et al argue, groups become a critical part of our identity, which helps us to define who we are (2005). Brown holds that the connection with others satisfies a need for belonging and social inclusion (2006). Besides that, by manifesting dissimilarity from others, a need for uniqueness will be gratified (Brown, 2006). Further, Sites insists that the need for meaning can be satisfied only by values that are socially constructed, shared or interpreted as such within the domain of culture (1990a). Thus, the link of needs to groups is an essential feature of human needs. The accomplishment of needs occurs within the context of groups of different scales (Kelman, 1997). In short, in a human needs approach, social networks of individuals, that is, groups, are a basic unit of analysis as human needs are pursued and values, interests and power arise through the interaction within them (Rosati et al, 1990).

From these viewpoints, it is clear that if groups can be recognized as a basic unit for the gratification of human needs, examining group dynamism in conflict would be important. It does not mean that the individual dimension in conflict should be ignored. However, given that collective needs such as identity, security, and meaning, which are derived from belonging to groups, are fundamental for human beings (or individuals) to exist, as Fisher insists, the analysis of intergroup conflict and its resolution is critical if we are concerned about comprehending human social behavior.
and ameliorating the human condition (1990a).

2-2-3 Third parties

Although primary conflicting parties or groups play the most important role in determining the direction of conflict, in some cases there can be no opportunity for contact between/among parties to a conflict without intervention of a third party that promotes communication between/among them (Cairns and Hewstone, 2001). Dedring states that the search for a peaceful outcome of conflict situations with the help of a third party or parties has been “a frequent phenomenon in world history” (2001: 8). According to Ramsbotham et al, in the conflict resolution enterprise, various kinds of agency (international organizations, states, non-governmental organizations, individuals) get involved, address different groups (party leaders, elites, grassroots) and vary in form, duration and objectives (2005). Fisher claims that it is of great importance to contemplate all elements of the conflict before surmising which form of intervention is likely to be most effective in moving the parties toward settlement and resolution (2001).

There have been various types of third party intervention proposed – conciliation,\(^\text{72}\)

\(^{72}\) Fisher explains in conciliation a trusted third party provides an informal communication link between the parties in the hope of detecting the central issues, reducing tensions and helping them move toward direct interaction like negotiation (1990a).
arbitration, mediation, consultation, problem-solving. Further, third party approaches can be categorized into two levels. According to Kriesberg, so-called Track One diplomacy consists of the mediation, negotiations, conciliation, and other official exchanges between/among governmental representatives while consultation, facilitation and problem-solving approaches are in Track Two diplomacy domain (1997). While Track One operates at the highest level of the government, Track Two refers mainly to more informal and unofficial efforts by non-governmental parties (Reiman, 2004). Though the participants in Track Two level do not hold formal power, they are seen as the important links between the high-level leadership and the wide society (Fisher, 2001).

Reiman explains that in the past attention had been paid mainly to the differences in essence and emphasis between Track One as conflict settlement approaches and Track

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73 In arbitration, an accepted authority as a third party imposes a settlement that is considered to be fair to both sides of conflict (Fisher, 1990a).

74 In mediation, a skilled intermediary facilitates settlement to the disputes on a set of specific substantive issues (Fisher, 1990a). Bercovitch maintains that mediation should be seen as an extension of the negotiation process in which an accepted third party intervenes to change the course or result of a conflict (1996).

75 According to Fisher, consultation is an intervention in which a skilled and impartial third party takes effort to facilitate creative problem solving through communication and analysis supported by social-scientific knowledge of conflict (1990a). Cheldelin and Lyons note that third party consultation emphasizes the importance of understanding and improving relationships as a means to resolve social conflict (2003). Further, they say that the emphasis is on the negotiation process and less on the substance of the outcomes (2003).

76 Mitchell notes that the objectives of most problem-solving workshops, or sustained dialogues attempt to change adversaries’ views of their situation from a “conflict to be won” to a “problem to be solved” (2003). He also insists that problem-solving approach should be one of involving the parties to conflict in an analytical rather than an adversarial process and to get them to undertake a joint search for sauces rather for responsibility of the conflict (2003).
Two as conflict resolution approaches (2004). However, she also states that there has been a shift to an integrative and complementary approach of Track One and Track Two strategies. The emergence of integrative and complementary approaches has made it essential to synthesize the different models and concepts in the face of the various complexities of contemporary violent conflict situations and peacebuilding tasks (Reiman, 2004).

**Critique of the assumptions on third parties**

According to Fisher, the broadly received view of third-party in intervening in conflict is that the third-party should be impartial and neutral and refrain from taking sides with one party over the other, influencing outcomes one way or the other (2001). However, Bercovitch contends that while even-handedness or impartiality as the conspicuous characteristic of effective mediation cannot be denied totally, critical eyes should be cast upon the assumptions (1996). Rather, third-parties should make an effort to keep in mind that their intervention itself is situated within the structures of existing social systems and can result either in maintaining them or transforming them (Fisher, 2001).77

As Miall states, most contemporary violent conflicts are asymmetric in terms of power

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77 See also Dukes (1999). He insists that adapting a cloak of presumed impartiality in the face of power asymmetry and injustice can be a way of reinforcing the status quo.
and status between/among conflictual groups (2004). 78 In those cases, therefore, the role of the third party is to help the transformation of the existing structure of relationships, if necessary, confronting elites for the purpose of transforming what have been violent and unequal relationships into peaceful, dynamic and balanced ones (Ramsbotham et al, 2005). 79 As Cheldelin notes, although the ethic of impartiality or neutrality is still important in third-party intervention, those ethical qualities such as equality, justice and relationship-building toward transformation should be also added (2003).

Another aspect that has been generally recognized in the role of third parties is the utilization of local knowledge and empowerment of local people. Given the complexity of contemporary conflict, as Woodhouse explains, it cannot be expected that one third party can deal with all or most elements of a given conflict (1996). Rather, as Kriesberg claims, in conflict resolution it has been important to seek for long-term processes and outcomes that take into consideration all sides of a conflict and maximize the participation of the people directly affected (1997). The long-term approach could be sustained if outsiders and experts support and nurture rather than

78 Structural dimension of contemporary conflict will be analyzed in detail later.
79 Sandole third parties have should facilitate changes in political, economic, social and other structures in the human-made world, allowing the relatively more disenfranchised parties greater access to what structural violence had previously denied them – resources in the human-made and natural worlds for fulfilling their needs (2001).
displace resources that form part of a peace constituency and if the approach addresses all levels of an affected population (Woodhouse, 1999b).  

Ramsbotham et al hold that there has been a shift from seeing third-party interventions as the main responsibility of external agencies towards respecting the role of internal third parties or indigenous peacemakers (2005). It is crucial to build constituencies and capacities within societies and to learn from domestic cultures how to manage conflicts in a constructive way over time (Ramsbotham et al, 2005). The internal actors from within the conflict zones are seen as the ones who will eventually assume the central role in transforming violent conflict into a peaceful situation. As Paffenholtz remarks, the internal actors are the only actors who can achieve a sustainable peace (2004). Therefore, strategies to strengthen internal actors would make resolving conflict and sustaining peaceful relationships in the long-term more feasible (Paffenholtz, 2004).

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80 Miall also maintains that people within the parties, within the society or region affected and outside actors with relevant human and material resources have complementary roles to play in the long-term process of peacebuilding (2004).

81 For instance, Caritas International (1999) proposes several ways to support local peacemakers: providing an advisory capacity, facilitating local initiatives, workshops and training in a number of fields which local groups might identify as imperative. The central aim of the support is to empower people of goodwill in conflict affected communities to rebuild democratic institutions and to help in the development of the local peacemakers’ inner resources of wisdom, courage and compassionate non-violence.
2-3 What dynamics have had impact on the understanding of conflict and conflict resolution?

2-3-1 Reassessing Protracted Social Conflicts in the context of the post-Cold War era

According to Azar, approaches to conflict before his concept of protracted social conflict had treated only the symptoms of overt conflict without addressing the problems of structural inequality and violence (1983). His main point is that without analyzing the relationship between conflict and development factors such as structural inequality, resource misdistribution, poorly planned and executed development projects, ethnic struggle and colonial experience, we cannot understand the dynamics of war and peace (1983).

Azar defines protracted social conflict as the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation (1991). As Ramsbotham argues, the sources of protracted social conflicts lay within and across states with four clusters of elements identified as preconditions for their transformation to high intensity (2005). The four variables are: the communal content – the identity group as the basic unit in protracted social conflict; deprivation of human needs; governance and the state’s role as the crucial factor in the gratification or frustration of individual
and identity group needs; and international linkages, in particular, political-economic relations of economic reliance within the international economic system and the web of political-military linkages forming regional and global patterns of clientage and cross-border interest (Ramsbotham, 2005).82

In understanding protracted social conflict, it is of great importance to keep in mind that for Azar inequality in social structures is mainly responsible for overt hostile behavior (Azar, 1983). A protracted social conflict is seen as the product of political and economic inequality and ideological dominations of one group over another, as a result of which, the unequal access to power is legitimized and the asymmetrical structure is maintained (Azar, 1983).

From these perspectives, it could be assumed that a protracted social conflict would arise when there is an unequal access to political and economic opportunity between/among different identity groups and the systems prioritize one or a few groups over others, which could result in the failure to meet the needs of all groups in a fair way. From Azar’s protracted social conflict perspective, as the deprivation of

82 Azar claims that although protracted social conflict occurs when communities are deprived of gratification of their basic needs based on their communal identity, the deprivation results from a complex causal chain involving the role of the state and the pattern of international linkage (1990). Further, he insists that initial conditions such as colonial legacy, domestic historical setting and the multicommunal nature of the society play critical role in shaping the genesis of protracted social conflict (1990).
basic needs is intertwined with structural and cultural violence, it is imperative to
address those two violence in order to fulfill everyone’s basic needs (Kanisin, 2003).
As Miall assesses, Azar’s studies in protracted social conflict can be understood as
having major influence on conflict transformation theory by proposing the protracted
quality of contemporary conflicts (2004). Miall explains that most contemporary
violent conflicts are asymmetric in nature, marked by inequalities of power and status
between/among groups (2004). Further, according to Nathan, there are four structural
conditions that can be generally recognized as characteristic of contemporary
conflicts: “authoritarian rule; the exclusion of minorities from governance;
socioeconomic deprivation combined with inequality; and weak states that lack the
institutional capacity to manage normal and political and social conflict” (2000: 189).
Thus, it could be argued that examining structural inequality becomes critical in
understanding contemporary conflict.

If it can be demonstrated that structural inequality, that is, social injustice is a source
of conflict, then achieving social justice that responds to the needs of all people or
groups becomes a critical agenda, in which peacebuilding can play an important
role.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{83} Although Azar himself did not discuss peacebuilding in his works, if we look into
the contents of peacebuilding, we could see that Azar’s theory of protracted social
conflict and peacebuilding are interconnected. Azar and Farah claimed that a
protracted social conflict involves a history of social interactions within an unequal
According to Christie et al, peacebuilding is “designed to reduce structural violence” (2001: 11). Bush states that the challenge of peacebuilding is to identify and cultivate structures, with sporadic violence representing deep crises in social interactions in the economic and political spheres, which makes it necessary to do a critical analysis of the structural causes for inequalities, the political power structure and the ways they may produce violence (1981). In protracted social conflicts, Azar insists, we can see features such as distributive injustice represented by political, economic, and social disparities among different groups and any approaches that do not address these injustices would rather prolong the conflict (1986). In other words, inequality in the social structure is mainly responsible for hostile behavior (Azar, 1983), which could lead to that structural transformation to achieve fair access of every group to political and economic activities is of necessity. Azar also insists that highly centralized political structures are sources of conflict since those structures tend to be dominated by one or a few groups and do not respond to the needs of all groups (1986).

Therefore, Azar claims that conflict resolution in protracted social conflict requires an open, participatory and decentralized political structures as opposed to highly centralized, dominant and exclusive structures since decentralized political systems could enable the local authorities to control their political, economic and social concerns (1986). Put differently, from Azar’s viewpoints, policy and institutional designs should emerge not from the top-down but from the bottom-up (1991). Inputs from the grass-roots level concerning various communal actors should be incorporated into the overall decision-making process (Azar, 1991). This would show that for Azar, achievement of social justice based on the fair participation of all groups in policy and decision-making is important in resolving conflict.

According to Fisher, the basic idea of peacebuilding is transforming the political and economic systems of a society so as to overcome the structural inequalities that can be seen as a cause of overt violence among different groups (2001). This could show, as Christie et al state, that peacebuilding stresses the promotion of social justice (2001). In other words, as Botes notes, social systems that are structurally peaceful could be created by constructing economic, political and cultural institutions in which decision-making power is equally distributed among groups (2003b). Thus, as Christie maintains, peacebuilding could be understood as a movement toward social justice that can be achieved when political structures become more inclusive by giving voice to the groups that have been marginalized in decision-making, as a result of which, economic structures is also transformed and everyone could gain access to material resources to meet basic needs (2001). Further, Clements states that peacebuilding is what most societies do spontaneously – developing effective rule making regimes, dispute resolution mechanisms and cooperative arrangements that can gratify basic economic, social, cultural and humanitarian needs of all concerned (1997).

Sustainable peace promoted by peacebuilding approach as Christie et al claims, needs peacemaking efforts within the context of long term strategy to produce more equitable social structures – both peaceful means of dealing with differences and socially just ends (2001). From those perspectives, it could be argued that the basic aims of peacebuilding is transforming unequal social structures, empowering those who have been marginalized in the society and enhancing the society’s competence to deal with conflict in peaceful and constructive manner. Thus it could be seen that both Azar’s theory of protracted social conflict and peacebuilding see social justice and empowerment of the grassroots as the important factors to resolve conflict in the long term. Therefore, exploring the relationship between Azar’s protracted social conflict and peacebuilding could be effective.
the political, economic and social space, within which groups in conflict can identify, develop and adopt the resources necessary to construct a peaceful and just society (2004). Further, he claims that the ultimate aim of peacebuilding is to strengthen or create democratic structures and processes that are fair and respond to the needs of every citizen – institutions that guarantee and promote the political rights and responsibilities of state and civil society and buttress human security through the promotion of sound and sustainable economic, judicial and social practices (2004).

Azar advocates structural development that is characterized as progressive reform in the sociopolitical structures and a redistribution of power, which will lead to the foundation of institutions that can promote economic development (1991). The degree of distributional inequalities is a matter of the flexibility of power relations: “the more flexible they are, the higher is the system’s capacity for integration (the less potential for conflict) and vice versa” (Azar and Farah, 1981: 331). The integrative competence of social system relies on: “the degree of mobility; the existence of institutionalized processes of mediation and arbitration such as a fair judiciary system; the degree of political participation; and the degree of inequality socialization (the levels of acceptance for the existing inequalities” (Azar and Farah, 1981: 331). As Ramsbotham summarizes, recommendations from Azar’s view on conflict resolution are: “the importance of managing ethnic dominance, countering lack of economic opportunity
and remedying government inability to protect minorities” (2005: 123) and promoting the capacity of society itself to resolve conflict in a non-violent and constructive way. Thus, it is clear that Azar’s proposals are very essence of peacebuilding.

Azar also emphasizes the linkage between protracted social conflict and the international system. He insists that the peripheral integration of developing countries into the international economic system has created conditions that promote the rise and perpetuation of protracted social conflict (1983). According to him, a growing structure of economic inequality, the inefficacy of the economic development model and bureaucratic authoritarianism enabling the state to cope with the economic crises resulting from the integration into the global economy are examples of the linkage (1983). Therefore, restoring equality of economic opportunity among states is crucial in resolving protracted social conflict. For him, critical analysis of international political and economic systems and eventual transformation of them are essential to achieve a peaceful and stable world in the long run.

Azar’s insight into the international dimension of protracted social conflict is still important in understanding contemporary conflict. For instance, Duffield insists that contrary to the popular view of globalization that sees capitalist relations as redoubling their penetration and interconnection of all parts of the globe, the central
regions of what is called the liberal world system appear to be consolidating and reinforcing the ties between them at the cost of outlying areas (2001). Further, he argues that in order to struggle with declining development assistance from the North, Southern rulers have formulated adaptive and innovative strategies for their economic and political survival (1999). These strategies are the formulation of new alliances with international actors including commercial ties to create the informal economy and those connections have resulted in both semi-legal and illegal parallel activities, which involve the control, coercion or deprivation of people’s (citizens’) assets (1999). Consequently he argues that many contemporary internal conflicts are not an irrational departure from daily life, but a rational strategy for Southern rulers or those who grip the power to survive globalization and changing nature of the nation-state (1999).

Duffield’s analysis shows that at least some contemporary conflicts cannot be fully comprehended or addressed without linking them to national, regional and international structures. Therefore, in the conclusion chapter of his work, he advocates the need for critical analysis of the nature of the political complexes associated with the contemporary conflicts, how such complexes are integrated within the liberal

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84 See also Christie et al (2001). They maintain that globalization, which is referred to as the worldwide push for free markets, has left enormous inequalities on a large scale.

85 In other work (2001), Duffield states while the South has been isolated and excluded by the dominant web of global economy, the South has been integrated into the liberal world system through the spread and deepening of all kinds of parallel and shadow transborder activity.
world system, and how the institutions and networks of global governance should be reformed in order to address the complexity of global structure (2001). As Ramsbotham argues, Duffield’s critical approach to the global system echoes the main thrust of Azar’s approach, that is, international linkages of protracted social conflict (2005). Besides that, as Miall claims, it should be noted that in the long run, “the nature of the international system shapes how conflicts are resolved in many ways” (1992: 60).

From these analyses, it could be argued that Azar’s analysis of conflict represented by the concept of protracted social conflict and his comprehensive and long-term oriented conflict resolution have huge implications for understanding contemporary conflicts. This does not mean that we should follow his theory blindly. Rather, the point is that the critical and constructive examination of protracted social conflict could give us some hints or wisdom to resolve contemporary conflicts.

2-3-2 Social psychology and conflict

Intergroup dynamism

As discussed in the previous chapter, social psychology has made a valuable contribution to the development of conflict resolution. Besides that, it has also been claimed that the group is the essential unit in conflict, and therefore, it is important to
examine psychological dynamism between/among groups.

According to Sheriff and Sheriff, the term “intergroup relations” means “relations between two or more groups and their respective members” (1979: 8). They also state that whenever individuals, who belong to one group, interact with another group or its members in terms of their group identification, there arises intergroup behavior (1979). In short, intergroup behavior involves actions by member of one group towards members of another group (Brown, 2001).

There are mainly two research agendas social psychology has been engaged in to approach the psychological dimension in conflict – social categorization/social identity theory and contact hypothesis (Brewer and Gaertner, 2003).

According to Brewer, through categorization, human judgment and cognition processes come to be constructed, in which the objects and events are lumped together into meaningful groups that enable us to deal with incoming information (2003). Categorizing the world into a manageable number of groups not only helps people to simplify and make sense of it, but also plays the key role in defining who they are.

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86 See also Hogg and Vaughan (1995). They define intergroup behavior as intersection between one or more representatives of two or more separate social groups.
(Brown, 2001). In other words, social categorization enables the individual to undertake many forms of social action and creates and defines the individual’s place in society (Tajfel and Tuner, 1979).

Furthermore, the most important thing in social categorization is that, as Brewer maintains, the categorization of a person into a social group creates a division between an ingroup (a category to which the perceiver belongs) and an outgroup (a category to which the perceiver does not belong) (2003) – the division between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The ingroup and outgroup distinction is the underlying component of social psychological theory of intergroup relations (Brewer, 2003) and it is important to examine how this distinction affects psychological dynamism.

Turner holds that social categorization can be internalized to change the psychology and conduct of the individual, that is, “producing a qualitative shift to a collective psychology” (1996: 20). According to Hogg and Vaughan, categorization of people into an ingroup (us) and an outgroup (them) causes an accentuation effect: the perceptual accentuation of similarities among people within a category and difference between people from different categories (1995). So, the perception of people in terms

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87 See also Hogg and Vaughan (1995). They hold that social categories provide members with a social identity – a definition of who they are and a description and evaluation of what his entails and instruct appropriate behavior for members.
of social group memberships brings about a tendency to overemphasize the perceived similarities within groups and the perceived differences between groups, which causes stereotyping\textsuperscript{88} and prejudice\textsuperscript{89} (Turner, 1996).

Through categorization, people come to be perceived and behave not as unique individuals but as group members (Hogg and Vaughan, 1995). Besides that, once categories have been formed and become salient, people are biased toward information that enhances the differences between members of different categories (Brewer, 2003). Further, as Stephan and Stephan argue, “the very act of categorization causes the tendency to evaluate oneself and one’s group positively” (1996: 103).\textsuperscript{90} In addition to that, ingroup and outgroup assessments tend to be inversely related, that is, the more positively the ingroup is evaluated, the more negatively the outgroup is evaluated (Stephan and Stephan, 1996) since the distinctiveness and value of one’s group stems from comparison to other group (Brewer, 2003).

\textsuperscript{88} Forsyth defines stereotype as cognitive generalization on the qualities and characteristics of the member of a particular groups (1990). He also notes that stereotype comes with certain built-in biases since it paints a picture of the out-group that is too simplistic, too extreme and too homogenous (1990).
\textsuperscript{89} Prejudice can be defined as the holding of derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs, the remark of negative affect or the demonstration of hostile or discriminatory behavior towards members of a group on account of their membership of that group (Kremer et al, 2003). They also state that prejudice is generally recognized as an affectively and emotionally-based negative attitudes (2003).
\textsuperscript{90} Hepburn maintains that in the state of people being de-personalized as the categorization becomes salient, if they cannot see their groups in a positive way, they cannot see themselves in a positive way (2003).
In short, members of outgroups are viewed as similar to each other, as different from the ingroup and as possessing generally negative features, and through those perceptions outgroup members will not be treated as individuals but as generic group members (Stephan and Stephan, 1996). This process could be the basis for negative stereotyping and for discriminatory actions derived from stereotyping, such as dehumanization of the outgroup and antagonistic responses toward them (Stephan and Stephan, 1996), as a result of which, mutual distrust between ingroup and outgroup can become more serious and intergroup competition can be fiercer. Thus, as Forsyth insists, categorization and its psychological dynamism show that even if conflict is rooted in objective characteristics of the situation, subjective biases would further divide the opposing groups (1990) and exacerbate conflictual situation.

Although categorization and its psychological dynamism are the key elements in social psychology perspectives on intergroup conflict, it should be noted that there is argument over whether categorization derived from social identity theory is a cause of conflict. For example, Tajfel and Turner argue that the mere perception of belonging to two distinctive groups – social categorization – is sufficient to touch off intergroup discrimination that favors the ingroup (1979). The mere consciousness of the presence of an outgroup is enough to give rise to intergroup competitive and discriminatory responses on the part of the ingroup (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).
However, Turner and Reynolds counter-argue that it is only when the positive distinctiveness of the ingroup is threatened that ingroup favoritism in the negative domain arises (2003). They claim that social conflict cannot be attributed to psychological processes exclusively but should be analyzed in terms of the combination of many aspects as conflict is shaped by the historical, social, economic, and political structure of society (2003). Therefore, intergroup conflict will emerge when insecure identities and a socially competitive need for positively assessed distinctiveness are correlated with a conspicuous division into groups and a realistic conflict of interests (Turner and Reynolds, 2003). From these perspectives, the psychological dynamism derived from social categorization is not seen as an alternative to conflicting group interests or the impact of the macro-social structure (Turner, 1996). Rather, it should be recognized that psychological intergroup dynamism is a complementary process and an interacting part of the complex web of factors that condition intergroup relations (Turner, 1996).

**Contact hypothesis**

According to Brewer and Gaertner, the contact hypothesis is “a general set of ideas about reducing intergroup prejudice and discrimination that developed among social scientists in the 1940s in the context of inter-racial relations in the United States” (2003: 452). The basic assumption behind the contact hypothesis is that since
intergroup hostility is caused by unfamiliarity and separation, under the appropriate settings, contact among members of different groups will reduce hostility and bring about more positive intergroup attitudes (Brewer and Gaertner, 2003).

The contact hypothesis assumes that contact between different groups will enhance mutual communication and enable them to discover that they share similar basic attitudes and values and to appreciate each other’s way of life and consequently mutual hostile attitudes, prejudices, and misconception would be reduced (Niens and Cairns, 2001). Thus, theoretically, it can be supposed that contact hypothesis can play an important role in resolving intergroup conflict since, as examined, psychological dynamism of intergroup relations can exacerbate conflict and it is critical to address the psychological negative impact on conflict.91

Gordon Allport, who made a huge contribution to theorization of contact hypothesis, states that prejudice will be reduced by equal status between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of shared objectives (1954). He also holds that the effect of contact will be increased if the contact is provided with institutional support, which will provide members of opposing groups with an opportunity to perceive common

91 For instance, Ryan (1995) states that the most simplistic way of peacebuilding is the contact hypothesis that is defined as the generally held view that interaction between members of different groups will reduce ethnic prejudice and intergroup tension.
interests and common humanity between them (1954).

From Allport’s original ideas, there are some generally agreed conditions central to the formulation of the contact hypothesis: social and institutional support for the contact; equal status among participants; promotion of some cooperation over jointly desired goals; and enough frequency and duration of contact to promote the meaningful relationships (Brown, 1996). Under these conditions, it is expected that the groups in conflict will be provided with the opportunity for positive experiences with members of the outgroup, which disconfirms previous negative attitudes and eventually changes attitudes toward and views on the outgroup as a whole (Brewer and Gaertner, 2003).

**Critique of contact hypothesis**

According to Kremer et al, it has been generally hypothesized by social psychologists that the ideal contact conditions would improve the interpersonal relationships between members of different groups and give them the opportunity to rectify their personal negative stereotypes and recognize the basic similarities between them (2003). The problem of this assumption is that even if intergroup contact takes place under the ideal circumstances, mutually nurtured positive attitudes formed toward individual members of the outgroup during the contact often fail to generalize to the outgroup in general (Niens and Cairns, 2001).
Behind this problem, there is a tendency in contact hypothesis that participants have been seen as individuals not as members of respective groups, which blocks the cognitive link to the prior groups (Brown, 2001). Treating outgroup members as individuals, not as group members is unlikely to bring about changes in attitudes toward the group in general (Stephan and Stephan, 1996). As Ryan insists, since intergroup conflict is a collective phenomenon, an appropriate collective model of man is required (1995). The psychological elements of intergroup hostility or antagonism will be best dealt with in terms of collective social cognition and motivation (Ryan, 1995).

By placing social groups in the background, interpersonal contacts will not change intergroup relations since individual outgroup members will not be viewed as members of social groups (Stephan and Stephan, 1996). Therefore, it should be recognized that contact must take place not between individuals as individuals, but rather between members of respective groups (Niens and Cairns, 2001). Put another

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92 Hepburn analyzes that traditional contact hypothesis derived from Allport’s work has understood prejudice as individual problems and, therefore, the solution to prejudice is seen in the framework of a liberalist view of society that stresses the fundamental nature of individual actions and understanding (2003). While social psychology has been motivated by a concern with human betterment and welfare including resolving intergroup conflict, it works within an individualist dimension of social organization (Hepburn, 2003).

93 According to Brewer, social cognition is the study of how individuals process information about themselves and other individuals, but it is also about the perceptions that guide interpersonal exchanges and about cognitive representations of social groups (2003).
way, group identities should be made salient in intergroup interaction to maximize the chance that positive changes generated by the contact will generalize to the outgroup as a whole (Stephan and Stephan, 1996). Thus, for the improvement or enhancement of the effect of contact hypothesis, the shift of focus on individual dimension to group or collective dimension is crucial.

**Contact hypothesis combined with other elements**

Brewer and Gaertner argue that one of the serious concerns about the contact hypothesis is whether the results acquired under the relatively benign settings of intergroup relations between experimentally generated groups in the laboratory can be generally applied to the real-world social groups with a history of conflict and antagonism, inequalities of status and power and political struggle (2003). Stephan and Stephan critique that contact hypothesis is generally oriented toward the present and less concerned with the historical causes of negative intergroup relations and the wider social context that cannot be subject to situational control (1996).

However, as Hewstone and Brown insist, most social conflicts are caused by historical, political and economic division in the society (1986). Intergroup discrimination and hostility are derived from elements other than mere lack of knowledge or inadequate perceptions; rather it should be recognized that a prevalent inequality between/among
groups is the background to the contact hypothesis and to any analysis of intergroup contact and conflict (Hewstone and Brown, 1986). Therefore, for instance, although the equal status between the participants in contact has been recognized as one of the critical factors in contact circumstances, the manipulation of equal status within a contact situation may be highly difficult or impossible to achieve (Hewstone and Brown, 1986) since actual inequality between groups is embedded in wider socio-political and socio-economic contexts.

In short, social phenomena including social conflicts have historical backgrounds and are affected by economic and political processes that cannot be addressed only by social psychological analysis (Brown, 2001). The use of contact hypothesis as a means of improving a conflictual situation depends much on the social structure that patterns intergroup relations (Pettigrew, 1986). As Ropers insists, the critical concerns of social conflicts are not stereotypical perceptions, difference of opinion and cultural standards, but rather actual conflicts of interests, structural elements and the struggle for power and influence (2004). Intergroup contact can ameliorate intergroup relations in society, but given that the social structural dimension has huge impact on intergroup relations, the role of contact hypothesis would be limited (Hewstone and Brown, 1986). In order to promote the successful intergroup contact, social structural transformation should be sought as the ultimate concern.
Since prejudice and conflict arise from various interrelated elements, there is no simple remedy and any single approach will be limited despite the strength of the theoretical basis (Kremer et al, 2003), which is true with contact hypothesis. Contact theory like most social-psychological processes does not have causal superiority in explaining social conflict (Pettigrew, 1986). As Ryan cautions, contact should be understood as a necessary but not sufficient condition for bringing about a positive change in intergroup relations and attitudes (1995). This does not reject the idea that contact can create a change of intergroup negative attitudes. Rather, other approaches need to be added to contact hypothesis to make it more effective as a means of reducing stereotypes, preventing scapegoating and reversing dehumanization (Ryan, 1995).94

2-4 What kinds of conflict have been identified and prioritized for resolution?

Salience of internal conflict in the post-Cold War era

According to Woodhouse, the vast majority of armed conflicts occurring in the post-Cold War era have been internal conflicts95 (1996). However, it would be

94 For instance, Ryan proposes several steps as peace-building approaches along with contact hypothesis: economic development with economic justice, the promotion of superordinate goal, education for mutual understanding between/among different groups and reconciliation and forgiveness policy. Regarding details of respective approaches, see Ryan (1995: 129-152).

95 Brown defines internal conflict as violent or potentially violent political dispute whose origin can be tracked down mainly to domestic factors and where armed conflict occur or threatens to come into being generally within the boundaries of a single state (1996).
missing the point to insist that internal conflicts have emerged only after the Cold War. As Duffield claims, for several decades, the majority of armed conflicts around the globe have been taking place within the state boundaries rather than between states (1999). Further, Harbom and Wallensteen argue that in every year since the end of World War Two, ongoing internal armed conflicts have outnumbered inter-state conflicts and that general increase in the number of conflicts between 1946 and 1992 is mainly explained by an increase in internal conflicts (2005).96 In short, as Goodhand and Hulme state, the shift in the patterns of armed conflict from wars between states to conflicts within states, which began around the end of World War Two, remained the same even in the post-Cold War era (1999)

Why did internal conflicts draw little attention during the Cold War even though the number of those conflicts had been increasing? Rothman holds that researchers in international relations focused on the causes and resolutions of inter-state war and consequently the analysis of internal conflicts was almost neglected (2001). Ramsbotham argues that throughout the Cold War, civil-international wars were generally framed by the Cold War geopolitics and at superpower dimension, and further, the two main blocs were preparing for the possibility of a full-scale military confrontation in spite of the nuclear deadlock (2005). It was this possibility of

96 Regarding the detailed data of an increase in the number of internal conflict, see Harbom and Wallensteen (2005: 623-635).
devastating military encounter of great powers that preoccupied the concerns of International Relations and Strategic Studies during the Cold War (Ramsbotham, 2005), which resulted in little attention being given to internal conflicts.

Although the post-Cold War era has seen an increased acknowledgement of internal conflicts, the problem of inter-state war cannot be dismissed. For example, Patomaki warns that the possibility of a third world war fought with weapons of mass destruction still threatens humanity (2001). Therefore he also insists that it is crucial to implement organized and concerted observation of technologies and the control of current weapons of mass destruction to prevent the global-scale war (2001).

However, at the same time, internal conflict also has a tremendous impact on the international community, which is well demonstrated by Brown. He asserts that the examination of internal conflict is significant mainly for five reasons. They are: internal conflict has been widespread; it has caused devastating suffering; it so often affects and involves neighboring states, which brings about regional destabilization; it engages the interests of distant powers and international organizations; and the efforts to address the problems put forward by internal conflict have been in the process of being reassessed by policy-makers at the national, regional and international level (1996). His argument clearly shows that internal conflict can have implications for
peace on the global scale.

Woodhouse argues that the basic unit of the internal conflicts in the post-Cold War era has been ethnic groups or that an ethnic element has framed contemporary internal conflict (1996). Besides that, he claims that there is a close connection between the protracted and violent nature of contemporary ethno-nationalist conflict and the identity-developing function of membership in ethnic groups (1996).

Behind the salience of ethnic identity in contemporary internal conflict, there is “the lack of convergence between ethnic communities and state boundaries” (Woodhouse, 1996: 37). However, as Harff and Gurr insist, the end of the Cold War cannot entirely be blamed for the outbreak of ethnic conflict in the 1990s onwards since the extent of conflicts between ethnic groups or between ethnic groups and states increased steadily during the Cold War (2004). Put another way, the explosion of ethnopolitical conflicts in the post-Cold War era has been an extension of a trend of conflict that began at the beginning of Cold War (Harff and Gurr, 2004). The outbreak of ethnopolitical conflicts can be understood as a manifestation of the mismatch between the state competence to govern and ethnic groups that want to defend and promote their collective identity and interests.⁹⁷ While state is a central component in international

⁹⁷ Hutchinson and Smith hold that in the modern state there was no room for ethnic
relations, it should also be remarked that examination of identity groups or collectivities is crucial to gain a clear picture of the dynamics of contemporary conflict.

According to Gurr, ethnic groups are “people who share a distinctive and enduring collective identity based on common descent, shared experiences and cultural traits” (2000:3). An ethnic group can be defined as a collectivity within a larger society having real or supposed common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on symbolic elements defined as the archetype of their people-hood (Schermerhorn, 1996).\(^9\) Further, Hutchinson and Smith raise two important elements of ethnic identities. They are: the importance of shared myths and memories in the definitions of ethnic identities and the subjective identification of the individuals with the community; and the orientation to the past, that is, the orientation to the origins and ancestors of the community and to its historical formation (1996).

Why is ethnic identity important for us? Woodhouse observes historically there seems autonomy that was at odds with the requirement for all citizens to integrate into the national state. The ideologies of political nationalism required all the members of a nation state to be united and homogenous, which led to the advent of conflicts in states which had various ethnic communities (1996).

\(^9\) Hutchinson and Smith raise several generally seen main features of ethnicities. They are: a common proper name to identify and express the essence of the community; a myth of common ancestry; shared historical memories or shared memories of a common past; one or more components of common culture such as religion, customs, language and so on; a link with a homeland; and a sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the population (1996).
to be a human need for the development of collective identity based on common language and the perception of a shared history and culture (1996). Rupesinghe states that (ethnic) identity is “a system of belief or a way of constructing the world, that makes life predictable rather than random” (1995: 72). He also holds that ethnic identity is not only a psychological sense of self but also encompassing a sense of self in relation to the world, which may be experienced socially and psychologically (1995). In short, the sense of a common ethnicity, that is, ethnic identity has remained a major focus of identification of individuals (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996), which gives them a sense of security and existence.

Having explored ethnic identity as a key element in contemporary conflict, we have one more critical question to discuss: Does the difference or diversity of ethnic identity cause violent conflict?

There are three generally recognized approaches to analyze the relationship between ethnic identity and conflict. The first approach is primordialism. 99 From a primordialist viewpoint, violent conflict arises from ethnic differences or is ultimately

99 According to Kaufman, primordialism sees basic group or ethnic identity as consisting of the ready-made set of endowments and identifications every individual shares with other from the moment of birth and by the chance of the family into which he/she is born (2001). From the primordialist perspective, ethnic identity is seen as fixed and less malleable.
rooted in ethnicity itself since ethnic splits and tensions are normal (Lake and Rothchild, 1998).

The second approach is instrumentalist. From an instrumentalist viewpoint, the central objectives of a group are material and ethnic identity is invoked primarily as a means to gain those goals (Harff and Gurr, 2004). The instrumentalists consider ethnic identity as a tool used by individuals, groups or political elites to acquire some larger material ends (Lake and Rothchild, 1998). Ethnic identity is understood as one of the various alternative bases of identity (Gurr, 2000). The major point of instrumentalists is that ethnic identity becomes significant when ethnic symbols are invoked and manipulated by political entrepreneurs in response to group threats or opportunity (Gurr, 2000). On an instrumentalist view, conflict is mainly stimulated by political elites who activate ethnicity to pursue their political interests (Lake and Rothchild, 1998).

The third approach is generally called constructivist. One of the conspicuous critiques of the instrumentalist approach is that individualistic understanding of identity formation could ignore the larger social dimension or social impact on constructing

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100 Hutchinson and Smith state that one of the main ideas of instrumentalist is that individuals can freely cut and mix from various ethnic heritage and cultures to construct their own individual or group identities (1996).
ethnic identity (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996). From a constructivist standpoint, ethnicity is not necessarily what can be decided upon by individuals at will, like other political groups, but is embedded within and influenced by larger society (Lake and Rothchild, 1998). Therefore, the webs of social interactions form ethnic identity and violent conflict arises from social systems beyond individuals’ control (Lake and Rothchild, 1998).

From a constructivist point of view, the differences of ethnic identities themselves are not the causes of conflict. Rather, the salience of ethnic identity is aroused by socially derived inequalities in material well-being or political participation (Jeong, 2000). Smith maintains that features of ethnic identity, such as shared historical experiences, myths, religious beliefs and so on, become decisive as a result of comparisons with the members of other groups (2004). In particular, experiences of discrimination compared with other groups and political mobilization to protect the group’s perceived interest make those features salient (Smith, 2004). As Harff and Gurr hypothesize, the more strongly a person is identified with an ethnic group that is subject to discrimination, that is, social, political and economic inequality, the more likely he/she will be determined to take violent action (2004). In short, in the constructivist approach, social structural inequality between/among different ethnic groups should be addressed to resolve violent conflict.
Although those three approaches have distinct understandings of ethnic conflicts, they have complementary aspects. The primordialist approach helps to elucidate the intensity and persistence of ethnic action (Harff and Gurr, 2004). While it can be understood that ethnic identities are a flexible social construction, intense ethnic violence creates conditions that make exclusive ethnic boundaries and strengthen inter-ethnic antagonism (Kaufman, 2001). In the middle of ethnic violence, narrow and exclusive ethnic identities can come to be perceived as a powerful tool for survival (Francis, 2002). So, the dimension of exclusive ethnic identities cannot be denied at some stages of ethnic conflicts. At the same time, as the instrumentalists claim, we cannot deny the group material and political interests as the key elements in conflict. Besides that, the emergence of political competition between elites can be the proximate causes of violence, which has been seen in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and so on (Brown et al, 2001).

However, we have to explore the question of why the appeals of political elites or leaders can be attractive to the members of ethnic groups. Here social structural problems can be crucial. As Wilmer argues, elites’ or leaders’ appealing to the fears associated with exclusive ethnic identities will not necessarily instigate mass violence without the social structural variables – political and economic inequalities that arouse the sense of insecurity (2002). Structural insecurity causes uncertainty within the
group and strengthens its bonds, which makes it easy for political elites or leaders to appeal to the group members since they believe that their appeals reflect their own grievances and hardships. In short, political mobilization based on exclusive ethnic identity arises along with social injustice (Smith, 2004).

Thus, ethnic groups are most likely to mobilize or to take action including violence when various factors such as an exclusive ethnic identity, manipulation of political elites, group disadvantages derived from social inequalities and other factors, are combined together. Therefore, it is important to examine ethnic conflicts from a combined viewpoint of those three concepts as it enables us to comprehend their complex combination of causes.

2-5 The formation of conflict models: examining dimensions of conflict

2-5-1 Objective dimension

As Mitchell states, the possibility of resolving a conflict hinges on how we understand the basic nature of human conflict (1981). Firstly, there is the objective approach to conflict. According to the objectivist perspective, there are essential objective standards that exist independently of any single situation or relationship (Mitchell, 1981). Objectivists have traditionally believed in metaphysical realism: there is a world of objective reality, existing independently of human beings (Beckett, 1997). In
other words, there is the distinction between the subject and the object (Beckett, 1997).

From the objectivist viewpoint, conflicts are caused by a scarcity of resources and attempts to gain control over those resources (Fetherston, 2000). Additionally, “conflicts are objective, caused by knowable, measurable, reducible objects, outside of and separate from the subject” (Fetherston, 2000: 2). Since conflicts over material resources or real interests are an objective phenomenon that cannot be altered by the subjects, only temporary compromise settlement is logically possible (Mitchell, 1981). Therefore, so-called conflict settlement would be the main approach to conflict.

According to Ramsbotham et al, conflict settlement is defined as the achievement of an agreement between/among the parties, which prevents or ends an armed conflict (2005). Reiman argues that since conflict settlement is based on the tenets of management, most research in conflict settlement defines conflict as a problem of political order and of the status quo and supposes that conflict is attributed to the incompatible interests and the competition for scarce resources (2004). Conflict settlement is a way of managing armed conflict that stresses power and material interests and therefore, the emphasis is placed on getting parties in conflict to the negotiating table, agenda-setting, and reaching a agreement regarding the future
distribution of resources and power between/among parties (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997).

For the achievement of those objectives, the conflict settlement approach uses the methods such as arbitration, more or less powerful mediation, and negotiation (Beckett, 1997). Settlement approach can be understood as the intervention by mainly powerful third parties who have the power and the resources to put pressure on the conflictual parties to induce them to settlement (Miall, 2004).

**Critique of objective approach**

One of the critiques of settlement approaches is that they focus exclusively on material interests or resources and overlook the importance of relationships between/among groups in conflict and their mutual perceptions (Fetherston, 2000). For instance, Lake and Rothchild criticize that violence is misattributed exclusively to competition over scarce resources (1998). They argue that eventually violence is costly for groups: people are killed; factories, farms and any properties are devastated; and resources that might have been utilized for economic growth are diverted to destructive purposes (1998). Their insight shows that conflict settlement approaches, which revolve around the presumption that people compete for material resources, cannot explain the seemingly contradictory phenomenon: while groups seek to gain
resources, they destroy those resources or use them for violence. This is the point at which subjective elements play an important role.

Further critique of conflict settlement approaches is that they are integrated into asymmetric power structures and connected to maintaining those unequal power structures (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997). From the objective approach, since conflicts arise over the absolute amount of valuable resources, the outcome would be a compromised allocation or all going to one of the rival groups (Mitchell, 1981). In this understanding of conflict, social structure is not taken into account since the focal point is the competition for material resources. Therefore, for conflict settlement, success is “the containment of the violent conflict and a return to a status quo” (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997: 26). The settlement approach is aimed at removing the threats to the stability of the existing order and keeping the peace within the existing social framework. Therefore, the problem of conflict settlement is that while a resource-based settlement approach may enable conflictual parties coexist temporarily by means of more or less coercive or powerful third-party intervention, it ends up as short-term, material fixes that leave the structural inequalities between/among conflictual groups unresolved (Rothman, 2001).

These critiques do not deny the significance of objective approaches represented by
conflict settlement to resolve conflict. Rather, what should be emphasized is that exclusive adherence to objective elements can miss the full picture of conflict thereby missing the broad dynamism of conflict.

2-5-2 Subjective dimension

Vayrynen states that “every participant in a social interaction replies to the other in terms of his/her perceptions and cognitions of the other” (1991: 28), which is also true with conflict. As Miall mentions, almost everyone tends to see conflicts from their own perspectives, to identify with their own side and to neglect the concerns of the other (1992). Accordingly, examining attitudes and perceptions are crucial in understanding conflict dynamics.

According to Kelman, the premise of psychological analysis is that subjective elements play a role in the perception and interpretation of events (1997). In a conflict situation, the subjective factors may intensify the conflict by creating differences in the way the parties in conflict perceive reality and by imposing constraints on the rational pursuit of their interests (Kelman, 1997). Clearly, conflict about real interests or material resources occurs under certain psychological dispositions and in psycho-cultural contexts that have a huge impact on the intensity and duration of

\[^{101}\] Utterwulghe explains that psycho-cultural conflict theory stresses the role of
conflict and consequently contribute to determining the outcome (Utterwulghe, 1999).

Mitchell argues that in conflicts, and in particular, intense conflicts, there emerges a need for those involved to activate certain psychological processes and develop specific ranges of beliefs and attitudes for the easy utilization of a range of defensive processes and development of a range of attitudes to cope with the situation (1981).

Fisher states that it is commonly seen that in inter-group conflict each group has simplified beliefs or stereotypes of the other, or has a less differentiated image of the other than of itself (1999). Besides that, as more and more information comes forth regarding the intentions, motivations, strategies, frustrations, concerns, complexity and variety of the other groups, each side experiences cognitive dissonance between incoming information and its existing images and attitudes (Fisher, 1999).

Intergroup perceptions, images and attitudes will be influenced by both motivational and cognitive biases, which result in a selective and distorted view of the social world (Fisher, 1990a). Further, cognitive structures such as beliefs, expectations, and stereotypes, play a decisive role in perceiving, interpreting and assimilating incoming information (Fisher, 1990a). Thus, as Fisher concludes, distorted and self-justifying culturally shared, profound ‘us-them’ oppositions, the conceptualization of enemies and allies and deep-seated dispositions on human action deriving from earliest development (1999).
images of own and other group replace reality and eventually create their own reality (1990a). This does not deny the objective factors as the source of violent conflict: rather, what should be highlighted is that the distinction between the subjective dimension and the objective one eventually will be of little help in analyzing dynamics of conflict (Reiman, 2004).

Emotions as well as perception and cognition affect the dynamism of conflict. According to Crawford, emotions are the innate states which individuals convey to others as feelings, and those emotions are subjective experiences that are composed of physiological, intersubjective and cultural components (2000). Human beings have relationships with each other that are characterized by the type and degree of emotional involvement (Crawford, 2000).

Protraction of conflict tends to leave deep scars of anger, grief, hatred, mistrust, and feelings of victimhood (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004) and these emotions cripple community cohesion, interdependence and mutual protection between/among different groups (Kumar, 1997). In short, when groups are in conflict, especially violent conflict, they encounter serious difficulty in overcoming bitterness and grievances that have been built up through conflict as well as in altering their hostile perceptions and mutual fears, and consequently stabilized peace relations cannot be achieved.
(Bar-Simon-Tov, 2004). Therefore, reconciliation could be recognized as a critical factor in achieving lasting stabilized peace. Jeong claims that the removal of residual hatred, mistrust and a sense of having been wrong is important since all these feelings remain latent sources of future conflicts and violence unless they are tackled as part of a conflict resolution process (1999). If they remain unaddressed, desire for expressing grievances with revenge could be high.

One of the vital elements of peace is that different groups respect each other, recognize mutual interdependence and appreciate differences. In order to achieve that, mutual negative feelings should be transformed into positive ones so that each group can see the other as sharing the same human nature.

2-5-3 Structural dimension

One of the critiques of subjective approaches to conflict is that while misperceptions, emotions and a lack of communication between/among different groups are critical elements in conflict, structural factors need to be examined in comprehending the generation, escalation and outcome of a deep-rooted conflict (Jeong, 2003). In the previous chapter, the work of Johan Galtung was examined, which showed that one of his contributions to conflict resolution and peace studies was the proposition of the concept of structural violence. The rise of the concept of structural violence has
enabled us to broaden the meaning of violence. In other words, “violence has come to mean more than physically violent behavior” (Botes, 2003b: 273). Further, Botes analyses that since its advent, the term ‘structural violence’ has been used to delineate and investigate how political systems and social and organizational structures act as sources of social conflict (2003b).102

Dukes maintains that how people behave and live their lives are shaped by larger social circumstances in which they find themselves (1999). Therefore, individual or interpersonal conflicts should be analyzed in the context of a larger framework of social structures and those conflicts reflect the interplay of forces beyond the control of individuals (Dukes, 1999). Structural conflict is the outcome of a patterned social relationship that fails to gratify the basic needs and secure the vital interests of the parties concerned (Rubenstein, 1999). In short, from structural perspectives, the cause of violent conflict can be attributed to the mismatch between social values and the social structure of the society, that is, unequal distribution of political, economic and social goods between/among different groups (Mitchell, 2005).

Jeong argues that since power is located within a society, its impact spreads around the

102 According to Kriesberg, a social conflict arises when two or more persons or groups show the belief that they have incompatible objectives (2003). Social conflicts are concerned with conflicts among interacting people and parties in social conflicts view each other as adversaries in achieving their own goals (2003).
social structure as a whole (2003). Therefore, from a structural point of view, the
distribution of power between/among groups has a great impact on the course and
cconduct of conflict (Northrup, 1989). Northrup also maintains that policies and
structures play the major role in keeping status quo that results in consistent
inequalities in power and opportunities (1989).

Serious social conflict is embedded in an unequal social and economic system, an
unequal access to political decision-making and cultural marginalization of certain
groups (Jeong, 2000). The disparity of political and economic opportunities
between/among groups and the destruction of cultural identities of certain groups are
closely associated with the imposition of dominant and asymmetric power relations
(Jeong, 2000). Asymmetric power relations generate (between/among groups) unjust
ability to control events and these asymmetric relationships are embedded in a
complex network of social and material arrangements that produce the very structure
of everyday life (Jeong, 2003). Therefore, as Dukes states, social conflict is a
structural phenomenon that requires structural confrontation with marginalization of
any other effort (1999). In short, when structural dimension is taken into account,
social injustice should be the crucial element in understanding conflict.104

103 Montiel also states that a structural perspective is sensitive to social power
differentials between/among groups (2001).
104 Smith holds that political mobilization emerges around the theme of injustice
(2004). He states that people do that because they believe that it is just or because
Therefore, if conflict resolution does not include the need for structural transformation, that could result in perpetuating the status quo characterized as inequality or social injustice and could not contribute to resolving social conflict (Botes, 2003b). Rather, since conflictual relationships stem from political, economic and social divisions that serve as the basis of power differentials between/among groups, the deconstruction of dominant power relations through transformation of values and institutions can be seen as the crucial elements in removing antagonistic relationships (Jeong, 2003).

Structural transformation is strongly associated with peacebuilding. According to Bush, peacebuilding, in its broadest sense, refers to those initiatives that promote sustainable structures and processes which beef up the prospects for peaceful cohabitation and reduce the likelihood of the outbreak, reoccurrence of violent conflict (2004). Furthermore, Christie holds that peacebuilding can be conceptualized as activity toward social justice that occurs when political structures become more inclusive by giving voice to those who have been marginalized in decision-making and economic structure is transformed, which enables those who have been exploited to gain more access to material resources that satisfy their needs (2001). In short, as Montiel states, structurally peaceful social systems are marked by equally-distributed decision-making powers in the production, allocation and utilization of economic, they at least consider that it will redress the injustice they experience in their own daily lives. (2004).
political and cultural resources (2001). In order to achieve structural transformation, the foundation of participatory, democratic politics and the development of a culture, structures and skills for the positive handling of conflict will be of great importance (Francis, 2004).

While it should be appreciated that the application of psychological approaches has made a huge contribution to eliminating misperceptions and enemy images that impede negotiations between/among adversaries, discussion on structural transformation needs to be developed more (Jeong, 2003). As Jeong claims, conflict resolution needs to make effort to engage in a critical analysis of the origin and the nature of an existing order and explore alternative strategies for dealing with human conflict that is attributed to institutional problems (1999). Thus, as Yordan argues, from the structural perspective, one of the important tasks of conflict resolution would be to transform social systems and create or reform social structures to meet with the changing needs of the people (1998).

105 According to Christie et al, culturally, peacebuilding requires the transformation of cultural narratives or beliefs that legitimize the dominance of one group over another. From a political perspective, peacebuilding occurs when political systems that oppress some groups are transformed so that there are equal opportunities for political representation and voice. And from economic viewpoints, structures that exploit and deprive people of resources necessary for optimal growth and development should be transformed, which enables everyone in the society to have enough material amenities such as decent housing, jobs, education, health care and so on (2001).

106 Bush says that it is crucial to buttress or create democratic structures and processes that are fair and responsive to the needs of everyone in a society, that is, establishing institutions that secure and promote the political rights and responsibilities of state and civil society (2004).
2-6 What have been the foundations of the understanding of contemporary conflict resolution?

2-6-1 What is epistemology?

In the previous sections, while the scope of contemporary conflict resolution has been explored, it has been also revealed that there are various approaches to analyze conflict, which has been demonstrated especially in the section of dimensions of conflict. Through that section, it has been shown that each dimension has its own distinctive approach to conflict: each dimension has its own specific approach in analyzing the same conflict. This raises the basic questions: “Why is there a diversity of approaches to conflict? What are the causes of the varieties of means to understand conflict?”

One of the valid answers to these questions is the difference of epistemological assumptions underpinning each approach to conflict. In other words, when there are different epistemologies, we have different understandings of conflict even when we are looking into the same set of dynamics or relations.

According to Greco, there are, first of all, two essential questions related to epistemology: “What is knowledge?” and “What can we know?” (1999: 1). Then, if we consider that we can know something, there arises the third question: “How can
we know what we do know?” (Greco, 1999: 1) and these three questions are the central themes in the study of epistemology. Put another way, epistemology examines the nature, extent and justification of knowledge (Rosenberg, 1995). Thus, epistemology pertains to providing a philosophical foundation for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can make sure that they are both adequate and legitimate (Maynard, 1994). Therefore, epistemology can be defined as the theory of knowledge concerned with how we know what we do, what justifies us believing what we do, and what standards of evidence we should use in seeking truth about the world and human experience.

According to Crotty, ontology is the study of being, which is concerned with ‘what is’, with the nature of existence or with the nature of reality as such (1998). How are epistemology and ontology related? Crotty claims that ontology and epistemology are interconnected since to talk of the construction of meaning is to talk of the construction of meaningful reality (1998). Any understanding of reality is supported by epistemological assumptions of how we know that reality as such. Therefore, epistemology can be recognized as the frameworks or models behind our experience of the world and ourselves from which we understand or analyze any phenomena or give certain meanings to them.

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107 See also Crotty (1998: 8). He states that epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general basis.
Knowledge is a valued state in which we engage in cognitive contact with reality (Zagrebski, 1999). Therefore, knowledge can be understood as a relation or interplay between a conscious subject and some portion of reality and the majority of epistemological attention has been devoted to the subject side of the relation (Zagzebski, 1999). Put differently, the existence of a world without a mind is possible, but meaning without a mind is impossible (Crotty, 1998). Recognizing a world and things in the world independently of our consciousness of them does not mean that meanings of them exist apart from our consciousness (Crotty, 1998). Accordingly, epistemology is connected with the nature of our consciousness and appearance of reality.

2-6-2 Why is epistemology important?

Rothman insists that we regularly say one thing, which corresponds with our adopted theories, while acting differently, conforming with our theories in use, which are derived from tacit conceptual frameworks that lead to certain actions for accomplishing clear purposes (1992). The idea of tacit knowing suggests that actions people take are seldom accidental but are established upon certain epistemological frameworks (Rothman, 1992)

As Chia claims, since epistemology examines how and what it is possible to know, in
epistemological inquiry we should contemplate the methods and standards through which we produce reliable and verifiable knowledge (2002). Our epistemological assumptions form and orient us towards particular strategies for knowledge production and action (Chia, 2002). Therefore, as Gray insists, the choice of methods of any research will be affected by the chosen methodology and the methodology will be influenced by the theoretical standpoint which is further based on the researcher’s epistemological stance (2004).

Cheldelin et al state that the role of research can be described as a goal-driven undertaking whose aim is to discover new knowledge (2003). The objective of the discovery or proposal of new knowledge is to contribute to theory – understanding of a phenomenon – and practice – use of knowledge to improve conditions (Cheldelin et al, 2003). However, justification of our choice of methods, methodology and theory in creating knowledge lies in epistemological stance. Accordingly, it is of great importance to start by contemplating epistemological foundations in order to create or produce knowledge. Put differently, from a certain epistemological framework, a set of method, methodology and theoretical viewpoint is produced, which leads to the creation of knowledge. Further, it can be seen that to know the epistemological foundation enables us to understand how certain knowledge has come into being.
2-6-3 What is the implication of discussing epistemology in conflict resolution?

As Bryman holds, methods of research are tied to different visions of how social reality should be examined (2004). Accordingly, they are intimately connected with the ways in which the researchers envisage the relationships between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be analyzed (Bryman, 2004). In other words, each researcher has his/her own distinctive method to examine the same phenomenon, which gives the various meanings to it and this difference derives from the different epistemological assumptions. In short, different epistemologies or epistemological frameworks result in creating the various understandings of the same phenomenon, which is also true with the studies of conflict resolution.

According to Ramsbotham et al, conflict resolution is concerned with addressing the deep-rooted sources of conflict, which implies that when behavior is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer antagonistic and the structure of the conflict has been transformed (2005). This definition can be seen as generic and there have been many people who are devoted to conflict resolution in terms of both practice and theory-building: Burton (1990), Azar (1990), Fisher (1990 and 1997), Jabri (1996), Avruch (1998), Vayrynen (2001) are the good examples although they are only a part of those who have been engaged in the area.
Further, there have been various ways identified in which different theories of conflict propose different understandings of the root causes or origins of conflict, which result in the different explanations of conflict mechanisms for tackling or transforming violent conflict. Behind these distinct approaches to conflict, there is the difference of epistemological frameworks of those who are engaged in conflict resolution.

By examining the epistemologies that have played the crucial roles in framing contemporary conflict resolution, we will be able to know how conflict has been understood in terms of the root causes and how they should be addressed. Further, the critical analysis of those epistemologies will reveal what areas have been underdeveloped in contemporary conflict resolution: what kinds of elements have not been explored as the root causes of conflict.

Therefore, in the next chapter, several epistemologies that have established the framework of contemporary conflict resolution will be critically examined and this critical challenge will eventually enable us to explore what epistemologies can be added to existing ones in order to expand the contemporary framework of conflict resolution. When new epistemological assumptions have been added to those epistemologies that have framed contemporary conflict resolution, new views on conflict dynamics and resolution of conflict can be constructed, which might empower
us to explore new theoretical and practical arguments in the future.
Chapter Three: Critical Analysis of Epistemological Foundations of Contemporary Conflict Resolution

3-1 Objective epistemology

3-1-1 Nature of objective epistemology

Knowledge as universal applicability

According to Gray (2004), Western thought has traditionally been categorized into two antithetical views of reality. Heraclitus who lived in Ephesus in ancient Greece put a strong emphasis on a constantly or continuously changing and emergent world. Contrary to this view, Parmenides who succeeded Heraclitus emphasized quite differently a permanent and unchanging reality.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, there have been two types of ontology: a Heraclitean ontology of becoming and a Parmenidean ontology of being (Gray, 2004).

This division of ontological view affects the epistemological approach to understand the world. From a Heraclitean view of reality, knowledge could be understood as a process, that is, knowledge or truth should be constantly changed or transformed. However, if a Parmenidean view of reality is taken, knowledge or truth could be recognized as stable and immutable. From a Parmenidean approach, that knowledge

¹⁰⁸ See also Tarnas (1991). He explains that while Heraclitus stressed the constant flux of the sensible world, Parmenides insisted on the changeless and unitary nature of intelligible reality.
or truth that can be eternally and universally applied would be presupposed, which is the fundamental feature of objective epistemology.

Williams explains that objectivism is a philosophical view that there can be a permanent, universal and ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can always appeal in judging the nature of truth and reality (2004). Crotty argues that objectivism is the epistemological perspective that things exist as meaningful entities independently of human consciousness and that meaningful reality exists as such apart from the operation of any human consciousness (1998). Thus, in the objectivist epistemology it is assumed that reality exists independently of human consciousness and that the aim of research from an objectivist epistemological perspective is to discover the objective truth that applies universally and explains every phenomenon systematically (Gray, 2004). In order to discover the objective truth, a careful and scientific approach is supposed to be adopted (Crotty, 1998), in which positivism plays an important role in such an approach.

**Positivism**

According to Gray, positivism was the principal epistemological paradigm in social science mainly from the 1930s through to 1960s, the main argument of which is that the social world exists externally to us and that its features could be measured through
observation (2004). Blaikie explains that positivism is a philosophy of science that rejects metaphysical speculation and emphasizes systematic observation by the human senses in order to unearth universally applicable knowledge or truth (2004). From an objectivist point of view, as Chia argues, reality is believed to be existing externally to perceptions, beliefs and biases of human beings (2002). Further, knowledge can be reached through the collection of facts that provide the basis for laws, the reason being that since human subjectivity should be under control in order to acquire knowledge, what is collected for analysis is supposed to be not value-oriented data but facts.

Positivist knowledge of the world is, therefore, based on “generalizations from the observation that, given sufficient number and consistency, are regarded as producing laws of how phenomena co-exist or occur in sequences” (Blaikie, 2004: 836). In other words, the fundamental tenet of positivism is that all sciences including social sciences are concerned with establishing or discovering universal laws or general propositions that can explain any phenomena, as a consequence of which, any phenomenon could be explained by showing that it is a specific case of such universal laws (Blaikie, 2004). From positivist perspectives, the world is considered as highly systematic and well-organized that is characterized as regularities, constancies, uniformities and absolute principles (Crotty, 1998). The ultimate purpose of social analysis by objective epistemology is to explore universally applicable knowledge that
can explain social phenomena and so that various social phenomena that ostensibly look different can be understood in a systematic and unified manner.

3-1-2 How has objective epistemology influenced conflict resolution?

Basic human needs approach

As argued, the central character of objective epistemology is the presupposition that there are universal truths or knowledge that can allow us to expound on all social phenomena in a systematic and comprehensive way. How has this supposition been applied to contemporary conflict resolution? The answer to this question would be the concept of basic human needs and its application to conflict resolution, which has been advocated mainly by John Burton.

Burton and Sandole insist that there are certain patterns of behavior for whatever reason, which are universally observed and this perception makes them believe that we can create conflict resolution that can be applied universally (1987). They also claim that such an approach to construct universally and cross-culturally applicable conflict resolution is established upon a generic theory (1986). They explain that generic theory, allows “explanation that transcends observable differences in human behavior – racial, cultural, and institutional” (1986: 334). In other words, a generic approach to analyze a problem is one that tries to uncover the universal and common
characters or attributes that give rise to the observable data of differences (Burton and Sandole, 1986). They hold that the existence of patterns of behavior that can be universally seen is a foundation for conflict resolution that can explain violence of many kinds (1987).

According to Burton, conflict is a universal phenomenon that affects all cultures and societies, at all phases of political, social and economic development and at all social dimensions from the interpersonal to the international and therefore, (from Burton’s view), the study of conflict is supposed to discover a generic or overarching explanation of conflict from which to deduce the axioms of treatment (1990). Based on this universal feature of conflict, Burton insists that conflict resolution is capable of addressing all kinds of conflict at all social levels and in all systems, the central hypothesis of which is that there are generic or all-embracing explanations of human behavior that enable us to construct means of resolving problems that can be applied to all social dimensions in all societies (1991).

Burton states that conflict resolution means eradicating conflict by analytical methods that get to the root of the problem (1991), which upholds the argument that if we tackle its fundamental cause, we can bring a conflict to an end. Further, he insists that since it is a means of getting to the fundamental root of problems, conflict resolution
is not just a way of resolving immediate social conflict in the short term, but it also presents insight into the generic nature of conflict and consequently contributes to uprooting the source of conflicts and preventing their recurrence (1991) more generally through basic human needs theory because basic human needs theory sites conflict at a every low, all-embracing level.

Burton states that basic human needs theorists claim that there are certain ontological and other biological human needs that will be sought for by any means available and that socialization processes, if they are not compatible with those needs, will cause a strong sense of frustration among those who live in the society and eventually lead to anti-social behavior including violence (1990). Although there are various kinds of basic needs, Burton argues that those who engage in conflict are struggling to gratify primordial and universal needs such as security, identity, recognition and development and this struggle cannot be repressed since those needs are primordial (1991). Furthermore, Burton maintains that the distinguishing character of basic human needs is that they are believed to be inherent in humanity and in other species and accordingly universal and not culturally or socially bound (1997).

How can basic human needs theory be seen as primordial and be universally applied?

Vayrynen states that basic human needs are crucial in becoming a human being since
The priority of basic needs derive from primary emotions\(^{109}\) that are indispensable for the survival of the physiological organism and psychological self (2001). Sites argues that it is essential for animals including human beings to establish conditions or states of existence that can reduce the three negative emotional states of fear, anger and depression and consequently realize the positive emotional state of satisfaction (1990a). Accordingly, he insists that human needs are ontologically grounded in emotions and that a threat to the survival of either the physical organism or the developing self can arouse negative emotions (1990a). Human beings need to alleviate the suffering triggered off by negative emotions, which will increase the possibility of satisfaction that is essential for healthy and sound physiological and psychological survival (Sites, 1990a).

As Sandole argues, basic human needs are organically and biologically programmed predispositions that are embedded in all human beings and therefore, the needs are universal and common to all humankind across time and space, although the means or satisfiers by which those ontological and primordial needs are met may vary across time and space (1990). The fundamental point of basic human needs is, as Vayrynen states, biology, that is, basic needs are assumed to stem from the biological nature of human beings and since needs are biological, they are universal (2001). Put another

\(^{109}\) According to Sites (1990b), primary emotions are fear, anger, depression and satisfaction.
way, the assumption of universalistic needs thinking is that what is true of the biological dimension of human nature must be true of all individuals in all cultures and societies (Vayrynen, 2001).

From these points of view, the superficial level of personal, cultural or social differences of behaviors and interests is not the focal point. Rather, it is the revelation of the ultimate goals - the universal, ontological and biological goals of individual and social group, that is, the satisfaction of basic human needs that are universal across all cultures and societies - that enables us to address conflict correctly (Burton and Sandole, 1986). As Jeong insists, (from the viewpoint of basic human needs theory) if the gratification of basic needs is imperative for human development as well as the survival of human beings in physical and psychological terms, the real source of conflict can be attributed to the frustration of primordial, ontological and universal needs since the lack of ontogenic or biological needs causes an imbalance in human life (2000). Put another way, basic human needs can provide objective, rational and universally applicable criteria for examining and assessing an emergent social condition that may contain the potential for generating conflict (Jeong, 2000).
3-2 Subjective epistemology

3-2-1 Characteristics of subjective epistemology

Knowledge by subject

According to Baronov, the most conspicuous distinction between inanimate objects and human beings is “human subjectivity” (2004: 11). In comparing natural sciences and social sciences, Bryman insists that the fundamental difference between them is that social reality, that is, the field of social sciences, has a meaning for human beings and consequently human action is meaningful (2004). Human beings behave based on the meanings which they attribute to their acts and those of others (Bryman, 2004).

As is generally recognized, a synthetic position between rationalism 110 and empiricism 111 was founded by Immanuel Kant (1729-1804). This integrated view insists that both human reason and observation are essential to comprehend the world (Smith, 1998). What should be emphasized regarding this synthesized standpoint is that, as Tarnas assesses, the nature of our human mind is not passively receiving sense-data. Rather, it actively digests and structures them to make sense of them (Tarnas, 1991). Our mind, in order to make knowledge possible, actively attributes its own cognitive dispositions to the data of experience, which means that our knowledge

110 Smith explains rationalism as the belief that human reason will lead us to the truth (1998).
111 Smith defines empiricism as the idea that observation and experimentation will lead us to the truth (1998).
is not a pure description of external reality as such, but a construction of our own mind (Tarnas, 1991). In other words, phenomena can be known through mind-dependent perception of them (Williams, 2004). Truth and meaning do not exist independently somewhere in the external world, but are constructed by subjects’ interactions with the world (Gray, 2004). In short, as Smith argues, the human subject can be understood as an active, creative and purposive actor in the construction of knowledge, and this constructive character of human beings is the legacy of Kant’s philosophy to social sciences (1998).¹¹²

From these points of view, it can be supposed that the main theme of subjective epistemology is that, human subjects, that is, our mind is the source of knowledge. Rather than discovering absolutely objective or transcendental truth beyond human reach, our minds construct truths or meanings of reality: “Subjective experience is the true object of human knowledge” (Harre, 2000: 252).

¹¹² It is also interesting to note here that Burr assesses that in spite of the differences, Kant, Nietzsche (1844-1900), Marx (1818-1883) shared the idea that knowledge is to some extent a product of human thought rather than grounded in an external reality existing independently of human beings (2003). Further, other great philosophers, such as Heidegger (1889-1976), Wittgenstein (1889-1951) to name a few, have also analyzed subjective dimensions of human beings as a source of knowledge. Therefore, it can be stated that one of the most notable characteristics of modern Western philosophy has been the studies in human subjects in terms of how they are related to creation (or construction) of knowledge.
Intersubjectivity

So for some theorists, the human subject has been recognized as a source of knowledge. The subjective dimension, that is, our mind constructs truths or meanings of reality. However, there is one more thing that should be analyzed: how does the human subject construct or create knowledge?

While Kant made a valuable contribution to social science by making the human subject a central actor constructing knowledge, as Harre states, the Kantian constructionist philosophy focused mainly on the individual mind in terms of the origin of the empirical world and of the contents of consciousness in the integrated undertaking of the mind (2000). However, as Baronov insists, “individuals do not live in isolation” (2004: 117). Rather, as Schutz and Luckmann claim, our world is not just private one, but a social one (1974). In other words, each human subject does not live alone, but lives in intersubjectivity.

According to Crossley, intersubjectivity means “the existence of a between-world, connecting individual human subjectivities” (2005: 168). Intersubjectivity indicates the character of our world as a public world (Gurwitch, 1975). Further, Crossley insists that the central question of intersubjectivity is how, as an individual mind or ego, one can know that others are conscious subjects and know the elements of their
conscious subjective lives (2005). So, individual subjectivity comes to make sense through the interaction with other subjectivities (Crossley, 2005). Human subjectivity can be comprehended in the context of one’s social and cultural life, which is mentioned as one’s personal lifeworld (Baronov, 2004). In short, in order to understand how human subjectivity constructs truths or meanings of reality, intersubjective social interaction must be examined and phenomenology is of great significance to this intersubjective analysis.

Phenomenology

The starting point of phenomenology\textsuperscript{113} is that we, human beings, are conscious subjects (Fay, 2003). According to Stewart and Mickunas, an appearance or a phenomenon is anything of which one is conscious (1974), which can be termed “intentionality of consciousness.”\textsuperscript{114} This means, as Vaitkus states, that all conscious acts have a directional feature toward some objects, whether real or imaginary, which indicates that all consciousness is consciousness of something (2000). Therefore, the main focus of phenomenology is the analysis of the content of consciousness (Stewart and Mickunas, 1974) since our consciousness frames what we experience (Follesdal, 1998 and Vaitkus 2000).

\textsuperscript{113} According to Vaitkus, the term phenomenology derives from the Greek “\textit{phainomenon}” and means the analysis of phenomena, the appearance or what shows itself as meaningful sense and knowledge to human beings (2000). Stewart and Mickunas state that phenomenology means a reasoned examination that identifies the inherent essence of appearances (1974). In other words, phenomenology explores how phenomena come to make sense to human beings. 

\textsuperscript{114} See for instance, Follesdal (1998) and Vaitkus (2000).
1998). This does not mean that phenomenology denies the existence of objects external to human subjects. However, in order for the objects to have some meanings, human subjects must play the central role. In short, phenomenology is “concerned with the cognitive reality which is embodied in the process of subject human experiences” (Wagner, 1970: 13).

How can the subjective experience be constituted? According to Baronov, in phenomenology it has been assumed that there are certain structures inside our consciousness that provide the world around us with form and meaning and that those basic structures are present in everyday life experiences (2004). Consequently, the central concern of phenomenology can be understood as analyzing and comprehending how the human mind structures experience and makes it accessible to each individual in his/her daily lives (Baronov, 2004).

Since the concept of the lifeworld is the basis of phenomenological philosophy and the task of it is to explore the basic nature of human experience, “the lifeworld, that is, the world as lived and experienced, is its primary datum” (Crossley, 2005: 184). In other words, understanding the nature of the lifeworld and its relation to the construction of human mind is the central task of phenomenology.
Berstein argues that the lifeworld denotes the intersubjective world which everyone experiences and participates in during his/her daily life (1976). It is intersubjective since everyone lives in it as a person and among other persons, is bound to them through shared influence and work, and understands them and is understood by them (Berstein, 1976). Consequently, a phenomenology of the lifeworld aims to examine how we come to interpret others and their actions, in the complex ways in which we understand our own actions and those of others within a social context (Berstein, 1976).

The view that the everyday lifeworld is an intersubjective and a social reality has some important implications for the construction and structure of the subjective stock of knowledge (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974). As Gray argues, human interaction with the world is reflected in the process of meaning-making and interpretation (2004). We interpret the meanings of objects and act according to those interpretations and those meanings are produced through by social interactions (Gray, 2004).

However, some schemes are required to provide our lived experiences with meanings and interpretations. Berstein insists that those schemes are essentially social and intersubjective ones since our lifeworld experiences are basically intersubjective (1976). According to Baronov, the experience of the social world is structured by
frames of reference that guide people living there, which are referred to “as categories of life” (2004: 117). Consequently, our everyday experience of social lifeworld is made organized and understandable (Baronov, 2004).

As Fay states, our social lifeworld entails the cultural and taken-for-granted framework of social life, which enables us to understand and interact with each other (2003). Our social lifeworld consists of “the knowledge of certain skills, typifications and routines that are socially prescribed and distributed” (Fay, 2003: 46-47). Put differently, our social lifeworld is a habit-world, a world of experience constituted by our habitual ways of perceiving, comprehending and acting on it (Crossley, 2005). An essential point is that from birth, we enter a social milieu in which a system of intelligibility prevails and we inherit a system of significant symbols that have been socially recognized to lead an intersubjective life (Crotty, 1998). In short, through the significant symbols such as language, signs, marks, and so on, which have been socially inherited and shared, one communicates with others and constructs the meanings of reality.

Therefore, when we see the world in a meaningful manner, we are viewing it through lenses endowed by our culture (Crotty, 1998). We do not perceive the world directly; rather our perception and understanding of the world is mediated through a social
stock of knowledge. Our subjective stock of knowledge is mainly “derived from elements of the social stock of knowledge” (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974: 262). The elements of knowledge of individuals that at first glance seem to have been obtained through direct and independent experience are embedded in the context of an extensively socialized subjective stock of knowledge (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974).

3-2-2 How has subjective epistemology influenced conflict resolution?

As shown in chapter two, identity, especially, social identity has been recognized as one of the essential elements in analyzing dynamism of conflict. For instance, Rothman insists that the role of social identity in examining conflict and its resolution has gained a great deal of attention in international society (2001). Fisher also states that the central analysis in contemporary protracted social conflict is the social identity group defined in ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic or other lines since it is through the social identity group that essential human needs are most forcefully expressed (1997). Therefore, it can be observed, as Black states, that “regardless of the direction of the causal arrow, many deep-rooted conflicts seem to involve parties organized around competing social identities” (2003: 123).

Although basic human needs including identity as key factors in contemporary conflict resolution have been analyzed by epistemologically objective means, its
approach has been principally biologically-oriented. Consequently, the human subjective dimension has been lacking in examining how identity, in particular, social identity is formed. Therefore, an analysis of the relationship between subjective elements in the construction of social identity and how it influences the dynamism in conflict should be made, as part of which, social psychology and culture assume an important role. However, social psychology and culture will not be analyzed separately; rather, a synthetic or complementary analysis will help to comprehend the dynamism of conflict.

Brown states that the most important assumption of social psychology is that “the meaning people give to their experiences guides their behavior” (2006: 2). How we behave relies on how we interpret, construe, appraise or perceive the situation (Brown, 2006). However, generally we do not behave at random based on a haphazard understanding of our experiences and environments. Rather, we try to understand the phenomena including ourselves in a systematic manner upon which we act reasonably and identity, especially, social identity becomes a constitutive element in establishing a systematic understanding of the world.

Tajfel explains that one of the basic ideas of social identity is that it is part of an individual’s self-concept that derives from his/her knowledge of his/her membership
in a social group together with value and emotional significance attached to that membership (1981). Oakes argues that social identity functions to shape the causal understanding of the social environment as a guide to action, which provides us with a system of orientation of self-reference, establishes and defines our place in society (2003). Social identity works to align each of us with the realities of the social context and construct dynamic and content-specific definitions of self and others which reflect and make possible the variable patterns of human social relations (Oakes, 2003). Through interdependence and interaction with others, social identity that provides us with shared understanding of social world is constructed.

In short, social identity, as Northrup insists, can be understood as a system of beliefs as a way of framing the world that makes life predictable (1989). Further, Brown argues that segmenting the world into a manageable and predictable number of categories provided by social identity not only helps us to simplify and make sense of it but also functions to enable us to define who we are (2001). Social identity can be more than a psychological sense of self to be extended to include a sense of self-in-the-world, that is, a sense of being-in-the-world (Northrup, 1989). Social identity brings about more than a psychological sense of self, which means that it makes us feel that we are safe in the world physically, psychologically, socially and even spiritually (Northrup, 1989). As Northrup summarizes, the formation of social
identity or the process of construing the world can be recognized as more than a
cognitive process since it embraces all dimensions of human experience including
emotions, values and behaviors as well as cognitions (1989).

From the above points of view, there is a case that in understanding identity, especially
social identity, we need to look into the subjective dimension, especially
intersubjective perspectives, since a construction of shared reality or common
understanding of the social world is pertinent to the establishment of existential
dimension of “Who we are.” Therefore, although biological factors cannot be denied
categorically in examining basic needs including identity, from subjective
epistemology viewpoints, intersubjective formation of social identity, that is,
construction of shared reality and its relationship with conflict dynamism, should be
explored, in which culture would be the central element.

Black insists that in cultural analysis we need to understand categories of meaning
used in our everyday lives by which participants themselves comprehend their
experience and orient themselves toward one another (2003). In other words, as its
starting and fundamental point, daily interaction and meaning-making through that
interaction are presupposed in understanding the nature of culture. Culture is, as
Avruch explains, conceived as an evolved component of human cognition and social
action, which constitutes social worlds, that is, intersubjective worlds as well as is constituted by those actors living in those worlds (2003).

Vayrynen claims that since the life-world is the world within which we act, within which we understand fellow men and women and are understood by them, it is “our paramount reality” (2001: 92). It is through this social world that we create or construct the shared meanings to make sense of the environment (Avruch and Black, 1991). In short, we, human beings, do not experience reality directly; rather, our experience (of reality) is mediated by our perceptions that are structured culturally (Avruch and Black, 1993), which means that cultural patterns condition how the world is represented to us (Vayrynen, 1998). Culture plays the central role in bridging our consciousness and the external environment through intersubjectively constructed understanding of reality.

Further, LeBaron argues that cultures exist within larger systems called worldviews, which embrace the following cultural dimensions: “social, practical and material and transcendent and spiritual” (2003: 11). Worldviews are profoundly embedded in our consciousness and frame and inform our identities and our meaning-making (LeBaron, 2003). They provide us with “big-picture ideas of the meaning of life and give us ways to learn as well as logic for ordering what we know” (LeBaron, 2003: 11).
Culture provides ways of seeing, thinking and feeling about the world which prescribe normality for us, that is, the ways things are and the way things should be (Avruch and Black, 1993). Culture is a lens or a grammar for the production and structuring of meaning-making. In short, culture is recognized as a fundamental feature of human consciousness, “the sine qua non of being human” (Avruch and Black, 1993: 132).

From subjective epistemological viewpoints, as Vayrynen claims, human beings, instead of being guided by biologically-oriented derives or needs, orient themselves in the world through cultural patterns that are essential for social groups and function to members of the group as a natural scheme of reference (1998). Human beings are basically creatures that assign meaning in order to make sense of our worlds and ourselves in the worlds (LeBaron, 2001). Through culture or intersubjectivity, we construct the meaning of reality and consequently provide ourselves with the answer to the fundamental existential question of “Who are we?” Thus it can be seen that culture plays a central role in forming our social identity and in providing us with the ways of meaning-making (LeBaron, 2003). Therefore, from subjective epistemological perspectives, in order to understand fully the dynamism of social identity, the biological dimension is not enough: the intersubjective or cultural dimension is of great significance.
Through culture, we create a shared understanding of reality and know who we are, which implies that in the process of the construction of social identity based on culture, the epistemological dimension of identity – how we can know or understand reality – and ontological or existential perspective of identity – who we are – are interfused with each other. Accordingly, as LeBaron insists, conflict emerges when social identities and meaning intersubjectively constructed are under threat (2003). We care to protect our social identities and shared meanings we nurture (LeBaron, 2003) since they are fundamental for our existence. Therefore, in order to gain a picture of the dynamism of conflict, the relationship between conflict and subjective perspectives, in particular, the intersubjective standpoint should be examined.

As Northrup claims, generally subjective elements contribute to conflict since, whenever people are engaged in relationships, they are interpreting events and ascribing meanings to the events (1989) and culture helps us to interpret phenomena and to attribute meanings to them. According to Deutsch, the expectations, beliefs, languages, practices, rituals, norms and values that members of a group have collectively define their shared culture and then culture constructs the symbolic meaning of actions and defines a type of action as appropriate or inappropriate, good or bad, friendly or hostile and so on (1991). Culture provides us with systems of symbols by which shared meaning is asserted and formed in the world (Avruch and
Black, 1993) and the world to which shared meaning has been assigned through systems of symbol comes to be recognized as the reality.

Further, Crawford states that although emotions are subjective experiences, they have also “physiological, intersubjective and cultural components” (2000: 125). Although emotions are strong feelings such as love, hate or anger, they are presented with attitudes such as beliefs, judgments and desires and these attitudes do not arise naturally but are based upon cultural beliefs and values (Crawford, 2000). Expressing emotions is a universal phenomenon, how they are expressed varies according to cultures. This means that emotions are constructed to “serve sociocultural functions, to restrain undesirable attitudes and behavior and to sustain and endorse cultural values” (Crawford, 2000: 129) that construct and maintain social identity. Put differently, cultures are, as LeBaron insists, systems of shared understandings or symbols that bind people together, providing them with unwritten messages on how to express and how to make meaning of their lives (2003). Consequently, the shared symbolic meanings attached to phenomena, which have been created and nurtured in culture, play key roles in conflict.

Kaufman argues that in understanding social identity that has been recognized as the core unit in contemporary conflict, myth and symbol should be in focus (2001).
According to him, a myth is a belief held in common by a large group of people that gives events and actions a particular meaning, the aim of which is to help one to understand what a set of events means to him/her (2001). Therefore, the core element of social identity that gets involved with violent conflict is the myth-symbol complex, that is, the combination of myth, memories, values and symbols that define who belongs to the group as well as what it means to be a member (of the group), as a result of which, the existence and security of the group come to be understood to rely on the status of group symbols (Kaufman, 2001). Therefore, how the culturally or intersubjectively shared symbolic meanings are treated influences the direction of conflict.

According to Kaufman, hostile emotions such as hatred and anger can be seen as rooted in pre-existing ethnic myths or symbols justifying hostility against the ethnic out-group (2006a). People choose emotionally among contesting values by responding to the most evocative or emotive symbol presented to them (Kaufman, 2006b). Symbols or myths, as Kaufman states, play central role in giving events and actions a specific meaning – typically by defining enemies or heroes and binding the ideas of

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115 See also Kaufman (2006a) and (2006b). According to Kaufman (2006b), (in relation to the myth-symbol complex) a symbolist approach notes that each ethnic group is defined by a myth-symbol complex that identifies which elements of shared culture and what interpretation of history bind a group together and distinguish it from other and these definitions of identity are always subjective, or more precisely, intersubjective.
right and wrong with people’s identity (2001). Symbols simultaneously refer to an interest of a group and to an emotionally loaded myth, which tends to form a conflict of interest as a struggle against hostile, evil or even subhuman forces (Kaufman, 2006b).

Furthermore, Kaufman argues that a group’s myth-symbol complex encompasses prejudice or bias against the other group – stereotypes about the competing group, enhanced by negative feelings about that group (2001). When a group feels that its own myth-symbol is threatened, various values and emotions are simultaneously evoked, in particular, shared feeling of superiority over the out-group will be aroused (Kaufman, 2001) to protect or secure the identity of its own. Prejudice or bias derived from a myth-symbol complex can lead a group to form further distorted images and see other groups as more hostile and aggressive or even barbaric than they actually are (Lake and Rothchild, 1998) and eventually extreme violence including massacre or genocide could be justified.

In short, deep-rooted or intractable conflict entails more than visible material resources: rather, as LeBaron claims, it is intricately connected with the symbolic level of identity and meaning-making which are difficult to transform since identity and meaning or meaning-making are fundamental to our sense of self and position in
the world (2001). Human subjectivity, especially intersubjectively formed and shared meanings of reality represented by myth or symbol are common in conflict. Truly, conflict involves tangible resources, but from an intersubjective viewpoint, as Rothman maintains, “tangible interests play a secondary or derivative role in the conflict” (2001: 297). Rather, what makes conflicts intractable are “the intangible: myths and fears that lead the parties to demand political and military dominance or superior status” (Kaufman, 2006a: 214), which could provide the group with legitimacy or justification to harm other group(s). Therefore, the emotional and symbolic processes that affect significantly how tangible issues are perceived or provided with meanings should be addressed in order to understand and eventually resolve conflict (Kaufman, 2006a).

3-3 Critical epistemology

3-3-1 Nature of critical epistemology

Critique of eternal and universal knowledge

There are some existing philosophies and theories that can be acknowledged as the foundational elements shaping critical epistemology: postmodernism, poststructuralism, social constructionism and critical theory are of great significance in forging critical epistemology. There are some significant differences among them, but we can also see common features among them, which constitute the essence of
critical epistemology. However, the various philosophical elements which inform critical epistemology do not aim to impair the distinctive characters of each of them. Rather, the aim is to promote further critical thinking by exploring complementary relationship among them.

Although it is difficult to generalize what postmodernism is, it can be acknowledged as the strong critique of modernism and structuralism. According to Crotty, modernism puts a great emphasis on the power of reason, especially the instrumental reason to discover the absolute forms of knowledge (1998). Reason is praised as the source of progress in knowledge and society, as well as the privileged locus of truth and the underpinning of systematic knowledge (Best and Kellner, 1991). Science and scientific methods are appreciated and recognized as the supreme and most authentic way to discover the universal or eternal truth (Crotty, 1998).

Further, the search for the absolute truth is based on the conviction that there are rules or structures that underlay the surface features of the world (Burr, 2003). It is believed that since the hidden structure or rule could be revealed as the fundamental reality underlying the surface features of the world, the truth about the world can be found by

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116 See also Burr (2003). She states that so-called the Enlightenment project was to search for truth and to comprehend the true nature of reality through the application of reason and rationality.
examining the underlying structures in a certain way (Burr, 2003), that is, by means of reason. In other words, as Baronov insists, Enlightenment thought sought to uncover the intrinsic and universal structure of the physical and social worlds (2004). It was assumed that a common denominator could be established for all belief and value systems, which implies that the world is a unified field and can be explained by a single system (Ermarth, 1998). In short, the central assumption of modernism and structuralism is that there are so-called metanarratives or grand theories that enable us to understand the whole social world in terms of all-embracing principles (Burr, 2003).

Postmodernism rejects both the idea that there can be an ultimate and eternal truth and the structuralist idea, that is, that the world as we see it is the consequence of hidden universal structures (Burr, 2003). While modernism aims to base itself on generalized and eternally applicable truths about the way things really are, postmodernism denies the epistemological basis for any such claims to truth (Crotty, 1998) by rejecting metanarratives or grand theories. The denial of the grand theories or metanarratives of ultimate truth that explains every phenomenon in a systematic manner, which was advocated in modern era, warranted a rejection of any undertaking to probe for reality

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117 Baronov states that the legacy of post-Enlightenment idea is the image of an orderly world held together by regular patterns, universal laws, stability, linear progress, common understanding and predictability based on certainty (2004).
or truth in any ultimate sense (Spears, 1997). A historic and acultural ultimate and eternal truth that can be applied universally is dismissed.

By rejecting grand theories that are believed to explain all phenomena in a systematic way, postmodernism “emphasizes the co-existence of a multiplicity and varieties of situation-dependent ways of life” (Burr, 2003: 13). Each situation is different and requires specific understanding, which means that there is no single foundation for truth: rather it changes from one episteme to another (Rosenan, 1992). On a postmodern perspective, it should be acknowledged that there are diverse worlds that are inhabited by different people, and that those different worlds construct diverse ways of knowing, distinct sets of meaning and various realities (Crotty, 1998).

The negation of ultimate or universal truth and the recognition of diversity of truths or realities are also the main themes of social constructionism. According to Burr, social constructionism claims that all ways of understanding reality are historically and culturally relative, which indicates that people in a society or culture construct their own knowledge and shared ways of understanding reality (2003). It is through the everyday social interactions between/among people that certain knowledge comes to be formed (Burr, 2003). In short, from social constructionism point of view, rather

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118 See also Chia (2002). Chia states that postmodernism stresses the heterogeneous, multiple and a linear character of real-world happenings.
than discovering\textsuperscript{119} universal, eternal and overarching truth, we construct the meaning of reality through social interaction. From these points of view, one of the central features of critical epistemology can be seen as the insistence that universal and eternal truth and metanarratives or grand theories are denied; rather, from critical epistemological viewpoint, respectively distinct forms of truth or knowledge are constructed by culture and society.

**Social construction of knowledge**

Spears insists that from a social constructionism viewpoint there is no objective window on reality, through which entities in the social world can be directly and objectively perceived or known (1997).\textsuperscript{120} Rather, as Bryman argues, the social world and the categories or classifications people apply to understand the social world are not external to them but are constructed in and through interactions between/among those who live in the social world (2004). How can people construct a shared knowledge of their social world?

Ibanez argues that de-naturalization of social phenomena is of particular importance since social phenomena are inherently historically and culturally-oriented and the

\textsuperscript{119} Burr explains that the word “discover” presupposes an existing and stable reality that can be uncovered by observation and analysis (2003).

\textsuperscript{120} See also Burr (2003). She states that social constructionism rejects the claim that our knowledge is a direct perception of reality.
The historicity of social phenomena implies that every phenomenon arises from linguistic conventions and the cultural traditions that constitute a way of life (1997). From a social constructionist perspective, as the knowledge or understanding of reality is constructed through the intersubjective daily interactions between/among people in the social or cultural world, social interaction of many kinds, especially language, is of great significance (Burr, 2003). The language people use in their daily lives constitutes the framework of the way they think, the categories and concepts that form the meanings of reality (Burr, 2003). In short, from a social constructionist view, language is a basic condition for our construction of knowledge in a society.

The central role of language or discourse in constructing the meanings of social world is also one of the essential features of postmodernism. Alvesson states that discourse is referred to as language-use anchored in an institutional context, articulating structured understanding or a line of reasoning with active and productive effects of providing meanings to the social phenomena (2002). Spears also argues that discourses can be understood as providing a repertoire of resources which people use

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121 For instance, according to Smart, basic figures of postmodernism are: the crisis of representation and associated instability of meaning; the denial of certain foundation for knowledge; the analytic centrality of language, discourses and the texts; the inappropriateness of the Enlightenment premise of autonomous subject and a contrasting concentration on the ways in which individuals are formed as subjects (2000). Alvesson also insists that one of the basic elements of postmodernism is the centrality of discourse, which stresses the constitutive power of language and the view that natural objects are discursively produced (2002). Thus it can be seen that an examination of how discourse and language used in society construct the meanings of the social world is a crucial issue for both social constructionism and postmodernism.
to interpret the social world (1997). Put differently, as Crossley insists, discourse could be understood as engaging in communication with others by a variety of means available (2005).

From the perspectives of social constructionism and postmodernism, as Gergen claims, the emphasis should be put on the ways in which conventions or structures of language, that is, discourses, are employed to construct the frameworks of meanings of a social world and consequently bring about some social effects (1999). We see the world through language that acts as a lens and sense-making tool that enables us to make sense of the world (Alvesson, 2002). Language, especially, the activities of naming and symbolic representation, gives the first ordering impulse for the systematic construction of our human life-worlds (Chia, 2002). In short, for postmodernism and social constructionism, the social world as conventionally understood, that is, social systems, structures, agents, shared meanings, and a prevailing social order are based on discourse or language with strong constructing effects (Alvesson, 2004).

**Critique of social construction of knowledge**

As argued, critical epistemology emphasizes socially constructed discourse as the way to understand reality and insists that discourse or language is not a mirror of the world
external to us, but is constructed in and through intersubjective interaction between/among people in society to make sense of the social world. However, there is one more thing that represents the central feature of critical epistemology: a critical attitude towards socially constructed discourses themselves.

Although discourse or intersubjective use of language is recognized as the source of understanding of the social world, in critical epistemology, a representationalist epistemology is denied. According to Chia, the gist of representationalist epistemology is that signs and linguistic terms represent an external world of discrete and distinguishable objects and phenomena (2002). From this perspective, social phenomena would be considered as stable and immutable entities. Further, this representationalist approach to discourse is relevant to structuralist approach to language or discourse.

Ritzer and Stillman explain that the root of structuralism lies in the idea that “language acquires its meaning from the juxtaposition of elements within a linguistic system” (2004: 1093). They also argue that one of the main themes of Ferdinand de Saussure, the leading figure in structuralism, is that the proper approach to language is to analyze the underlying rules and models of the linguistic systems that enable real-life speech, as a consequence of which, language can be understood as a static and stable
According to May, for Saussure, signs or discourses are divided into two parts: “the signifier (the sound) and the signified (the idea or concept to which the sound refers)” (2004: 846). Further, Saussure believed that the sign has a natural and direct relation to its referent and that the signifier has a unitary and stable relationship with the signified (Best and Kellner, 1991). From a structuralist viewpoint, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is considered as fixed and consistently stable (Baronov, 2004). Since the relationship between the signifier and the signified is fixed and unchanging across a society, everyone (in the society) can determine the meaning of any statement no matter who the speaker is (Baronov, 2004). Put differently, the meaning of any term is believed to be fixed through language as a self-referential system (May, 2004). While, as Best and Kellner state, structuralism made a huge contribution to describing social phenomena in terms of linguistic and social structures, rules, codes and systems (1991), its understanding of discourse based on the fixed and invariable relation between the signifier and the signified has led to the establishment of an immutable and deterministic view of discourse (Gergen, 1999), which should be problematized from the standpoint of critical epistemology.

While structuralism insists that there is a fixed and stable system that underlies the use
of language, post-structuralism and postmodernism challenge the assumption that there are systems that are self-sufficient structures and consequently call into question the possibility of precise and fixed definitions upon which systems of knowledge can be based (Gutting, 1998a). Rather, post-structuralism, postmodernism and social constructionism stress the instability and contingency of the structural context of social interaction and discourses that arise from the interaction; consequently, they question the fixed and unchanging link between the signifier and the signified (Torfing, 1999). While we tend to regard the sign as a tight and stable integration of the signifier and the signified, that is, the word and the object it refers to create a concept or an image, from postmodernist and post-structuralist perspectives, there is no one-to-one fixed relationship between the use of language and objects in the world (Alvesson, 2002). In other words, it is insisted that there are no fixed and immutable relationships between the signifier and the signified (Baronov, 2004) and consequently, the arbitrary nature of everything that is socially constructed – discourse, culture and social structure itself – is emphasized (Best and Kellner, 1991).

Gergen argues that generally, discourse in the social world appears to its users as well structured, that is, as a set of conventions, habits or ways of life that are stable, recurring and fixed (1999). Crossley insists that the key point of discourse is the assumption that those who participate in it are generally unconscious of the system of
conventions to which they have got accustomed and are also mostly unaware of the specific consequences that their use of the discourse may bring about (2005). In short, the discourse that is prevalent in society tends to be taken-for-granted. However, as Burr remarks, we should take a critical attitude toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world (2003) since power relations underlie the social construction of knowledge.

Gergen insists that since language is a critical aspect that represents power relations in a society, it is important to critically examine the discourse of knowledge prevalent in society (1999). Burr insists that our constructions of the social world are tied up with power relations since they have important implications for what it is acceptable for different people to do and for how they may treat others (2003). As Alvesson argues, power relations inhere in the discursive formulation itself, that is, the combination of a set of linguistic distinctions, ways of reasoning and material practices that structure social institutions and produce specific forms of subjects (2002). In short, social construction of knowledge or socially constructed knowledge creates a particular version of reality that is generally recognized as such (Alvesson, 2004). Consequently, as Burr states, description or construction of a particular view of the social world can be understood as maintaining some fixed patterns of social action

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122 May (2004) holds that discourses provide the limits to what may be experienced as well as the attribution of meanings to those experiences.
as normative and excluding others (2003).

It is unavoidable that socially constructed knowledge basically derives from seeing reality from some perspective and consequently can be viewed as serving some interests rather than others (Burr, 2003). However, the danger of this is that by representing certain interests of a particular group over other groups, socially constructed knowledge itself can cause an unequal inter-group relationship in society. Discourses that are prevalent in the social world, therefore, can be understood as being mediated by power relations in society: through socially constructed discourses, certain groups in society are privileged over other groups and exercise some oppressive force on subordinate groups (Gray, 2004). Consequently, what are recognized as facts in society cannot be isolated from ideology and the self-interests of dominant groups (Gray, 2004).

**Deconstructing socially constructed knowledge**

From a critical epistemological point of view, the connection between social construction of knowledge and power relations is unavoidable and consequently, knowledge loses a sense of innocence and neutrality (Alvesson, 2004). However, it does not mean that we should abandon constructing knowledge. Rather, as an ultimate goal, understanding socially constructed knowledge or the dominant discourse in the
As Smith (1998), Smart (2000), Alvesson (2002) to name a few argue, from post-structuralism, postmodernism and social constructionism viewpoints, there is no absolute and ultimate foundation for knowledge. Put another way, grand theories or metanarratives that secure the absolute or overarching status of one truth would be denied, so any assertion of one truth in the world should be critiqued. Therefore, the discourses that are dominant in a social world cannot be seen as absolute but as relative since there is no firm foundation that secures their absolute position. If there is no firm foundation for the discourses that are dominant in a social world, how those discourses are established should be put into critical examination, in which deconstructionism could play a significant role.

Lockyer states that deconstructionism aims at specifying and problematizing the categories and strategies that construct particular versions of reality, which is to demonstrate that images of people, places or objects which we consider as natural or taken-for-granted are neither universal nor fixed, but particular ones (2004). According to Baronov, a main task of deconstruction is to reveal the fundamental indeterminacy of meaning within language (2004) and in order to implement this essential undertaking, deconstructionism focuses on texts and tries to show that the
meaning of a text is always indeterminate, open-ended and interactional (Burr, 2003). Best and Kellner argue that traditionally there have been the binary oppositions governing Western philosophy and culture – such as subject/object, appearance/reality, speech/writing, man/woman and so on – that have worked to construct a hierarchy of values that attempt to secure truth as well as to serve to exclude, marginalize or devalue allegedly inferior terms or positions (1991). However, deconstructionism gives a critical eye to the logic of fixed categorizations, especially the either/or logic of binary oppositions (Lockyer, 2004) and attempts to uncover the fragility of the logic.

For instance, Lockyer provides three steps for deconstructing text or discourse. The first step identifies binary oppositions or polarities in the text and demonstrates how one particular pole is privileged; the second step transposes the subordinate pole of the opposition into the dominant position, which serves to reveal how the privileged pole relies on and could not exist and operate without the opposition; and finally the opposition is reconsidered and new concepts and practices could be explored (2004). In other words, as Butler claims, when we look at particular systems or

\[\text{See also Gergen (1999). He argues that word meaning depends on differentiating between a presence and an absence, that which is designated by the word against what is not designated and that the presences are privileged, that is, they are brought into focus by the words themselves and the absence might only be existing by implication or forgotten totally. However, he claims that those presences cannot make sense without the absences. Following this analysis, it could be argued that the}\]
discourses that are believed to describe the world correctly, the concepts they privilege or make central and the hierarchies constructed by them are not certainly in the right and stable order but are dependent on those that are considered as inferior or under-privileged (in the systems or discourses) (2002), which reveals that there cannot be any absolute and stable status of discourses in the social world: rather they are relevant to and dependent on others.

The deconstructionist approach to the categories of language or discourse insists that any attempt to fix or stabilize the meaning of a sign will never succeed since “there is always a surplus meaning – a supplement – which leaves the meaning of a sign open to contestation” (Smith, 1998: 57). As Rosen highlights, deconstructionism’s approach to demystifying a text or discourse would be to uncover its internal arbitrary hierarchies and its presuppositions (1992).124 From a deconstructionist viewpoint, there is no stability in any of thought or concept’s fundamental opposition: their exclusive alternatives turn out to be highly connected and consequently their implicit hierarchies are fragile and reversible (Gutting, 1998a). Thus, the pinnacle of deconstruction is to call into question the seemingly fixed and stable systems of discourses that privilege some ideas or groups rely on what are excluded or left out from the discourses.

124 See also Alvesson (2002). He insists that deconstruction functions mainly to challenge the belief of representation by recalling the suppressed term (in discourse) that provides the system and consequently allows the positive term to appear to stand for an existing object and order.
representation (Harvey, 1999), which could enable us to realize that since there can be no firm foundation or fixed rules, all forms of representation can be rearticulated and transformed (Smith, 1998).

By this means, discourse can be recognized as a tool to construct shared meanings or common understanding of social world. However, at the same time, a fixation or belief in the largely unchanging solidity of the discourse is denied in critical epistemology. Rather, since critical epistemology emphasizes the historicity of knowledge, that is, the negation of the invariability and universal applicability of knowledge, knowledge should be recognized as a process, not as a substance: from a critical epistemological perspective, there is no end-state of the construction of knowledge. Put differently, knowledge can be understood as what is being open to constant critique, revision and transformation done by those who live in a specific history.

3-3-2 How has critical epistemology influenced contemporary conflict resolution?

As demonstrated, critical epistemology denies the existence of truth or knowledge that can be eternally and universally applied to everyone. Rather, in critical epistemology, it is maintained that knowledge or truth is constructed by those who live in a society or culture: in each society or culture, specific knowledge or truth is constructed by the
inhabitants. In short, the social construction of knowledge is presumed in critical epistemology.

**Conflict transformation**

From a critical epistemological viewpoint, the values or narratives that are seen as taken-for-granted in society and the structures that maintain the society or social order should be open to critique and eventually be transformed since those narratives or values and social structures themselves marginalize some of those who live in the society and cause inequality among them. In the context of contemporary conflict resolution, this critical view of the discourses and structures that are prevalent in the society is pertinent to conflict transformation. As examined in the first chapter, conventional conflict resolution represented by a problem-solving approach has been criticized since it is inclined to ignore structural and cultural aspects of conflict. It has been critiqued that traditional conflict resolution is implemented with existing social structures and discourses intact. Critical epistemology challenges this approach and advocates transforming those structures and discourses and consequently the critical epistemological approach to resolving conflict revolves around the concept of conflict transformation.

Mitchell states that the underlying assumption of conflict transformation is that there
is nothing sacrosanct about the status quo; rather, it starts with analyzing and critiquing the existing system and assuming that it is crucial to construct new systems, structures and relationships (2005). Francis argues that conflict transformation can be understood as counter-cultural by aiming to tackle the pressing manifestation of violent conflict as well as its structural and attitudinal sources, eventually to achieve long term transformation (2004). Conflict transformation seeks for the transformation of oppressing, unequal and violent relationships and structures and manifestations of violence (Francis, 2004).

In short, conflict transformation can be recognized as a holistic or synthetic approach to conflict by dealing with visible direct violence and more importantly, by overcoming structural violence and cultural violence. Conflict transformation does not downplay direct violence or visible armed conflict: rather, what should be emphasized is that structural and cultural dimensions, that is, human subjective dimensions play a critical role in causing and protracting conflict since social structures and cultural narratives and values create unequal relationships between/among those who live in the society. In other words, conflict transformation starts by problematizing the dominant social frameworks and aims at constructing

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125 According to Reiman (2004), structural violence can be defined as the social, political and economic structure of a conflict situation when asymmetric power relations, domination and dependency are maintained, whereas cultural violence means the social and cultural legitimation of direct and structural violence.
alternatives that could transform the predominant social institutions and social meanings that are regarded as taken-for-granted: conflict transformation seeks to transform the basis on which everyday life and meaning are constructed and practiced (Fetherston, 2000). Thus, critical analysis and transformation of social structure and socially constructed discourse is the essential task for conflict transformation.

**Critical analysis of social identity and construction of discourse**

In contemporary conflict resolution, identity, especially social identity is one of the essential elements in understanding the dynamics of conflict, and in critical epistemology, the critical analysis of identity is crucial in transforming conflictual situation or relationships into peaceful ones. Especially, a critical examination of the relationship between the construction of social identity and discourses or narratives in a society can be regarded as crucial.

As Neumann states, identification or construction of identity can be considered as an essential aspect of all social interactions (1999) since as Jabri argues, identity is “the medium which bridges the self-society nexus” (1996: 125). Therefore, through the construction of social identity, social reality is also formed, as in the process of construction, those who live in a society negotiate the meanings for actions and situations (Rogers, 2003). Social reality framed through the construction of social
identity is a complex of socially constructed shared knowledge – meanings, cultural symbols and social institutions and those meanings and interpretations arrange and structure social human relationships (Rogers, 2003). In short, social identity is not merely a matter of existence: rather, as Jabri argues, construction of social identity encompasses the construction of shared memories, myths, symbolic orders and self-imagery that shape a constitutive part of the practical consciousness of situated individuals and they provide knowledgeable human agents with meaning in the daily encounters (1996). In other words, shared or socially constructed discourses, narratives or symbols come to be the core elements in the formation of social identity126 and they should be considered as critical in analyzing conflict.

As Crossley notes, the formation of collective or social identity accompanies the creation of narratives of collective history, symbols and rituals that promote strong emotional bonds between members (2005). Further, narratives and symbols, as Baronov states, function as frameworks of belief that legitimize and structure social institutions and practices by formulating the rules of interaction and setting the criteria for judgements (2004), which enable us to lead an intersubjectively constructed life.

126 For instance, Jeong and Vayrynen insist that the subsistence of a society is based on a cognitive scheme of collective self, i.e., social identity supported by symbols, myths and ideologies (1999). Their argument shows that subjective perspective of social identity is crucial in understanding or examining social identity. Examining how symbols, myths or discourses are constructed means comprehending how social identities are framed.
However, what should be remembered is that “the construction of identity implies active selection of particular modes of representation” (Jabri, 1996: 131). Furthermore, the active selection does not refer to free selection: rather, it is constituted through dominant societal norms, symbolic orders and structures of domination (Jabri, 1996), which could be termed as symbolic power. According to Crossley, symbolic power is “a concept used to challenge both the neglect of questions of representation and symbolic culture in many analyses of power, politics and inequality and the neglect of questions of power and politics in many analyses of representation and symbolic culture” (2005: 316). Language, discourse and symbolic culture play a critical role in defining social situations or framing reality, that is, framing social identity of those who live in the society and shaping social practices and structures, but the practice of defining and forming reality is never an open or equal process (Crossley, 2005). Rather than reflecting or describing some objective and neutral reality, language, discourses and symbols are used to construct meanings (Gough and McFadden, 2001), which is accompanied by power relations.

Fetherston and Parkin argue that power is exercised partly through the production or creation of truth and knowledge, that is, through the distribution of discourses of truth or narratives that exert control through fixing norms (1997). Consequently, production of truth or construction of discourses on reality come to be seen as exercise of power,
which is dominated by some particular social groups. So, the emergence of dominant patterns of discourses or narratives is pertinent to asymmetric power relations in which structures of signification or modes of discourses are used to legitimize some particular interests of hegemonic or dominant groups (Jabri, 1996). Consequently, some social groups are sanctioned or privileged to make definitions or constructions of social meanings (Crossley, 2005). As a result of this, some discourses or narratives of reality come to be prioritized over the others and further, those that do not accord with dominant or prevalent ones can be marginalized or eliminated as deviations from society.

As a corollary of construction of dominant discourses or narratives, there emerges a singular dominant mode of social identity and accordingly the relationship between identity and the outbreak of violent conflict is thought to reflect how conflict is implicated in establishing a strict boundary between friend and enemy (Neumann, 1999). Social identity is, as Jabri claims, formed through deeply embedded institutional and discursive continuities which places itself within bounded communities, the definition of which is based on mode of inclusion and exclusion (1996). As Jeong and Vayrynen insist, the networks of signs, symbols or images are employed to establish a system of inclusion and exclusion (1999). In a social world, particular ways are used to perceive and interpret others as well as to present the self
to others (Jeong and Vayrynen, 1999) and the multiple identities that individuals are supposed to possess come to be expressed in terms of one dominant identity (Jabri, 1996) in that process.

In short, through the construction of dominant discourses or narratives on reality, more specifically on ingroup and outgroup, narrow and exclusionist social identities are formed. The production of a dominant or exclusive modality of representation or discourse precludes other possibilities in discourses and narratives and consequently invalidates the pluralities of social identity (Jabri, 1996), which can lead to the distorted or simplistic views of both oneself and others and consequently violence of many kinds and discrimination could be justified.

The emergence of a singular dominant mode of representation excludes other possibilities in discourses or narratives and denies the multiple identities that are possessed by every individual (Jabri, 1996). Conflict establishes a discourse of exclusion based on intersubjectively constructed identity that involves strong sense of separation and strict boundaries (Jabri, 1996). The production of dominant constructions of social identity within particular locations or societies demonstrates the structures of domination as implicated in the construction of hegemonic identity

127 Francis argues that narrow and exclusionist identities have powerful weapons in the struggle for survival in conflict situations (2002).
defining discourses (Jabri, 1996). Consequently, the dominant discourses or narratives and social identity derived from those hegemonic discourses fixate the views on ingroup as well as on outgroup and strengthen sense of inclusion and exclusion between them. Further, what should be stressed is that once they have been established, dominant discourses and identities based on asymmetric power relations become part of the taken-for-granted social world (Nordstrom, 1995). The asymmetric power relations and the dominant discourses can be so strongly fixed as to influence the course of social life and could be perceived as the way life is (Nordstrom, 1995). Put differently, the predominant discourses or narratives accompanied by power relations come to be naturalized, which prevents us from viewing ourselves and others in different ways. Therefore, it is imperative to critically analyze and challenge the dominant discourses or narratives and power relations that are associated with them.\(^{128}\)

From these points of view, as Jeong and Vayrynen argue, the critical examination of narrowly defined social identity and the exploration of alternative possibilities are crucial in transforming violent situations and relationships (1999). The transformation of a singular dominant social identity into diverse and multiple identities, which requires adversarial groups to perceive ingroup and outgroup in an interdependent and self-constituting relationships (Jeong and Vayrynen, 1999), must entail transforming

\(^{128}\) For instance, Nordstrom insists that true conflict transformation can come only when the cultures defining conflict and power relations are critically examined and consciously revised (1995).
the dominant discourses or narratives and asymmetric power relations that prop up the fixed social identity and strongly bounded dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion. In other words, the beliefs, norms, values and symbols that have been seen as taken-for-granted in everyday social interaction should be thematized and subjected to critique by those who live in the society (Crotty, 1998), as a consequence of which, there could emerge the transformative possibilities for the multiple voices or discourses in group or society.

In order to challenge and eventually transform the singular dominant discourses, narratives or symbolic meanings that constitute fixed social identity with strong exclusionist perspectives, critical thinking must be nurtured. According to Crotty, critical thinking understands reality as process and transformation, not as a static entity (1998). In the context of critical thinking about dominant identities and discourses or narratives, we must be conscientized that the boundaries of identity are fixed and can be reorganized with the construction of new meanings and perspectives (Jeong and Vayrynen, 1999).

How can dominant discourses, narratives or symbolic meanings be subjected to critique or critical inquiry and how can transformative counter-discourses or new meanings be explored? Jabri insists that the exploration of counter-discourses or the
transformation of dominant discourses or narratives should be located in the public
space or sphere (1996). Crossley explains that the public sphere means “a space, real
or virtual, in which individuals, who otherwise live private lives and have their own
private concerns, come together to discuss issues of common concern with the
purpose of thrashing out their different views and arriving at a common position”

Fetherston and Parkin insist that it should be recognized that the transformation of a
conflict situation must entail the repair or promotion of communicative networks that
enable citizens to participate in the reconstruction or reconfiguration of shared cultural
knowledge, social solidarities and socialized personalities (1997). Further, they also
argue that the communicative repair work can be achieved partly by local social
movements or community groups that function to open up public spaces for more
inclusive and unrestricted discourses (1997). Put another way, local people should be
empowered to construct or secure the democratic social space or sphere to explore the
transformative discourses or narratives, which could challenge the dominant
discourses, narrowly defined social identity and deformed or distorted power relations
that construct and sustain the dominant discourses disguised as taken-for-granted or
natural.
A true transformation of conflictual and violent situations should involve an integration of all who have been affected by conflict into the mainstream of social life including public discourse (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997), which could enable them to critique the dominant discourses, narratives or cultural symbolic meanings that have been assumed to be natural or absolute and to explore the alternatives. Consequently, rather than recognizing monolithic views of identity, people would recognize diversity, the articulation of multiple subjectivities and explore the possibility of cross-cutting modes of discourses or narratives that transcend or break through strong demarcation of inclusion and exclusion (Jabri, 1996).

Thus we need to explore “complex, flexible and inter-subjectively produced responses to violent conflict which intend to create emancipatory social transformation” (Fetherston, 2000: 23). The renewal of cultural knowledge, social solidarity and social identity could be achieved through intersubjective action oriented to reaching understanding (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997) and cultivating capacity to have a critical eye to the existing discourses or narratives. Interactions that are interwoven in a network of everyday intersubjective communicative practice can be the medium through which culture or discourse, society and identity are reproduced (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997). Put it another way, empowerment of local people or people in grassroots level through the promotion of daily communicative action, could enable
them to critically examine the dominant discourses or narratives that control their society and to explore new discourses or narratives.

**Critique of social structure**

As Jabri insists, human conflict is “a social continuity sustained by deeply embedded discursive and institutional structures existent in patterned social systems” (1996: 146). Existing social structures should be subject to critical analysis and eventual transformation: any status quo based on an existing dominant social structure should be problematized and transformed into new one since social structure itself is seen as a source of conflict. In other words, critical epistemology tries to problematize functionalism.

According to Jeong, the main presupposition of functionalism is that “component actors are motivated to act in accordance with their role requirements to maintain the integration of the system” (2003: 157). From this functionalist viewpoint, conflict can be managed by reforming the components of a system, which implies that functionalism is oriented toward maintaining the status quo (Jeong, 2003). On this view, the status quo is taken-for-granted. However, from a critical epistemological perspective, the social structure that sustains the status quo is not neutral: rather it is based on asymmetric power relations between/among the component actors in the
social system in which some actors or groups are prioritized or privileged over others. Accordingly, the maintenance of the existing social structure is understood as fundamentally maintaining the unequal relationships.

As Jeong argues, since unequal power relations between/among those who live in a society are located within a society itself, its effects can be understood as being spread around the social structure as a whole (2003). Asymmetric power relations are embedded in a complex web of structural and material elements, which constructs the fabric of everyday life itself (Jeong, 2003).

If the deformed social structure derived from the asymmetric power relations between/among different groups is considered as a source of conflict, serious conflict should be recognized as being often embedded in an unequal social, political and economic system that reflects prolonged exploitation backed by coercion (Jeong, 2003). Structural conditions for the emergence of conflict are unequal economic opportunities and unjust access to political power or a lack of political openings (Smith, 2004). Hierarchical and asymmetric social relations or structures are institutionalized in ways that prevent those who are subordinated or underprivileged from effective participation in social, political and economic activities (Jeong, 2000). Consequently, an exploitable sense of social injustice, which has derived from the
underlying inequality of power and prosperity in a society, is the central factor for
devastating political mobilization (Smith, 2004). Put differently, as Wilmer claims, social
structural insecurity that arises out of asymmetric social, political and economic
opportunities between/among those who live in a society causes psychological
uncertainty of those who are underprivileged and weakens their psychic defenses
against the cognitive processes that triggers fear and eventually drives them to resort
to violence (2002).

Therefore, approaches that ignore structural transformation would result in
perpetuating the status quo and consequently would not contribute to resolving
conflict but might prolong and worsen it (Botes, 2003b). In other words, the
achievement of social justice through the transformation of existing social structures
and of asymmetric power relations between/among the habitants in a society is of
great significance. As Mitchell claims, social structural changes are necessary
conditions for successful effort to address the conflict: only by seeking structural
transformation, we could prevent future conflict (2005). In short, a great deal of
conflict resolution is based upon the belief that overcoming structural violence is the
core element of social justice.

According to Kanisin, tackling structural violence in terms of addressing conflict
means “breaking down the structures of exploitation, marginalization and fragmentation of people in society” (2003: 4).\textsuperscript{129} As Reimann insists, the political imperative to build a new infrastructure to recognize and empower the underprivileged people or group of people should be emphasized in order to foster social justice (2004). Put differently, structural accommodation entails formal means of securing inclusiveness and respect for diversity in the political system, institutions and the law (Nathan, 2000). However, as Nathan argues, justice in the socioeconomic domain is also crucial in addressing conflict since where underdevelopment is combined with extreme inequality, sporadic violence can occur accompanied by negative feelings such as anger, frustration and fear (2000).

In short, as Montiel elucidates, structurally peaceful social structures can be characterized by “equitably-distributed decision-powers in the production, allocation and utilization of economic, political and cultural resources” (2001: 285). Structural transformation is a process of transforming relatively enduring asymmetric relationships between/among collectivities in a social structure to new sets of intergroup relations where all groups can enjoy more equal control over political-economic resources within the society (Montiel, 2001). Since vertical

\textsuperscript{129} Nathan, for instance, raises four structural conditions for conflict: authoritarian rule; the exclusion of minorities from governance; socioeconomic deprivation combined with inequality; and weak states that lack the institutional capacity to manage normal political and social conflict (2000).
relationships between/among groups are deeply embedded in the asymmetric social structures, by transforming the asymmetric structures into more equitable ones, those vertical relations could be reconfigured into more horizontal ones. As Wilmer insists, transformation of the asymmetric power relations in which ethnic majority enjoys social and cultural privilege, greater access to power, control of the political institutions and economic privilege into more civic polity in which diversity and equality can be guaranteed, is essential for sustainable peace and social stability (2002).

Thus, dynamic changes of social structures that are marked by asymmetric power relations should be included as the core of resolution of conflict in the long run (Bachler, 2004). From a critical epistemological perspective, the status quo should be critiqued and transformed. It should be recognized that the existing state of affairs does not exhaust all other possibilities: our human world is a product of human action and therefore it should be acknowledged that it is the product of some actions among wide varieties of possibilities (Calhoun, 2000). Consequently, it should be understood that existing social structures are not what will last eternally; rather, since they have been constructed by human beings themselves, they can be transformed even if it takes time to carry out the transformation.
3-4 Problems of existing epistemological approaches to contemporary conflict resolution and exploring the potential of new epistemologies as complementary to existing ones

3-4-1 Critique of objective epistemological approach

Achievement of objective epistemological approach

The most distinct achievement of objective epistemological approaches to addressing conflict, that is, the application of basic human needs theory to conflict resolution, is that by challenging the traditional approaches represented by conflict settlement, and providing an alternative to them, it has enabled us to explore the possibility of resolving conflict, the basic assumption of which is that since conflicts have root causes, if we address the causes, we can resolve conflict.

According to Rubenstein, a traditional or conservative view of human nature is that human beings are creatures inherently driven to engage in violent conflict by sinful rebelliousness, innate aggressive instincts or a lust for power (2001). Further, Burton insists that traditionally it has been held that human beings are aggressive mainly in order to pursue material goods, in particular, resources and territories that are in limited supply (1998). Therefore, it has been believed that “conflicts are caused by knowable, measurable and reducible material objects” (Fetherston, 2000: 2). In other words, conflict emerges from substantive issues such as power-sharing, territory,
natural resources, economic control and so on (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997).

Consequently, some approaches to conflict have concentrated on minimizing the worst excesses of violence, which can be termed conflict settlement (Fetherston, 2000). According to Fetherston and Parkin, conflict settlement is “to distinguish a way of managing violent conflict which emphasizes power and interests” (1997: 24). Beckett explains that the conflict settlement approach entails reaching agreement over specific material or substantive matters, in which the parties to the conflict have an interest, using various ways of bargaining processes to achieve a compromise (1997). Fundamentally, conflict settlement embraces the suppression of conflict by coercive means, concretely focuses on methods such as arbitration, power mediation and sees sanctions and rewards as important instruments to manage or control further conflict (Beckett, 1997).

A basic assumption of conflict settlement is that since human beings are inherently evil and/or biologically aggressive, mechanisms for control are essential (Jeong, 2000). As Rubenstein states, because human impulses to aggress or dominate, which have been biologically embedded, cannot be eliminated categorically, all that we can do is to control or balance them by countervailing force (2001). Although human violent and destructive behaviors cannot be completely overcome as they are inherently
embedded in human beings, they can be controlled by disciplinary or coercive means (Jeong, 2000). Thus it can be supposed that from the conflict settlement perspective, what we can do is to control biologically programmed human violence through powerful or coercive methodologies, but it is impossible to resolve violent conflict completely, let alone prevent it.

However, the basic human needs approach has criticized the assumption of conflict settlement and insisted that conflict can be resolved if the root-source of violent conflict is addressed. Fetherston and Parkin explain that conflict resolution, which is concerned with addressing root-causes of conflict, developed out of a critique of conflict settlement approaches (1997). From a conflict resolution viewpoint, there is the deeper or more profound idea that conflicts fundamentally are not fought over substantive material issues, but could be rooted in basic human needs (Fetherston and Parkin, 1997). From basic human needs perspective, it is believed that people conflict when they feel that their basic needs have not been gratified (Dunn, 2001) and the distinguished view on basic human needs is that they are assumed to be inherent in human beings and universal (Burton, 1997). Consequently, it can be supposed that aggression is not inherent but only an outcome of the failure to satisfy basic human needs that are not malleable (Fetherston, 2000). Furthermore, while conflict, at first glance, might be viewed as being interest-oriented (territory, material resources and so
on), it will come to be recognized as being human needs-based, which is ontologically and universally common to all human beings (Burton, 1991).

An epistemologically objective view, in which conflict is seen as ‘win-lose’ or ‘all or nothing’ phenomenon, can turn into ‘win-win’ as people engage in conflict not over visible material resource but over basic human needs that are common to all (Burton, 1986). Basic human needs theory has contributed to the development of a process that would enable parties to conflict to discover the real motivations and intentions, that is, the satisfaction of basic human needs, not the acquisition of material interests and to explore the means by which human needs held in common can be gratified (Burton, 1986). By introducing basic human needs theory to conflict analysis, conflict has come to be recognized as a problem that could be resolved rather than a situation in which violent behaviors that are genetically or biologically embedded must be controlled or suppressed coercively (Burton, 1998).

**Problem of objective epistemological approach**

While the objective epistemological approach to contemporary conflict resolution, that is, basic human needs approach, has made a huge contribution to creating and developing conflict resolution by proposing that conflict has root causes, there has been a grave problem with the approach: the analysis of the relationship between
subjective dimension and the basic human needs has been underdeveloped.

The core idea of basic human needs approach is, as Burton and Sandole insist, that there are generic or genetic drives and motivations toward human goals that cannot be suppressed: the satisfaction of basic human needs is a universal phenomenon (1986). Consequently, it is presumed there exist universal patterns of behavior and that enables a generic approach to resolving conflict, that is, basic human needs approach, to be applied to all conflicts (Burton and Sandole, 1987).

Further, the fundamental theme of basic human needs theory is that in ontological terms, all individuals are conditioned by biology or by a primordial drive to pursue the same human needs (Burton, 1990). In other words, as Sandole argues, basic human needs are biologically and genetically embedded elements and the needs are universal and common to all humankind across time and space (1990), as a result of which, the same pattern of conflict resolution can be applied to any conflict.

However, as Rubenstein points out, the attempt to establish an objective basis for basic needs in human biology or in unalterable human nature has been critiqued as “indefensibly essentialist, de-contextualized, a-historical” (2001: 4). As Clark states, human beings have an essential need for social intercourse through life (1990). Further,
as Vayrynen claims, humans are basically “self-interpreting and self-defining beings, who live in the world of cultural meaning” (2001: 8). In understanding the dynamism of basic human needs, intersubjective social interaction and the construction of shared meaning must be taken into account, which has been underdeveloped in objective epistemological approach to contemporary conflict resolution.

The central assumption of objective epistemology has been that there is universally applicable knowledge or truth that transcends time and space and accordingly even conflict could be explained from the viewpoint that there is a common root cause of conflict, that is, the frustration of the satisfaction of basic human needs, especially needs for security, identity, recognition and development. However, as Rubenstein claims, while the need for identity might be a universally seen phenomenon, the way to gratify the need (for identity) will be determined essentially by local or cultural histories or environments (2001). Further, Wedge insists that the need for recognition is rooted in the psychology of social self (1990). Groups seek the acknowledgement of their unique existence, in the process of which, they adopt various kinds of shared symbols and exhibitions that represent their uniqueness and attract attention (Wedge, 1990). Our ability to share together questions about the meaning of events, or the construction of shared meanings of events plays a central role in sustaining our sense of self (Clark, 1990). The symbols embedded in each culture or society form a cultural
bond through which an individual attains self-identity (Clark, 1990).

In short, by constructing intersubjective or shared meanings and projecting them onto objects, phenomena or historical events, our based human needs are satisfied, in a way that is subjective-oriented, but also cultural and social. From these arguments, it can be seen that while it might be a universal phenomenon that human beings seek the gratification of basic human needs, especially in the context of contemporary conflict resolution, needs for security, identity, recognition and development, how those needs are gratified should be explored in the domain of human subjectivity that is locally, culturally and historically specific, which has been left out from the objective epistemological approach to contemporary conflict resolution.

3-4-2 Critique of subjective epistemological approach

Significance of subjective epistemology

The most important contribution of subjective epistemology to knowledge is the proposition that knowledge is constructed by human subjects, in particular, by the process of intersubjectivity. From a subjective epistemological viewpoint, there is no objective knowledge that is independent of the human subject: rather, human subjects construct knowledge or meaning of reality and that becomes their reality. Nevertheless, subjective epistemology insists that human subjects do not construct knowledge or
truth individually: since human subjects are inherently social beings, knowledge, truth or meaning of reality is constructed through social interaction. In other words, intersubjective or social construction of knowledge has been assumed as the starting point and cultural dimension and social psychological perspective play crucial role in the social construction of knowledge. Although subjective epistemology does not deny the importance or significance of basic human needs in conflict analysis, the relationship between the subjective dimension and basic human needs has never been well articulated in objective epistemology, which could be complemented by subjective epistemology.

From subjective epistemology, as Gray states, “human interaction with the world is mediated through the process of meaning-making and interpretation” (2004: 21). Human beings interpret the meaning of objects and actions in the world and act on those interpretations (Gray, 2004). Furthermore, this human subjective activity represents a person’s central aim and understanding of who he/she is (Baronov, 2004). In short, subjective understanding of reality is interconnected with the existential matter of “Who am I?” However, this subjective activity is not carried out individually but collectively.

As Schutz, the leading figure of sociological phenomenology, states, human beings are...
born into a world that existed before their births and this world is from the beginning not only a physical, but also a sociocultural one (1970). That everyday life-world is, from the outset, not a private but an intersubjective and consequently a social or cultural reality, has important influences on the constitution and structure of the subjective stock of knowledge (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974). Culture plays a central role in constructing the framework of human subjectivity.

According to Gudykunst, culture constitutes “a system of knowledge that allows us to know how to communicate with others and how to interpret their behaviors” (2004: 43). Culture refers to “widely shared practices and to commonly held assumptions and presumptions that individuals and groups hold about the world, which involves the social structuring of both the world outside the self and the internal world” (Vayrynen, 2001: 3). In short, culture conditions how the world is represented to a person (Vayrynen, 1998). As Fry and Fry explain, through socialization within his/her culture, one obtains views on what the world is like, embraces a specific set of values and understands the cultural meanings of events and actions (1997).

As Gurwitsch argues, our personal identities are, to a great degree, socially constructed and derive from a stock of knowledge at hand; and the socially accessible stock of knowledge forms the framework of reference, interpretation and orientation
for our life in the world of everyday experiences (1975). Further, as long as social stock of knowledge enables us to acquire desired specific results, it is applied and compiled with without doubt: it will not be put into question unless the results fail to materialize (Gurwitsch, 1975). Accordingly, it can be seen that cultural identities are our central social identities (Gudykunst, 2004).

From the viewpoint of the intimate connection between the construction of social identity and the formation and acquisition of shared reality derived from culture, how can conflict be understood? As LeBaron argues, human beings care to maintain and protect their ways of life and their views of the world derived from culture (2003) since they reflect or constitute social identity. When conflict emerges because of social identity being under threat, it actually means that culturally formed shared reality or an intersubjectively constituted common view of reality is entailed. Therefore, as Vayrynen holds, conflict inevitably involves the struggle to impose one’s definition or view of reality upon the other, the central question of which is whose definition of reality is taken seriously and acted upon (2001). What Vayrynen states clearly demonstrates that identity, especially social identity should be examined not in the biological dimension but in the socio-cultural dimension, which means that socially constructed knowledge, that is, intersubjectively constructed shared view of reality plays the core role in conflict dynamics since the parties in conflict take any effort
including violence to protect and maintain their cultural reality. The reason for that is if their culturally constructed and preserved view of reality is impaired, it would threaten their existence. Thus, from the subjective epistemological viewpoint, in understanding conflict dynamics, an intersubjectively constructed view of reality should be taken into serious consideration.

### 3-4-3 Critique of critical epistemology

#### Significance of critical epistemology

The most distinguished contribution of critical epistemology to studies of knowledge is the demonstration that knowledge is a process: there is no universally or objectively applied knowledge that transcends time and space, as a result of which, knowledge has come to be recognized as what should be constructed by people who live in a specific or particular time and history or society. The construction of knowledge has come to be understood as the enterprise with no end-point, that is, a never-ending process, which has contributed to the promotion of conflict transformation that essentially challenges existing discourses and social structures and seeks to transform them into ones that treat all of the habitants in the society in equal manner.

According to Hoffman, traditionally, knowledge was seen to derive from the activity of describing the world: it had been presumed that knowledge understands the world
as a set of ready-made facts waiting to be discovered through the application of objective or scientific methodology and those facts are independent of the social framework (1987). However, from a critical epistemological viewpoint, there is no way to acquire direct knowledge about the real world, and consequently there will be no one single reality, that is, one true or absolute knowledge (Rogers, 2003). On the contrary, people construct various kinds of knowledge: knowledge is constructed or made real by human meaning-making (Rogers, 2003). Social reality is recognized as the product of processes by which those who live in a society collectively negotiate the meanings for the actions and situations: it is the symbolic world of meanings and interpretations (Rogers, 2003). More specifically, the social world as conventionally understood – systems, structure, agents, shared meanings, a predominant social order and so on – is taken over by discourse, that is, language with strong constructing effects, images and interpretations in circulation (Alvesson, 2004).

Further, critical epistemology maintains that social construction of knowledge is linked with power relations. Crotty argues that all discourses or narratives are essentially mediated by power relations that are social in nature and historically constituted (1998), as a consequence of which, a particular version of reality is produced and affects and shapes how people in the society should relate to their social worlds (Alvesson, 2002). Consequently, certain perspectives come to be legitimized
and others are marginalized or excluded from society (Baronov, 2004) and certain
groups in the society will be prioritized and others will be unreasonably subject to
discrimination or abuse and given little opportunity to participate in society (Gough
and McFadden, 2001).

Therefore, the crucial task of critical epistemology is to critique the existing socially
constructed discourses and to show the possibility of transforming them into new ones.
Since socially constructed knowledge or discourses on reality are based on
asymmetric power relations, they could maintain or even promote unequal
relationships between/among the habitants in a society (Butler, 2002). From critical
epistemological viewpoints, as Butler argues, when we examine the particular social
systems and discourses, which in general claim to describe the social world correctly,
it can be clear that the concepts they privilege or make central and the hierarchical
orders they maintain, are not so certainly in the right order (2002) since those that are
privileged are dependent on those that are underprivileged or marginalized for their
existence. The privileged discourses or the views on reality can be undermined by
careful attention to the role in it of marginal features (Gutting, 1998a). In short,
existing discourses and social structures do not possess absolute states and rather are
fragile in essence.
The upshot of critical epistemology is that while social interaction occurs within a context of socially constructed economic and political structures, those structures lack a privileged center and do not or cannot totalize and exhaust the field of identity and accordingly they are exposed to constant contestation and transformation (Torfing, 1999). Put differently, the instability and contingency of the structural context of social interaction are emphasized (Torfing, 1999). Further, the instable and contingent nature of the structure reveals the arbitrariness and non-referential character of the sign (Best and Kellner, 1991), which leads to that we should break from the traditional presumption that there is a literal connection between words and reality: rather, the fundamental indeterminacy of meaning within language should be recognized (Baronov: 2004).

However, the arbitrary and non-referential nature of the sign or the indeterminacy of meaning within language should not be understood as nihilistic: rather, it should be realized that everything social – language or discourse, culture, practice, social structure and so on – is arbitrary and instable in essence (Best and Kellner, 1991), and can be transformed into new ones. The existing social forms and interactions are not natural or given, but are the products of a historical process that can be critically challenged and transformed eventually (Best and Kellner, 1991). Further, it can be appreciated that, as Smith argues, since the meanings of event or representations of
reality, that is, the discourses in society, are contested and open to reinterpretation in nature (1998), social identities can be seen essentially as fluid or flux and open to continual transformation (1998).

Thus, a critical epistemological approach calls for active thought that can constantly challenge or examine critically the existing state of affairs in social world (Dant, 2003). The praxis of critical consciousness could lead to change in the way society is lived (Dant, 2003). Although it is difficult to challenge the existing social structures and discourses and social identities derived from them, critical epistemology has succeeded in revealing their fundamental fragility and instability and possibility of their transformation. Through critical epistemological analysis, construction of discourses and social structures has come to be seen as the constitution and reproduction of social relations of power, domination and exploitation. However, at the same time, as Fairclough holds, the fundamental arbitrariness or instability of structures and discourses derived from the impossibility of clear connection of language and reality makes it possible to transform them and explore and eventually promote social emancipation and enhance social justice (2004), which enables those marginalized to participate in society more actively and this is the upshot of conflict transformation.
**Limitations of critical epistemological approach**

The most noticeable problem of critical epistemology is that it has underdeveloped the potential of agency or individual subjects while it emphasizes the importance or necessity of critiquing and transforming socially constructed knowledge since (from a critical epistemological perspective) knowledge is to be recognized not as a substance but as a continual process.

According to Gutting, critical epistemological perspectives represented by poststructuralism, postmodernism or social constructionism have retained structuralism’s elimination of the human subject from any role as a foundation of reality or construction of knowledge\(^{130}\) while they have challenged the structuralist assumption that systems are self-sufficient structures and questioned the possibility of the precise definitions on which systems of knowledge must be founded (1998a). The core of structuralism is “the treatment of distinctively human domains as formal structures in which meanings are constituted not by conscious subjects but by relations among the elements of a formal system” (Gutting, 1998b: 600) and critical epistemologists critique this presumption, stating that the seemingly formal or fixed systems are in essence fragile and open to transformation.

\(^{130}\) See also Best and Kellner (1991). They hold that poststructuralists continue to reject the concept of the spontaneous, rational and autonomous subject.
However, as Spears points out, while critical epistemologists have spent much time in critically examining the power of social structure, language and discourses, there seems to have been little for the arguments on the individual agent, and as a corollary of that, individual agents have come to be considered easily as passive bearers of social structure or discourses (1997). In other words, exploration of the potential of individual agency or subject has been lacking or downplayed in critical epistemology, which, it could be argued, has unearthed a contradiction and limitation of critical epistemology itself.

Butler argues that in Western thought, there has been a tendency to privilege or rely on particular transcendental signifiers such as God, reality, the idea of man to construct discourses (2002), which has had huge impact on the binary thinking in the West. As Best and Kellner state, there have been the binary oppositions affecting Western philosophy and culture – for instance, subject/object, appearance/reality, speech/writing, God/human beings, man/women, and so on - to construct discourses (1991). However, they also claim that these binary oppositions have worked to constitute a far-from innocent hierarchy of values that attempt not only to secure truth but also serve to marginalize and devalue allegedly inferior terms or positions (1991). Further, the conceptual binary oppositions have made us get fundamental relations rigidly fixed (Butler, 2002) and believe that the unequal hierarchy of values and its
fixity are natural.

Critical epistemology has been concerned with giving a critical eye to binary thinking and challenging the hierarchies of systems based on it. It is argued (from a critical epistemological viewpoint) that the allegedly opposing dichotomy has no absolute status since the alternatives it offers are neither exclusive nor exhaustive (Gutting, 1998a). Rather, as Alvesson insists, the deconstruction approach, which is an important methodology of critical epistemology, functions to “critique the ideal of representation by recalling the suppressed term that provides the system and thus allows the positive to appear to stand for an existing object” (2002: 59). Put another way, the status of binary opposition is not so fixed as it is believed and rather fragile since one binary is dependent upon the other of the binary and vice versa for its existence.

Therefore, there is no stability in a fundamental binary or dichotomy in any mode of thought since the allegedly exclusive alternatives find themselves to be inextricably interconnected and consequently the hierarchies derived from the binary thought is made reversible or overturned (Gutting, 1998a). Thus it could be seen that an essential nature of critical epistemology is the denial or critique of binary or dichotomous thought of any kind.
However, as pointed out, since it has downplayed or underdeveloped the potential or quality of agency or the human subject in the construction of knowledge, critical epistemology faces a contradiction: while critical epistemology attempts to criticize and eventually transform the traditional Western binary thinking or dichotomous way of constructing discourses or knowledge, there is still the binary relationship of structure/agency in critical epistemology itself, in which the former has been prioritized over the latter. From critical epistemological perspectives, the complex and deep-seated patterns of social meanings and relations that govern interaction within a social system are referred to in terms of structure and while the structure is instantiated or constituted by the actions of individual agencies, it is not reducible to individual action (Torfing, 1999). Rather it is maintained that processes or phenomena of social conventions are operated not within individual minds, but intersubjectively, that is, between people, within shared conventions or rules and mediated by and through the meanings or discourses that are shared by people that possess a common culture or mutual social relationship (Rogers, 2003).

However, the fundamental thesis of critical epistemology is that socially constructed knowledge itself must be subject to constant critique and transformation since in its nature socially constructed knowledge is fragile and does not have absolute status or eternity and in this dimension of understanding of knowledge as a process, the
binary relations of structure/agency and its prioritization of structure reveals the limitations of critical epistemology: since critical epistemology lacks an adequate theory of agency, of active and creative self mediated by social structures, discourses and other people (Best and Kellner, 1991), how agency can critically examine and eventually transform the existing discourses and social structures has been obscured. Critical epistemology rejects the notion of the autonomous, self-determining individual with a unitary identity as the center of the social world, which is based on the assumption that there is never a core or an essence of human nature or a stable and fixed sense of subjectivity (Alvesson, 2002). Consequently, it can be assumed that since there is no fixed or monolithic nature of human beings, agency is not at the mercy of social and cultural forces (Gough and McFadden, 2001).

However, by ignoring the potential of agency and maintaining the binary relationship of structure/agency with the former prioritized over the latter, a deterministic nature of human agency has been revealed in critical epistemology since the power or potential of agency has not been explored. Truly, since human beings are social beings, they are affected by social conventions such as prevalent discourses, rules, social structures and so on, for their understanding of reality. However, if the aim of critical epistemology is the critique and transformation of socially constructed knowledge, as Burr recommends, how we should understand the self or agency qualitatively must be
explored (1998). How we should conceive of the person as an agent and director of critique and transformation of knowledge must be analyzed (Burr, 1998). In short, in order to make the main theme of critical epistemology, that is, constant critique and transformation of socially constructed knowledge, more coherent, the binary thinking of structure/agency, which still remains actually in critical epistemology, should be broken. The creation of a critical and self-reflective subjectivity of agency must be explored.

3-4-4 What kinds of epistemological approach are missing or underdeveloped?

Exploring new epistemologies to complement the existing epistemological approaches to contemporary conflict resolution theories

In previous sections of this chapter, two issues have been analyzed: how Western epistemologies that are categorized into three types have contributed to contemporary conflict resolution theories; and the critique of those approaches. It has been seen that Western epistemologies, through self-critique and self-reflexivity, have evolved and enriched understandings of reality, which has made a crucial contribution to developing conflict resolution theories.

Traditionally it had been considered that since conflict is attributed to inherently embedded human aggressiveness, it is impossible to resolve conflict although we
could control or suppress violence by coercive means. However, objective epistemology challenged this traditional belief. Objective epistemology claims that there are basic human needs that are universal and common to all human beings. It insists that there are root-causes of conflict, that is, the frustration of the satisfaction of basic human needs and if basic human needs are gratified, conflict can be resolved, which means that objective epistemology has demonstrated that conflict is not something beyond human reach, but what can be addressed by human beings themselves.

Nevertheless, the subjective dimension has been lacking in objective epistemology. In particular, while identity is generally recognized as one of the central elements in conflict dynamics, how identity is formed has been unclear in objective epistemology. This has been addressed by subjective epistemology. Subjective epistemology insists that human beings are the creatures that make or construct meanings, of the world and of themselves. Since human beings are social or cultural beings, they construct meanings of the world intersubjectively, so, through social interaction, we construct shared reality of everyday experience. Thus, intersubjectively constructed or formed meaning or understanding of reality constitutes the core of our identity, which is the subjectively-oriented element. Therefore, it has come to be understood that at least in some instances, conflict arises when the shared reality or intersubjectively formed
understanding of reality is broken down or under threat since that reflects that identity is under threat.

Further, critical epistemology has succeeded in critiquing socially constructed knowledge. Subjective epistemology and critical epistemology share the idea that knowledge is socially or intersubjectively constructed. However, critical epistemology, as its fundamental theme, argues that social construction of knowledge produces power relations in which some views are prioritized over the others and consequently some people of group of people are privileged and others are subordinated or discriminated in society. Nevertheless, critical epistemology has demonstrated that existing socially constructed knowledge that sustains the status quo is fragile and unstable in its nature, which has been shown by deconstructionist methodology. This deconstructionist approach has succeeded (theoretically and conceptually) in proving that there is no socially constructed knowledge that has an absolute or eternal status: rather, it has been shown that knowledge is not a substance but a process. As a result, constant critique and transformation of socially constructed knowledge has been recognized that existing social identity and social structure are not absolute or an end-point: social identity and structure are fluid in essence and consequently it is possible for us to transform them.
However, as critically examined, critical epistemology, while it makes the constant critique and transformation of socially constructed knowledge its own central theme, has not elaborated the potential of individual agency. In other words, critical epistemology, like structuralism, has consciously or unconsciously prioritized structure over agency, and consequently, how individual mind can critically examine and transform socially constructed knowledge has been underdeveloped.

Based on these contributions of Western epistemologies to contemporary conflict resolution theories through self-critique and self-reflexivity and the critiques of those epistemological approaches, what has been missing or underdeveloped? It could be argued that in contemporary conflict resolution theories and the Western epistemologies that have shaped them, human mind has been exclusively socially-oriented. Put differently, as their understanding of human mind focuses rather exclusively on its social orientation in Western epistemologies, the quality of human mind has never been well explored.

It is generally held, as Matsuo claims, that traditionally in Western philosophy, “the search for truth was keyed to something external to the self or within the Logos” (1981: 4). It had been considered that truth or knowledge exists exterior to the human mind and the task of human mind is only to reflect or discover the truth or knowledge.
that exists objectively external to human mind. However, this traditional assumption has been challenged within Western philosophies, which has been shown by subjective epistemology and critical epistemology.

Through the emergence of these epistemologies, it has come to be recognized that mind is not the passive reflector of objective knowledge that exists independently of human subjects. Rather it has been acknowledged that human mind actively constructs knowledge or truth. Both subjective epistemology and critical epistemology have placed social construction of knowledge at their center: intersubjective or social dimension of human mind has been on exclusive focus for their analysis of human mind. As a result of this, while the construction of knowledge by the human subject or mind has been appreciated as one of the core elements of Western philosophy, the quality of human mind has been confined to the intersubjective or social level, which has made it highly difficult to explore how individual agency or individual mind can be engaged in critique and transformation of existing socially constructed knowledge and truth.

The world is not a set of facts to be discovered, but a set of experiences to be interpreted and our interpretation relies on what perspectives and inner powers we bring to our experience (Said et al, 2006). Accordingly, to make a constructive critique
and transformation of the world around human beings, first of all, they must make a constructive and positive transformation of their ways of knowing (Said et al, 2006). Transformation is “a process involving a change in our conscious beliefs and in the structure of underlying unconscious symbols that hold our word in place” (Said et al, 2006: 113). Therefore, if we want to make a constructive critique and transformation of socially constructed knowledge, our socially-oriented or socially constructed ways of knowing ourselves must be broken through. This does not mean that a socially-oriented mind-set or mind-state is denied or impaired: rather, it should be accepted that socially-oriented human mind is a part of mind that possesses more profound and broader quality that can transform and expand our way of knowing. This has been underdeveloped in subjective epistemology and critical epistemology that have played the central role in the studies of human mind in Western conflict resolution.

Therefore, in order to explore the quality of human mind, non-Western epistemologies or philosophies could be of significance and one of them is Buddhist philosophy. According to Matsuo, from a Buddhist perspective, rather than engaging in metaphysical speculations about an external and objective world, philosophy is a critical study of human thoughts that build a meaningful reality (1981). From this view, the purpose of philosophy is “to know thyself in terms of understanding the structure
of one’s own thinking process (Matsuo, 1981: 4). Knowledge can be obtained in various ways: by reflection, by rational consideration, by intuitive induction, by creative thinking and so on (Said et al, 2006). Knowing the nature or quality of one’s mind or understanding the principles of epistemic function is a central theme of philosophy: knowing, first of all, reality as a construct of the mind-base or mind-structure, critically reflecting its potential danger or limitation and finally exploring how it can be addressed constitute the nature of epistemology (Matsuo, 1981). Critical and constructive examination of the potential or power of the human mind is the essence of epistemology.

Exploring the structure or quality of mind is the central theme of Buddhist epistemology. Buddhist epistemology does not negate subjective epistemology and critical epistemology, that is, the socially constructed mind-structure or socially-oriented mind quality, but it insists that human mind cannot be confined exclusively to its social orientation. Rather, from a Buddhist epistemological perspective, the premise is that although social or cultural influence of human mind cannot be denied, the exploration of the quality or structure of human mind should be carried out from more profound and broader angles. From these points of view, the central theme of this work is not the denial of Western epistemologies and contemporary conflict resolution theories based on them. Rather, what this work
wishes to emphasize as its intellectual crux is that by complementing Western epistemologies from a Buddhist philosophy that explores the structure and quality of human mind as the central source of knowledge and truth, it is possible to expand the framework of contemporary conflict resolution theories that have been mainly socially-oriented.

The essential point of social science is not to judge which theories and philosophies that are the bases of theories are superior to others. Rather, as Calhoun insists, one of the enduring and everlasting challenges for social science is “to go beyond the affirmation and reconstitution of the familiar world to recognize other possibilities” (2000: 506). New perspectives, new theories and novel empirical information, which are proposed by exploring new epistemologies, can enable us to see and understand how things can be different from the ways they first present themselves to us and explore how things could be different from the ways they are (Calhoun, 2000). In other words, as Alvesson argues, the fundamental theme of social science is to keep challenging the existing guiding assumptions, fixed meanings and relations and to enhance the formative capacity of human beings in relation to others and the world (2002).

Epistemological scrutiny and challenges are part of the routine development of any
systematized human intellectual endeavor, which has been shown in this chapter. Objective epistemology, subjective epistemology and critical epistemology, by challenging and critiquing the preceding epistemologies respectively, have expanded the understanding of conflict resolution. However, critical epistemology is not the end-point of the enterprise of epistemological analysis and accordingly new epistemological ground should keep being broken. Put another way, as Chia states, the intellectual enterprise of knowledge creation and legitimation is never a static substance but an ever-lasting process that keeps renewing itself (2002) and the intellectual endeavor of this work is not an exception.
Chapter Four: An introduction to Buddhism: Examining its central themes

4-1 The Four Noble Truths

The central aim of Buddhism is solving and overcoming the problem of suffering (Burton, 2002). This has been the unchanging purpose of Buddhism since its foundation by Gautama, the Buddha, who according to Bhatt and Mehrotra, “was led to philosophizing by an intense longing for the eradication of suffering” (2000: 2). Gautama, the Buddha and subsequent Buddhist masters have never been interested in metaphysical or speculative philosophies: their aim has been consistently concerned with overcoming suffering by the means of the eradication of its cause (Burton, 2002).

The central concern of Buddhism is suffering, its origin, its cessation and the way to its cessation (Cheng, 1982); and the Four Noble Truths play the central role in showing the means to eliminate suffering and to achieve enlightenment.

The Four Noble Truths are a fundamental element of all Buddhist teachings and are the core doctrinal framework of every school of Buddhism including Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana (Yun, 2002). According to Pereira and Tiso, the Four Noble Truths are “truths of pain, origin [of pain], suppression [of pain] and the way [to suppress pain]” (1988: 172). The first noble truth states that from Buddhist
perspectives, life is nothing but suffering and pain (Rahula, 1974). According to Rubin, what the first noble truth claims is that “awryness and unsatisfactoriness are inherent features of the universe” (2003: 43). However, the central aim of the first noble truth is not to reveal a pessimistic and hopeless view of life. Rather, by realizing that our existence is suffering, we must comprehend suffering in terms of what suffering actually is or what is the nature of the state of suffering (Shinohara, 1998). In short, the statement that life or this world is filled with suffering does not signify the end of the world or a nihilistic view of reality: what is emphasized is the importance of knowing the fundamental unsatisfactory and agonizing feature of reality, which arouses a deeper and more profound question of “What is the cause of suffering?” and this is the second noble truth.

The second noble truth presents the cause of suffering (Rubin, 2003). Suffering is caused by craving, that is, a mental state that leads to attachment (Burton, 2002), which can be characterized as the tendency of mind to cling or stick to some specific objects or views (Rubin, 2003).\(^{131}\) Besides craving, ignorance is recognized as a fundamental cause of suffering (Cho, 2002). According to Shinohara, ignorance means

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\(^{131}\) Burton (2002) argues that craving and attachment take various forms. For instance, he states that there is desire for one's eternal existence and strong attachment to one's own self. There is also craving for and attachment to various other internal and external entities. One will stick to his/her opinions and one can crave and be attached to particular emotions.
“lack of self-awareness and correct knowledge of the world and human life” (1998: 15). One’s failure to understand the way things really are results in his/her craving, strong attachment and consequently suffering (Burton, 2002). Thus, the second noble truth is that ignorance and craving are the fundamental causes of suffering. Further, these two elements give rise to three mental defilements: greed, anger and delusion (Shinohara, 1998). Olendzki argues that these three are representative mental afflictions derived from ignorance and craving (2003). Accordingly, it can be seen that Buddhist understanding of suffering is psychologically or subjectively-oriented. In other words, Buddhism can be understood as “the codification of the insights about human psychology developed by Gautama Buddha” (Rubin, 2003: 42).

By knowing the cause of suffering, human beings will be inspired to overcome its cause (Yun, 2002), which is the main thrust of the third noble truth. The third noble truth states that suffering can be eliminated (Rubin, 2003). What the third noble truth expresses is that suffering or affliction is not everlasting; rather, it stems from our temporary craving and ignorance (Yun, 2002) and accordingly can be overcome if

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132 Ignorance, “avidya” in Sanskrit, is one of the most important elements in Buddhism in terms of its soteriological and intellectual enterprise. Details of the contents of ignorance will be examined in the next chapter.

133 See also Rahula (1974). Olendzki explains that delusion is the effect of the distortions of mind (2003). Furthermore, he specifies that delusion is a mind-state that sees impermanent phenomena as stable or permanently existing and sees phenomena that (from Buddhist views) have no self (or no fixed or permanently unchanging self). Impermanence of phenomena including human beings and the no-self of phenomena are key elements in Buddhist teachings.
addressed properly.

While the third noble truth clarifies that the cause of suffering can be eliminated, one question remains to be addressed: “How can we attain the eradication of the cause of suffering?” The answer is the fourth noble truth. The fourth noble truth provides us with the way to address suffering and restore mental health or tranquility (Rubin, 2003), which is generally called the noble eightfold path. The eightfold path is: right view or understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (Rahula, 1998).

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134 According to Yun (2002: 33), right view or understanding means “correct understanding of dependent arising of phenomena: the awareness that all phenomena are empty in their true nature and thus are impermanent.” Since dependent arising (pratityasamutpada in Sanskrit) and emptiness (sunyata in Sanskrit) are the fundamentals of Buddhism, they need careful and in depth analysis. Therefore, they will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter.

135 Yun explains that right thought indicates “correct perception that our bodies will eventually decay, sensations cause suffering, thoughts are momentary and impermanent and that the nature of all phenomena is without a self.” (2002: 33). Shinohara argues that right thought is established as a consequence of right view (1998: 21).


137 Shinohara explains that right action signifies refraining from needless killing, stealing, committing adultery or other sexual misconduct (1998).


139 According to Yun (2002: 34), right effort denotes “correct diligence in developing wholesomeness that has not arisen, increasing wholesomeness that has arisen, preventing the arising of unwholesomeness and eliminating unwholesomeness that has arisen.”

140 Shinohara explains that right mindfulness signifies “constant awareness of things or phenomena that are happening at present and careful recollection of things that occurred in the past” (1998: 22). Yun adds that right mindfulness includes “correct determination in one’s belief, non-attachment to phenomena, misconception of the law of cause and effect and not giving rise to the confusion of birth and death” (2002: 34).

141 Shinohara states that right concentration means “spiritual unification, concentration and mental tranquility achieved through the act of meditating in order to recall the action in the path, perceive the mind at present and cultivate goodwill.”
There are three essentials of Buddhism for attaining liberation from suffering: ethical conduct, mental discipline and wisdom (Rahula, 1974) and they are embodied in the fourth noble truth, that is, the eightfold path. Right view or understanding and right thought are categorized into wisdom while right speech, right action and right livelihood are in ethical conduct (Khong, 2003). Accordingly, mental discipline indicates right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration (Khong, 2003). The eightfold path categorized into three pillars embraces everything we do and aims at the achievement of eradication of suffering, as a result of which we can enjoy an authentic way of being in the world (Khong, 2003). Further, what should be emphasized is that these three essentials are interdependent and interconnected with each other: without one, the other two cannot be actualized.

From the above depiction of the Four Noble Truths, it can be understood that Buddhism teaches us suffering in order to enable us to realize the truth about suffering and lead us to eradicate it (Yun, 2002). However, recognizing the existence of suffering should be only a part of the process (Yun, 2002): what is stressed as the core of Buddhist teachings is that suffering is not beyond human reach or beyond solution:
through a holistic approach represented by the three pillars of Buddhist discipline –
ethical conduct, mental discipline and wisdom – suffering can be eradicated by human
beings themselves.

4-2 Exploring the implications of the Four Noble Truths for Buddhist
epistemology

4-2-1 Liberation by human beings

Generally, it can be demonstrated that in the West, religion is that which has to do with
the worship of superhuman beings (Herbrechtsmeier, 1993). Religion, in the
understanding of the West, presupposes the existence of a transcendental entity like
God as the foundation of religious beliefs. Furthermore, Rahula mentions that almost
all religions are based on faith or blind faith (1974). In other words, (in many
religions) faith in established creed or dogma is a main feature of them. From these
views, a general non-Buddhist understanding of religion is that the fundamental
element is the existence of transcendental being(s), that is, God(s) as the final judge of
truth and that human beings are supposed to abide by the creed or dogma that has been
traditionally maintained: human beings are rather secondary actors or subordinate to
superhuman or transcendental being(s).

However, Buddhism has different characteristics. The most conspicuous feature of
Buddhism, which is a clear contrast with other religions that possess a transcendental entity as their foundation, is that the central actors or figures in Buddhism are human beings themselves. Put another way, while in Buddhism transcendental or divine agency that brings about liberation to human beings has been denied, human autonomy has been emphasized as a central element for attaining liberation (Bhatt and Mehrotra, 2000).

The reason for the Buddhist emphasis on human beings, not on transcendental ones, as the fundamental actors that create liberation can be attributed to the Buddha Gautama’s approach to liberation. The interest of the Buddha was not in metaphysical speculations on the nature of reality: rather, his most important intellectual concern was showing the way to liberation from actual human suffering in daily lives (Chang, 1971). The basic source of exploration for attaining liberation from suffering is the analysis of direct experience of daily lives. As a result, the fundamental reference point for all doctrinal formulations of Buddhism which aim to achieve liberation is that it is open to all human beings to the extent which they can contemplate their own existential situation (Skiotis, 2004). In short, the underlying spirit of Buddhism is the affirmation that liberation is not bestowed upon human beings by transcendental entities represented by God but attained by human beings’ cultivation of an insight.

\footnote{For instance, Komito (1987) states that the Buddha taught about his own direct experience.}
into the truth about their actual world (Chang, 1971). Buddhism could be recognized as a religion about understanding reality and demonstrating the truth of the understanding through our own experience (Khong, 2003). Thus, in the Buddhist approach to achieving liberation, transcendent entities are not required: rather, we human beings should look into ourselves to conceive or acquire the truth of reality in relation to our own lives. We should seek for truth not exterior to ourselves, but within ourselves.

This fundamental Buddhist theme that truth lies in human beings themselves has been clearly stated in the Sutras. For instance, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch states, “All of you return to your rooms and look into yourselves. Men of wisdom will of themselves grasp the original nature of their prajna intuition” (Yampolsky, 1967: 128). The sutra also states, “The sutras tell us to take refuge in the Buddha within yourselves; they do not say to rely on other Buddhas. If you do not rely upon your own natures, there is nothing else on which to rely” (Yampolsky, 1967: 146). In order to demonstrate that Buddhism is a human-based religion, it is stated,

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143 According to Chang (1971: 261), sutras are defined as “the holy scriptures of Buddhism.” Further, he states that all sutras were supposedly preached by Buddha himself.

144 Luk assesses that this sutra is essential for Buddhists, especially for Mahayana Buddhists who adhere to the doctrine of mind (1962).

145 Prajna means “wisdom.”

146 Although original text was written by Huineng (638-713), one of the most important Chinese Chan (Zen) monastic around 7th century, there are various English translations. The version cited in this dissertation is translated by Yampolsky.
“All sutras and written words, Hinayana, Mahayana, the twelve divisions of the canon, all have been postulated by men. Because of the nature within man, it has been possible, therefore, to postulate them. If we were without this wisdom, all things would, from the outset, have no existence in themselves. Therefore, it is clear that all things were originally given rise to by men” (Yampolsky, 1967: 151). Throughout its history, Buddhism has encouraged and inspired each person to develop him/herself and explore his/her own liberation since human beings possess the power to emancipate themselves from all bondage by their own personal effort and intelligence (Rahula, 1974).

Further, the essential foundation of Buddhist philosophy that emphasizes human beings themselves as the central actor to achieve liberation is the strong belief in the power inherent in human beings, which is called “Buddha-nature.”\textsuperscript{147} For example, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch states, “Good friends, enlightenment and intuitive wisdom are from the outset possessed by men of this world themselves” (Yampolsky, 1967: 135). The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment states, “By Buddha power is meant the inner power influenced by the absolute Buddha nature which is fundamentally inherent in ourselves” (Luk, 1962: 236-237).\textsuperscript{148} These statements

\textsuperscript{147} For instance, see Lai (1977) and Chang (1971).
\textsuperscript{148} This dissertation owes English translation of the Sutra of Complete Enlightenment to Charles Luk’s Ch’an and Zen teaching.
demonstrate that in Buddhism it is of great importance to look into oneself and know one’s power that exists intrinsically in order to attain liberation.

As Cho reveals, the meaning of Buddha is “an awakened one” (2002: 429) and it is fundamental that everyone can be awakened to the truth for liberation to the degree he/she makes the necessary effort for attaining liberation (Skiotis, 2004). The teachings expounded in Buddhism could be a benefit for every human being since each person innately has the capacity to realize truth for liberation. In short, Buddhist religious goals can essentially be attained by one’s realization of the Buddha-nature that exists within all sentient beings intrinsically (Chang, 1971).

4-2-2 On the relationship between religion and philosophy in Buddhism

The human-oriented dimension of Buddhism is intimately connected to its attitude towards the relationship between religion and philosophy. One of the significant characteristics of Buddhism is that in Buddhism religious enterprise and philosophical contemplation or intellectual enterprise are mutually interdependent. In Buddhism there is not necessarily a clear and categorical division or separation between religion and philosophy.

The central goal of religious pursuit is, as Scutton argues, “liberation or salvation from
the unsatisfactoriness of human condition or existence” (1993: 26). Buddhism is not an exception. As a religion, the central objective of Buddhism is an achievement of liberation (Ng, 1993). In the case of Buddhism, since liberation is established as the goal to be attained by human beings, it would be appropriate to state that this is a religious aspiration (Cho, 2002). The major concern of Buddhism as religion is salvation from suffering through human self-effort.

Philosophy can be understood as an intellectual enterprise to explore knowledge that can enable human beings to explain or comprehend a fundamental nature or feature of reality, or phenomena including human beings. 149 Schilbrack argues that in general a main interest of philosophy is “an inquiry into the character of being qua being” (2000: 34). He also states that if one disagrees with the idea that all things are substances, one can say that “metaphysics 150 concerns the character of reality qua reality as such” (2000: 34).

In the West, generally it has been considered that a clear-cut boundary or demarcation should be maintained between philosophies and religions (Herbrechtsmeier, 1993).

149 For instance, Olson (1975) argues philosophy is an intellectual endeavor to frame a coherent, logical and necessary system of general ideas in terms which every element of our experience can be interpreted.

150 Smith, for instance, defines metaphysics as a worldview that provides a sense of orientation (1989). He also argues that historically, philosophy has assumed responsibility for articulating worldviews systematically while metaphysics has been its branch that dealt with them directly.
Derived from this general proposition, a philosophy (in the West) can be understood as “a system that lends perspective to human existence through beliefs and practices derived from the efforts of human reason, introspection and community discourse” (Herbrechtsmeier, 1993: 4-5), while religion can be recognized as worship of transcendental entities like God and that transcendental or superhuman objects are considered as the fundamental source of ultimate reality and truth. Cho insists that this general tendency to separate philosophy from religion can be attributed to the “traumatic experience of the domination of the Church during the Medieval period” (2002: 434). In the West, while philosophy has been seen as sited in a human realm, religion has been sited a superhuman or transcendental realm, as a consequence of which it has been generally recognized that religion and philosophy are in different fields for their intellectual enterprise, since what counts as knowledge and/or truth is different in nature or quality.

However, the clear demarcation between religion and philosophy seen in the West is not a universal phenomenon. There is no distinct boundary between religion and philosophy in Buddhism: rather, Buddhism is both a religion and a philosophy (Inada, 2000). The reason for Buddhism being both a religion and a philosophy can be

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151 Regarding the details of general history of the relationship between religion and philosophy, especially, a kind of tension between an institutionalized Church-based religion and modern Western philosophy, Tarnas’s work (1991) would be of great use.
attributed to its nature as a religion.

As argued, Buddhism is a human-oriented religion. In Buddhism, there is no transcendental deity or superhuman being (Inada, 2000). Further, as Cho explains, Buddhist texts are “not holy scriptures meant to reveal the intent of a God or gods: no divine origin or authority is attributed to them” (2002: 430). In short, Buddhism as a religion is neither study in transcendental entities nor aims at uncovering superhuman beings as the ultimate source of reality: Buddhist soteriology is not derived from transcendental entities.

Being a religion that does not rely on transcendental entities for liberation or soteriological achievement, Buddhism defines the human condition of the tangible world as one of suffering and aims to attain liberation from suffering (Foshay, 1994). Liberation must be achieved only in this empirical world in which we lead our daily lives (Ng, 1993). In short, the religious phenomenon of soteriology and the daily phenomenon of our lives cannot be separated, which means that in Buddhism as a religion, the transcendental realm and the human realm, which have been separated in the West, are interfused in Buddhism since the Buddhist focal point is the soteriological attainment by human beings in their daily lives. There is nonduality between the human realm and transcendental sphere since the only reality that should
be in focus is our daily reality. This nondual relationship between these two realms results in establishing a foundational theme of Buddhism: it depends on human beings themselves whether they achieve liberation or not.\(^{152}\)

While Buddhism as a religion can be characterized as human-oriented soteriological undertaking, how can Buddhism as a philosophy be understood? Since the fundamental aim of Buddhism is the attainment of liberation by human beings themselves, its philosophical statements and arguments should be subject to soteriological purpose (Conze, 1963). The central objective of a Buddhist philosophy is, as a religion, soteriological achievement. Accordingly, the central goal of the Buddhist philosophical enterprise is “not to make a report about the world but to help people to get rid of ignorance\(^{153}\) and illusions so as to obtain salvation” (Cheng, 1982: 5). Put another way, Buddhist philosophy is not an intellectual enterprise that tries to represent some external reality or world, but an intellectual endeavor that aims to acquire right knowledge to achieve enlightenment or liberation in this world. Thus, the pursuit of a Buddhist philosophy, like that of Buddhism as a religion, by obtaining right knowledge of this experiential world, aims at changing our way of life or views

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\(^{152}\) Buddhism does not necessarily deny superhuman beings. Rather, the way they are understood is different from religions that recognize God as final judge. For instance, Herbrechtsmeier (1993) argues that in Buddhism, superhuman beings are important to the extent they are able to manifest the truth of dharma (phenomena, events or things), which enable us to attain liberation.

\(^{153}\) This term, (avidya in Sanskrit) is one of the key words and details of this term will be analyzed in the next chapter.
of life (Sharma, 1993). As Klostermaier states, a Buddhist philosophy “takes over existing notions of the physical universe and fills them with existential and soteriological meaning” (1991: 31).

Because Buddhist liberation or soteriological achievement must be realized by each human being who has inherent Buddha-nature, a Buddhist philosophy should be recognized as philosophy for every human being. The knowledge acquired by Buddha and other great masters of Buddhism should appreciated as knowledge for the benefit for all sentient beings who possess the innate power to obtain the knowledge for emancipation from suffering (Bhatt and Mehrotra, 2000). The upshot of Buddhism as a religion and a philosophy is that there is nonduality between the religious realm and philosophical realm in Buddhism.

4-2-3 The human mind as a source of knowledge for liberation

From the preceding arguments, it is clear that Buddhism is a human-oriented religion and philosophy, the fundamental aim of which is to achieve liberation from suffering by human beings. Although the human-based nature of Buddhism both as a religion and a philosophy for liberation has been demonstrated, there are important questions that remain to be clarified: How can human beings achieve liberation or realize their soteriological aspirations? What is meant by “liberation by human beings
themselves?"

A central answer to those fundamental questions is that mind assumes the core role in the Buddhist religious and philosophical enterprise. Looking into our own mind is the key to salvation from suffering. The Buddhist understanding of mind as the key element in its religious and philosophical enterprise is demonstrated in sutras or texts. The Platform Sutra states, “If you know the mind and see its true nature, you then awaken to the cardinal meaning” (Yampolsky, 1967: 132). The Sutra also asserts, “To understand the original mind of yourself is to see into your own original nature” (Yampolsky, 1967: 137). These two statements show that in Buddhism mind is the focal point to realize one’s own nature. Further, The Surangama Sutra states, “The Tathagata154 has always said that all phenomena are manifestations of mind and that all causes and effects including (all things from) the world to its dust, take shape because of the mind” (Luk, 2001: 16).155 This shows that (as a central component of reality) our mind plays an essential role in making meaning of phenomena: mind gives us insight into the nature of reality and our interpretation of experience.

154 According to Chang (1983), Tathagata is a title of the Buddha. He also states that Tathagata signifies one who has attained full realization of suchness or who has acquired right knowledge of phenomena. It could be understood that Tathagata is one who has been awakened to truth for liberation from suffering. 
155 This dissertation owes English translation of Surangama Sutra to Charles Luk.
In Buddhist philosophy, mind has been consistently one of the cardinal topics (Jan, 1981) that must be addressed. From Buddhist perspectives, nothing exits apart from mind and accordingly all phenomena can be understood as manifestations of mind (Chung, 1993). This does not mean that there are no objects outside our mind: rather, as Lai argues, that “the qualities of the things come into existence after the mind, are dependent upon mind and are made up of mind” (1977: 66). In other words, the world or reality of our experience is framed as the realm of the derived subjective construction: the only world we can explore is our inner world (Olendzki, 2003). Therefore, from Buddhist viewpoints, the world around us, or the world, which we believe exists exterior to us, is a reflection of the condition of our mind (Ramanan, 1978).

Therefore, analyzing mind-state in relation to one’s understanding of reality is of great significance. Practicing Buddhists cannot seek truth or right knowledge to attain their own liberation outside of minds or mind-states. The Platform Sutra states, “Because all sentient beings have of themselves deluded minds, they seek the Buddha by external practice and are unable to awaken to their own nature. But even these people of shallow capacity, if they have the sudden doctrine,[sic], and do not place their trust in external practices, but only in their own minds always raise correct views in regard to their own original natures: even these sentient beings, filled with passions and
troubles, will at once gain awakening” (Yampolsky, 1967: 150). The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment also states, “All Buddhas relied on the true mind of the dormant enlightenment to develop the wisdom of aroused or initiated enlightenment to eradicate delusion” (Luk, 1962: 170-171). Furthermore, “Hymn to the jewel of the mind” by Nagarjuna\textsuperscript{156} says, “Attainment of the mind is illumination: only mind are five destinies, and the essence of happiness and suffering does not exist at all outside the mind” (Tola and Dragonetti, 1995: 136).

Kalpaohana argues that the Buddha (and the other Buddhist masters) have realized the potential power of human mind both in the perception of evil and the promotion of good (1987), which means that mind is both a source of enlightenment to attain liberation and a cause of non-enlightenment or delusion (Lai, 1977) that brings about suffering and trouble. Accordingly, human suffering is understood as actually human-caused, that is, mind-made. However, suffering or trouble should be understood positively or be recognized as an upshot of Buddhist religion and philosophy that aims to achieve soteriological liberation. The reason for that is while human mind causes suffering, as the above statements of sutras and hymns show,

\textsuperscript{156} Nagarjuna is one of the most important Buddhist philosophers, who lived between the second and third century. Chang (1971) states that Nagarjuna is a founder and exponent of Madhyamaka (Middle-Way) philosophy that centers on sunyata (emptiness) doctrine to achieve liberation from suffering. According to Williams (1989), he is called “the second Buddha” since, Chang states, he made a huge contribution to the development of Mahayana Buddhism. Regarding the details of Nagarjuna's works and Madhyamaka philosophy, see Williams (1989: 55-76).
human mind its fundamental nature possesses the potential of enlightenment and prajna or wisdom to overcome suffering. That human mind brings about suffering and trouble and that the essential nature of the same mind is the innate possession of power to know wisdom and attain enlightenment, mean that suffering is within human beings. Thus, what we should work on is, as Ng insists, “nothing but the ordinary mind in our daily lives” (1993: 176).

4-2-4 How can Buddhist epistemology be characterized?

As argued, human mind has been the central element in Buddhism as a key to liberation from suffering. However, what is the implication of this Buddhist understanding of mind’s fundamental role in this religious and philosophical enterprise; and how can Buddhist epistemology be characterized?

Since human mind has been a principal locus in Buddhism, it can be pointed out that Buddhist philosophy has laid major emphasis on subjectivity and it has been consistently linked with such understandings of reality (Sharma, 1993). In Buddhism, therefore, it is difficult to establish the world that exists independently of our own perception and interpretation of it since our apprehension of the world is inevitably of the world as understood (Burton, 2001). Our understanding of reality or phenomena in terms of their content is invariably mediated by the knowing mind and its perceptual
apparatus (Burton, 2001). We cannot step outside our own mind-state to comprehend reality. As Scutton insists, from a Buddhist approach to knowledge, “all knowledge is more about our own mind than about the (objectively existing) world” (1991: 204). Consequently, in Buddhism, without human mind, metaphysics cannot be established and in the same vein, nor can ontology be established: the contents of metaphysics and those of ontology are to be understood as states of mind.\(^{157}\)

Therefore, from a Buddhist standpoint, the object of philosophical investigation is consistently human beings, the aim of which is the realization of the mind-base for knowledge and construction of knowledge (Matsuo, 1981). So the meaning or significance of philosophy is an examination or exploration of the nature of human mind since any knowledge of reality or phenomena including human beings is derived from human mind itself.

\(^{157}\) Scutton argues that it is sometimes with difficulty and never with categorical certainty that the distinction between ontological, epistemological and soteriological concepts can be made (1991). Matsuo insists that Western philosophy, which fused the essentials with Greek and Christian thought, has set aside the original doctrine and admonition of “knowing thyself” and come to regard the philosophical enterprise to be in the domain of different and respective areas of concentration such as epistemology, metaphysics, theism, atheism, materialism, idealism to name a few, while the pursuit of unifying all the different disciplines has remained to be explored (1981). What should be emphasized is not that Buddhism downplays or denies those respective areas of philosophical or religious enterprise: rather, what Buddhism wishes to show is that those seemingly different domains have one thing in common: they are originally derived from human mind and as a corollary of that, each domain is to be seen as a reflection of mind-state. Different domains of philosophical and religious enterprise are different stages or conditions of human mind.
However, what should be noted is that, as discussed, while human mind inherently possesses the potential or power to attain enlightenment or to obtain wisdom to achieve the soteriological objective, the same mind causes suffering: human mind is to be understood both as the seed of enlightenment or soteriological aspiration and as a cause of suffering. For instance, The Platform Sutra states, “It is because the mind is deluded that human beings cannot attain awakening to themselves” (Yampolsky, 1967: 135). The Sutra also warns, “If you are deluded in your own mind and harbor erroneous thoughts and contrary concepts, even though you go to an outside teacher you will not be able to obtain salvation” (Yampolsky, 1967: 153).

Komito argues that erroneous and distorted cognitions cause all our troubles and produce suffering rather than serenity and peace (1987). However, as there are erroneous cognitive and perceptual modes, so there are non-erroneous and valid cognitive and perceptual modes (Komito, 1987). Accordingly, whatever occurs to mind or any mind-state and knowledge derived from it cannot be recognized as a right source for liberation: a distinction must be made between right mind-state and right knowledge arising from it, which leads to the attainment of the soteriological goal, that is, liberation from suffering; and mind-state and knowledge that impedes the soteriological objective and causes suffering.
Based on the above understanding of mind both as a source of liberation and as a cause of suffering, a Buddhist epistemology can be characterized as a critical and qualitative analysis and exploration of the structure or nature of human mind; and a right knowledge or an insight into the nature of reality including human beings, the ultimate aim of which is to attain liberation from suffering. While a critical and qualitative analysis of human mind has come to be recognized as the core theme of a Buddhist epistemology, what is a right state-of-mind and what is a right knowledge or an insight into the nature of reality? The exploration of this question is the central theme of the next chapter.

However, before analyzing a Buddhist epistemology in detail, there is one thing that must be noted. It is that in-depth analysis and understanding of a Buddhist epistemology can be applied to every dimension of our human life including conflict. As argued, from Buddhist viewpoints, this empirical world is full of suffering. However, it is possible to transform the world filled with suffering into that which has overcome suffering and attained peace or tranquility. Further, what should be emphasized regarding soteriological aspiration is that since the focal realm of Buddhist religious and philosophical enterprise is our daily lives, the approach to soteriological enterprise can be applied to any dimension of our lives. This has important implications for the contribution of studies of Buddhist epistemology to
understanding conflict and conflict resolution.

Since any dimension of our daily lives is within the Buddhist religious and philosophical enterprise, conflict is inevitably to be included. Besides that, from Buddhist views, conflict like other sufferings is not beyond our reach or beyond resolution since it is essentially understood as human-made or mind-made. However, while Buddhism stresses mind as the key to salvation from suffering, it also recognizes the danger of mind as the source of suffering. Put another way, a clear distinction must be made between mind-state that enables resolution of conflict and state of mind that causes conflict and hampers its resolution. While Buddhism believes that conflict can be resolved, a critical analysis of human mind must be made since mind is understood both as a key to conflict resolution and lasting peace and as a source of violence.

Consequently, in-depth studies in Buddhist epistemology, that is, an exploration of right state of mind and right knowledge would enable us to comprehend a Buddhist view of conflict that could contribute to expanding the framework of contemporary conflict resolution based on Western epistemologies, which has focused mainly on the social dimension of human mind. However, the aim of the in-depth examination of Buddhist epistemology is not to deny or impair the social dimension of human
subjectivity that has been the main theme of contemporary conflict resolution. Rather, what the examination of a Buddhist epistemology can emphasize is that social mind is only part of our mind: studies in a Buddhist epistemology — more profound and qualitative exploration of human mind in relation to how suffering arises and how it can be overcome — aims to reveal the richer and broader nature of human mind. This deeper qualitative exploration of human mind will provide us with a novel angle to understand conflict in a different manner, which could open the door for an exploration for a new framework of contemporary conflict resolution. Especially, studies in a Buddhist epistemology can enable us to make a critical and constructive analysis of subjective and critical epistemological approaches to contemporary conflict resolution that have limited human mind to social dimensions, which could lead to an exploration for a new phase of contemporary conflict resolution. Therefore, in-depth analysis of Buddhist epistemology is of great significance as a first step towards exploring or expanding the framework of contemporary conflict resolution.
Chapter Five: Examination of Buddhist Epistemology and Meaning of Peace

5-1 Examining ignorance as a cause of suffering

As discussed, in the Buddhist religious and philosophical enterprise, the mind is the focal point for soteriological attainment. However, the same mind is seen as the cause of suffering, the recognition of which makes it essential to engage in a critical analysis of the quality of mind, so that state of mind and “right knowledge” that can enable us to attain salvation from suffering will be revealed. However, before examining Buddhist right knowledge and right state-of-mind, it is of great importance to understand the cause of suffering. From a Buddhist perspective, since the aim of Buddhist epistemology is to acquire right knowledge to achieve liberation, it is also essential to have a proper understanding of the nature of that which causes suffering as a first step.

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, the fundamental cause of suffering in Buddhism is ignorance, or avidya in Sanskrit. Clear understanding of the meaning or characteristics of ignorance will enable us to have a clear picture of a Buddhist epistemology.
According to McFarlane, ignorance in Buddhism is “to ignore the true nature of things” (1995: 5). He also states that it is “the original mistake of taking things to be other than what they are and then acting on this false presumption” (1995: 5). Huntington explains that ignorance is defined as “the misapprehension of the meaning of words and concepts as if they referred to entities which are ultimately true” (1983: 328). Further, Shinohara asserts that ignorance is the fundamental cause of errors and misfortunes since it distorts one’s images or views of the world and of the self (1998). From these views, ignorance is to be understood as a subjective phenomenon in which we fail to gain an insight into the nature of reality or phenomena including ourselves, while we project the some attributes or features upon them, as a result of which, we fall into mainly psychological suffering. Put differently, the core nature of ignorance is an erroneous thought construction of reality due to the misunderstanding of the nature of it. But, how can a false understanding of reality be characterized?

The Lankavatara Sutra\textsuperscript{158} states, “Since the ignorant and simple-minded, not knowing

\textsuperscript{158} Suzuki (2003) explains that Lankavatara Sutra is one of the main texts of Mahayana Buddhism and central to Zen school that is one of the important wings of Mahayana Buddhism. He also argues that the teachings presented in this sutra examine the nature or quality of mind, self-realization and the process for its attainment. Put differently, it can be understood that Lankavatara Sutra engages in critical and constructive analysis of human mind that seeks to break through an erroneous understanding of mind and unveil its true nature so that we can achieve liberation from suffering that essentially arises from our own mind.
that the world is only something seen of the mind itself, cling to the multitudinousness of external objects, cling to the notions of being and non-being, oneness and otherness, bothness and not-bothness, existence and non-existence, eternity and non-eternity and think that they have a self-nature of their own, all of which rises from the discriminations of the mind and is perpetuated by the habit-energy, and from which they are given over to false imagination” (Suzuki, 2003: 4-5).\textsuperscript{159} The Sutra also states, “The ignorant and simple-minded, their minds burning with the fires of greed, anger and folly, finding delight in a world of multitudinous forms, their thoughts obsessed with ideas of birth, growth and destruction, not well understanding what is meant by existent and non-existent, and being impressed by the erroneous discrimination and speculations since beginningless time, fall into the habit of grasping this and that and thereby becoming attached to them” (Suzuki, 2003: 5). Moreover, it is stated, “It is because the ignorant clinging to names, signs and ideas: as their minds move along these channels they feed on multiplicities of objects and fall into the notion of an ego-soul and what belong to it: they make discriminations of good and bad among appearances and clinging to the agreeable. As they cling to the agreeable there is a reversion to ignorance and karma born of greed, anger and folly, is accumulated. As the accumulation of karma goes on they become imprisoned in a cocoon of false discrimination and are thenceforth unable to free themselves from the round of birth.

\textsuperscript{159} This dissertation owes English translation of the Lankavatara Sutra to Suzuki.
These statements describe the crucial features of ignorance as a strong belief in the existence of a separate and independent self and separate and independent others (Rothberg, 1992), or as Murti asserts, ignorance is “the wrong belief in the atman”\textsuperscript{160} (1955: 11). With the rise of ego-consciousness, we put some fixed attributes to self and believe that they are absolute, as a result of which, we stick to those projected natures and have negative feelings such as anger, hatred or pain when we encounter those that are opposed to them or are believed to threaten those attributes.

However, the problem is not only about an erroneous view of self, that is, the assumption or belief in the permanent and fixed self: the tendency to conceptualize reality or any phenomena or entities with fixed attributes is in general a fundamental cause of suffering and obstacle to liberation from it. Of course, to conceptualize reality, that is, to project some marks, signs, attributes or characteristics upon phenomena or any objects is essential for us to live a meaningful life. However, what Buddhist analysis of ignorance emphasizes is the potential danger of those conceptualizations. The danger emerges when each conceptual thought or view of reality comes to be believed to have an absolute and independent status as the right view. Under the\textsuperscript{160} According to Chang (1971), atman refers to unchanging or fixed self, ego or individual personality.
strong belief in the absoluteness of some view, one tends to cling to it and have negative reactions against other views or conceptual thoughts that are opposed to one’s own, as a result of which, anger, fear or hatred will emerge in one’s mind. In other words, the root of suffering is in our mind’s propensity to ardently stick to its own fancies, that is, its conceptualizations of the real (Gomez, 1976) and the illusory belief in their absolute and unchanging status.161

However, there is one more thing that should be emphasized as a conspicuous character of this erroneous understanding of reality: that is, belief in the separation between subject and object. As the Lankavatara Sutra claims, in the ignorant condition, one tends to be unaware that the attributes or characters of reality or phenomena, including human beings, are manifestations of mind. Accordingly, there emerges a situation in which the subject and object upon which some conceptually constructed view or attribute has been projected are separated and the object with the attribute come to be believed to exist objectively or independently of subject. As a consequence of one’s unawareness of the contents of reality (including oneself) as manifestations of mind, a contradictory condition arises, in which conceptually constructed thought or views projected upon reality or phenomena come to be objectified: it comes to be

161 Muller argues that the main obstacle to the achievement of enlightenment or liberation from suffering is the tendency of the mind to become conditioned and attached to concepts (1998).
believed that these attributes or characteristics, although they have been actually
projected by the mind, are inherently possessed by the phenomena or objects
themselves. Under this illusory circumstance, one tends to cling to some specific or
agreeable view or attribute as absolute or categorically right and manifests anger,
hatred or fear towards different views, even though the clinging and the origin of
negative feelings are fundamentally born out of one’s own mind.

5-2 Analysis of tendency of mind

Why are human beings inclined to absolutize their conceptually constructed thought
or view on reality including themselves and cling to it as if it were absolutely right?
From Buddhist perspectives, the tendency is intimately connected to svabhava
thinking. According to Chang, svabhava, which is Sanskrit, denotes “self-being,
self-existence, or selfhood, that which does not depend on others for its existence: the
definitive, irreducible and self-subsisting entity that is being self” (1971: 261).162
What exists by means of its own-nature accompanies the assumption that it has
permanent, fixed and unchanging nature (Jones, 1978).

However, what must be clarified regarding the svabhava idea is that svabhava should
be analyzed or discussed not as an ontological matter, but as an epistemological one.

162 Siderits (2003) argues that to say that something has svabhava is to say that its
nature is wholly its own.
For instance, Sharma asserts that svabhava entails “the idea of essential condition which remains invariable with a thing” (1993: 109). Put another way, svabhava is our assumption that entities including ourselves inherently possess some fixed, unchanging and immutable atman or self-nature. Therefore, what should be added to the above explanation of svabhava is that svabhava signifies an epistemological feature of the tendency of the human mind to project fixed, permanent and unchanging characteristics upon reality and to believe that it is inherent within reality itself.

Why do human beings have svabhava thought to understand reality including themselves? Mipham asserts that in their anxiety or quest for reassurance and security, people reify situations and things and cling to and manipulate these reified conditions (2002). Essentially, human beings cannot live without ideas, or more specifically, as Chinn claims, “without something to strive for that gives their existence authenticity” (2001: 69). Consequently, in seeking the ultimate meaning of their existence, human beings are disposed to project some fixed and permanent nature or attribute upon reality of phenomena and feel that their existence is assured and secured, after which, we cling to them.

163 Betty (1983) argues that svabhava is the characteristic which people unconsciously and erroneously suppose all individual entities to possess. His view shows that svabhava is, rather than what entities have inherently, what is projected upon by human mind.
However, from a Buddhist epistemological perspective, the svabhava way of thinking should be exposed to critique. As Murti states, “we desire consciously or otherwise, to acquire and enjoy things” (1955: 256) by projecting some fixed and permanent attributes on to them. We ascribe some fixed and unchanging features to reality in order to satisfy our own desires, cravings or pleasures. However, actual conditions in the real world are not always in consonance with our projected attributes and with our desires, which results in suffering (Murti, 1955) represented by anger, hatred or bewilderment. What must be underlined is that the discrepancy between the attributes or natures projected upon reality and the real and consequent negative feelings are a responsibility of our mind, especially, our svabhava thinking of reality.

The mind in svabhava thought, as Inada argues, “freezes or staticizes the object of perception” (1970: 24) with fixed and permanent qualities and accordingly objects and reality in general come to be tied up with definitive and fixed views and treated as a fixed entity or substance (Chang, 1971). Thus through the projection of some fixed views on objects, one substantializes reality with fixed attributes and this subjectivized reality becomes objectified. By fixating reality with a permanent and unchanging nature or attributes, as Suzuki argues, “one wraps him/herself like a silkworm in a cocoon, binding tight not only him/herself but others” (1999: 113).
The minds in svabhava thought that have constructed their own world with fixed and certain attributes keep strong hold of those qualities as absolute, over which they learn to have greed, anger, infatuation or obsession (Suzuki, 1999). Those clingings can strengthen our disposition and transform our interests and emotions into self-view, self-confusion, self-esteem and self-love and accordingly the notion of a permanent and eternal self is fortified (Kalpahana, 1987). Further, the ego-clinging, in terms of one’s self and views of reality is by nature exclusive and tends to reject others and different views (Chang, 1971).164 These clingings to svabhava thought, an extreme attachment to ego and their negative impacts are described in the Lankavatara Sutra: “By becoming attached to what is seen of the mind itself, there is an activity awakened which is perpetuated by habit-energy that becomes manifest in the mind-system. From the activities of the mind-system there rises the notion of an ego-soul and its belongings; the discriminations, attachments and notion of an ego-soul, rising simultaneously like the sun and its rays of light” (Suzuki, 2003: 37).

On this view, the projection of fixed and permanent attributes upon reality causes suffering since they do not accurately reflect how the world really is (Loy, 2006). By indulging in conceptual thought-constructions with some fixed qualities on reality, one

164 Siderits asserts that clinging to ego reinforces the belief in “I” and “mine” (2003) and consequently one feels anger, hatred or confusion when he/she encounters different views.
is imprisoned in his/her own fixed world and is unable to liberate him/her from the encumbering thread of wrong judgements (Suzuki, 1999). The intuitive perception of being or actuality as being of permanent and unchanging nature manifests human being’s deep clinging and attachment, which is the very root cause of suffering (Chang, 1971). We tend to believe that, by fixating or putting some permanent nature to objects or phenomena as their own essential or inherent nature, we can gain sense of security or happiness and consequently we cling to the projected quality. However, this is the result of an epistemological orientation, one that Buddhism regards as illusory and does not bring about any security or tranquility of mind: the fixation will result in the opposite, that is, infatuation, insecurity, anger or hatred.

5-3 Gaining an insight into the real as the key to liberation from suffering

What must be remembered is the Buddhist recognition of the potential of human mind either in the direction of suffering or the liberation from it: it is the acts of our mind that determine whether we are in svabhava-thought, or in enlightenment, that is, salvation from the suffering (Ng, 1993). Therefore, the Buddhist stance is that the strong belief in phenomena including ourselves as solid and real entities with fixed and permanent natures or qualities is neither a sin (Mipham, 2002) nor something what we cannot overcome.
Since suffering arises from ignorance, liberation from it can be attained by dispelling it. In order to overcome ignorance, one must be able to acquire insight into the nature of phenomena or reality that has been erroneously grasped at by the mind in ignorance (Komito, 1987). The vantage point of Buddhist critique of svabhava-thought is not that thought should be rejected, but that we should obtain insight into the nature of real (Loy, 1983). What Buddhism wants to achieve is the transformation of our mind-system by acquiring a right insight into the real. Transformation of svabhava-thought into right thought that gains an insight into the nature of the real centers on the acquisition and cultivation of a certain general subjective attitude towards the world and daily lives, which derives from the experience of change in the activity of our own mind (Suzuki, 1999). This shows that the core of Buddhist epistemology is the critique of human subjectivity. Although Buddhist epistemology acknowledges that human subjectivity is essential to make a meaningful reality, it asserts that it can also cause a trouble or suffering when it is trapped into svabhava-thought mode. Rather than rejecting human subjectivity itself, what Buddhist epistemology seeks to achieve is a mind-state that has overcome svabhava-thought pattern by gaining an insight into human subjectivity. This character of Buddhist epistemology has an important implication for a Buddhist epistemological contribution to contemporary conflict resolution based upon Western epistemologies. Rather than denying social or cultural subjective dimensions of human mind, which
have been examined in the third chapter, Buddhist epistemology makes a critical analysis of how those social and cultural characters of human mind can cause conflict or make conflict intractable, which will be conducted in the sixth chapter.

5-4 Examining Buddhist dependent-arising

As outlined above, from Buddhist perspectives, the fundamental cause of suffering is ignorance, that is, lack of insight into the nature of the real, which is a subjective phenomenon. Moreover, the most salient feature of ignorance is svabhava-thought: the belief in permanent, fixed and unchanging self-nature of objects and entities including ourselves. Accordingly, as a first step to liberation, svabhava-thinking must be exposed to critical examination.

Accordingly to Komito, the term svabhava – denoting own-being or self-existence – is “an existence which inheres in something itself, a being which inheres in something on its own.” (1987: 69). It signifies an actual independent existential status of each phenomenon or entity including ourselves (Komito, 1987). As Betty explains, svabhava is “the characteristic which, according to Nagarjuna and his followers, ordinary people unconsciously and erroneously suppose all individual entities to possess” (1983: 127). In this svabhava-thought, one sees and experiences reality as a collection of discrete and self-existing objects and entities with fixed and permanent
At the heart of the problem or misunderstanding of the real lies the perception of a
duality between ourselves and the real. For instance, Loy argues that we normally
separate ourselves from our own actions and thinking and from the events that happen
to us (2006). In order to overcome the false division between the substantialized
reality and the subjects, a nondual relationship must be established. However, how can
a nondual relation be achieved and what is meant by non-dual relationship? One of the
core elements to answer those essential questions in relation to attaining liberation
from suffering is ‘dependent-arising’ or pratityasamutpada in Sanskrit. Inada – one of
the most important figures in Buddhist studies – asserts that one of the essential
corcepts in understanding Buddhism is pratityasamutpada known as dependent or
relational origination (1968). Matsumoto also claims that Buddhism is “the teaching
of dependent-arising and therefore the enlightenment that Buddhism proffers is
nothing other than thinking correctly about the teaching of dependent-arising.” (1997:
249).

Pratityasamutpada is a principle that demonstrates how entities or phenomena arise.
According to Lai, pratityasamutpada means “conditioned co-arising.” (1977: 244),
according to which, there is no independent entity or phenomena with fixed or
unchanging nature. From the Buddhist viewpoint of dependent-arising, phenomena or entities, which prima facie seem to exist independently with permanent characters, are defined by and depend upon their interconnections (Mansfield, 1900). In short, pratityasamutpada denotes a fundamental mutual interdependency of entities and phenomena.

However, in order to grasp the profound meaning of Buddhist pratityasamutpada, a deeper analysis of its meaning must be made. The most important premise of Buddhist dependent-arising is that it is essentially different from conventional understandings of causality. Loy argues that the conventional view of causality is rooted in “purposive activity to attain something desired or to present something disliked” (1983: 362), which is essentially of a temporal and linear nature. An orthodox idea of causality assumes that some specific cause A will inevitably give rise to effect B (Loy, 1983). Since the fundamental presupposition of the conventional view of causality is that we experience the world as a collection of separate objects or entities with fixed and unchanging qualities or natures (Loy, 1983), causality comes to be considered as a phenomenon in which mutually independent objects or entities that possess inherently fixed and permanent attributes or natures interact and determine a subsequent phenomena.
However, the Buddhist notion of pratityasamutpada or dependent-arising opposes this naïve cause-and-effect relationship. From the Buddhist perspective, the conventional understanding of causality and its basic premise, that is, the world as a conglomeration of mutually independent objects or entities with fixed attributes can make us believe that objects and subject exist inherently, intrinsically, and independently of human subjective work, that is, conception or designation (Mansfield, 1990). The conventional causality can place the effects or participation of the human subjectivity secondary role. Buddhist claims that this conventional view of causality does not enable us to obtain an insight into the real and accordingly prevents us from achieving liberation from suffering. The reason is clear: since the main cause of human suffering is our svabhava-thought, that is, strong belief in the inherent or intrinsic existence of phenomena with fixed attributes or characteristics and the orthodox idea of causality is based on svabhava-thought, it is impossible for us to break through the svabhava-thought itself as long as we try to understand or explore the nature of the real from the perspective of conventional causality. On a Buddhist view, although conventional causality plays an important role in our lives, it also tends to make us believe in the independency of objects or phenomena with unchanging nature, which can result in causing us to fixate our view and bringing about suffering.

While the conventional view of causality – an interaction between/among mutually
independent objects or entities with fixed attributes – has been criticized, how can a Buddhist pratityasamutpada be characterized? One of the core features of it is the revelation of the unreality of independently existing objects and entities with their own fixed nature. However, what Buddhist pratityasamutpada wants to emphasize is not the categorical denial of phenomena or reality: the aim of Buddhist causality is “to refute the concept of independent and fixed self-nature and accordingly to overcome the ontologization of any entity or object” (Cheng, 1982: 7). Put another way, Buddhist causality tries to enable us to understand phenomena including ourselves without falling into a substantialist view of reality which is the cause of suffering.

According to Siderits, to assert that something has svabhava is to state that “its nature is wholly its own; that is, it is not borrowed from or dependent upon those other things on whose existence it depends” (2003: 1). Svabhava or inherent own-being is characterized as “non-dependent” (Robinson, 1972: 326) and accordingly, any conventional understanding of cause-and-effect that tries to establish a connection between/among mutually independent objects or entities that possess inherently fixed and permanent natures can fall into the contradiction (Loy, 1999) since if they are inherently in svabhava condition, cause-and-effect relationship itself cannot be established.
Komito states that true existence refers to “that which exists inherently from its own side without depending on any other thing” (1987: 98). However, no phenomenon, object or entity is dependent on itself for existence, but each depends upon other causes and conditions for its existence, as a result of which, it is devoid of inherent existence or self-existence with a fixed and permanent nature or attributes (Komito, 1987). In short, Buddhist pratityasamutpada seeks to reveal the non-inherent self-nature of objects and phenomena, that is, unreality of their independency and fixed nature of attributes.

The Buddhist critique of the inherently fixed nature of phenomena or the real is asserted in Buddhist texts. Nagarjuna’s “Yuktisastikakarika” or “Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness” is a good instance. It states, “Without depending on the defined, one cannot establish a definition and without considering the definition, one cannot establish the defined. As they depend on each other, they have not arisen by themselves, so therefore the defined and the definition are devoid of inherent existence and also they do not exist inherently in a mutually dependent way, so none of them can be used to establish the inherent existence of another one” (Komito, 1987: 85). 165 Following this statement, it is asserted, “Following the logic of this explanation of mutually dependent origination, one cannot use the cause of a result to

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165 This dissertation owes English translation version to Komito.
prove that the result has inherent existence because the cause of the result originates in
dependence on the result and so is devoid of inherent existence. The same applies to
all the pairs such as feeling and the one who feels or seeing and the seer and so forth.
Taking these as examples one should understand how all the pairs are explained as
being devoid of inherent existence because they originate in mutual dependence”

What these statements exhibit is that the true dependent-arising or causality must be
based on the premise of the unreality of inherent existence of phenomena or objects
with some fixed and permanent natures or qualities. We tend to believe that inherent
existence of phenomena, or objects possessing fixed and stable qualities or natures is
essential for understanding reality, but from Buddhist pratityasamutpada perspectives,
“an object’s lack of inherent existence and its dependency makes phenomena possible
and functional” (Mansfield, 1990: 62). Since phenomena arise in dependence on each
other, they lack inherent existence and consequently do not possess inherently existing
characteristics or attributes of their own (Komito, 1987).

While the non-inherent and non-fixed nature of phenomena is asserted from Buddhist
dependent-arising perspectives, how can the nature of the real that is conventionally
believed to consist of the interaction between/among the mutually independent objects
possessed of some fixed attributes be characterized? Since from a Buddhist perspective phenomena arise in mutual dependence, the inherent existence of phenomena and their characteristics or natures are to be understood as being superimposed or attributed to them from the agency of human mind (Komito, 1987). Our very conventional notion of independently existing phenomena including ourselves, some fixed qualities and their causal relations are, in their fundamental nature, a mental fabrication or a conceptual thought-construction.

The real as a mental fabrication is asserted by Buddhist texts. For instance, Asvaghosa’s Discourse on the Awakening of Faith\textsuperscript{166} states, “Since all things, owing the principle of their existence to the mind, are produced by subjectivity, all the modes of particularization are the self-particularization of the mind” (Suzuki, 2001: 77).\textsuperscript{167} In addition, the Awakening of Faith, the Lankavatara-sutra states, “All such notions as causation, succession, atoms, primary elements, that make up personality, personal soul, supreme spirit, sovereign God, Creator, are all figments of the imagination and manifestations of mind” (Suzuki, 2003: 58-59). As Chinn argues, our inherent desire to have an absolute understanding of the basic framework of experience of reality causes the obsessive delusion of thinking-mode by which we treat phenomena with

\textsuperscript{166} Suzuki (2001) explains that Asvagosha (first or second century CE) is one the important expounders of early Mahayana Buddhism.
\textsuperscript{167} This dissertation owes English version of the discourse to Suzuki.
inherently fixed and unchanging natures (2001), which leads to the belief in the causal relationship between/among inherently or independently existing phenomena or objects. However, it is in reality merely a construction of the mind. Phenomena or objects – more precisely, phenomena or objects that innately possess some fixed attributes or characteristics – have only a conceptual existence. Put differently, as Burton claims, such an entity is “simply a name or concept attributed to the conglomeration of conditions” (2001: 4).

People tend to ontologize reality to make sense of it: they understand reality as a collection of mutually independent objects that innately possess fixed or unchanging natures or attributes and believe those discrete objects interact to make the reality although they are essentially mental fabrications, as a corollary of which, they are not objective phenomena. The aim of Buddhist pratityasamutpada is to reveal the falsehood of this understanding of the real. From the Buddhist view of dependent arising, there is no inherently fixed self-nature of phenomena including ourselves: the discrete or independent objects with fixed qualities or attributes are a subject’s conceptual thought-construction as a true nature. In short, what Buddhism seeks to demonstrate through pratityasamutpada is the realization that the real is a product of our conceptual thought-construction.
However, the realization that reality is not exterior to us, but a mental fabrication or conceptual thought-construction is not the ultimate aim of Buddhist epistemology: in the view of Buddhist epistemology, we must make a deeper and more profound analysis of reality than the discussion of conventional understanding of reality. The reason for that is if the realization of the real as a conceptual construction is the final stage of Buddhist epistemology, it can result in “Anything goes” view: any conceptual thought or mental fabrication can be assumed to be the right or true apprehension of the real. Put differently, any subjective state can be mistakenly seen as a true nature or reflection of reality.

While Buddhism emphasizes the mind as the key source for liberation from suffering, it also warns of the potential danger of the mind: every subjective state is not necessarily recognized as the source for liberation. Therefore, a critical analysis of a true nature of conceptual thought-construction must be made in order to acquire an insight into the real, which eventually brings about the liberation from suffering. For this purpose, the idea of sunyata comes to the fore to unveil the true nature of conceptual thought-construction.

5-5 Analyzing sunyata

From time immemorial, we human beings have developed the use of language as the
primary tool to understand or make sense of the world of experiences in abstraction and to communicate them with fellow human beings (Ichimura, 1997). However, Buddhism warns of the tendency of the human mind to become enmeshed in specific conceptual positions (Muller, 1998) and cling to them as absolute, which causes suffering. Therefore, the main obstacle to salvation from suffering is the tendency of the mind to become conditioned and attached to concepts (Muller, 1998). In order to overcome this, it is of importance to have an insight into the conceptualization of the real, which is to be achieved by knowing sunyata, or emptiness of conceptual thought-constructions. The importance of knowing sunyata is stated by Nagarjuna’s Mulamadhyamakakarika or The Middle-Way Stanzas: “There is moksa (release or liberation) from the destruction of karmic 168 defilements which are but sunyata conceptualization. These arise from conceptual play (prapanca) which are in turn banished in sunyata” (Inada, 1970: 114).

According to Ichimura, the term sunyata consists of sunya (empty, void, hollow) and an abstract suffix ta (equivalent to “ness”) and has been translated into Chinese as kung-hsing (emptiness or voidness) (1997). However, Ichimura also argues that the difficulty in understanding sunyata is “due to its transcendental meaning in relation to

168 Chang defines karma as “action, causation, the binding force of the universe which enforces the law of “like cause produces like effect.” (1971: 255). He also states that karma is a metaphysical principle that governs the overall phenomenon of human world.
the logico-linguistic meaning, especially because the etymological tracing of its meaning – sunya meaning vacuous or hollow within a shape of things – provides no theoretical or practical addition to one’s understanding of the concept” (1997: 87). The difficulty in grasping the meaning of sunyata which Ichimura points out is reasonable. The idea of emptiness or voidness within a shape of things or objects can give us an impression that sunyata denotes nothingness or annihilation and consequently it can come to be considered that sunyata is some transcendental condition beyond the empirical world.

However, a nihilistic view of sunyata and understanding of sunyata as an ontologically transcendental entity or realm is not the accurate comprehension of sunyata. Rather, in order to grasp the correct picture of sunyata, its aim needs to be clarified. Ng states that the aim of sunyata is to enable people to acquire a right understanding of objects and phenomena, especially, our conceptual thought or mental fabrication that puts certain attribute or nature upon them (1993).

Buddhist sunyata aims to overcome our strong attachment or clinging to conceptual thought-construction. For practical purposes, conceptual thought-construction is essential for us. However, suffering arises when some conceptual view is absolutized and clung to as such (Fredericks, 1995). We tend to choose some particular views and
“claim completeness for the aspects that we have selected” (Ramanan, 1978: 107).

Consequently, the chosen view comes to be seized on as absolute and clung to as the complete truth (Ramanan, 1978), which makes us dogmatic, excluding or denying other views. From the sunyata viewpoint, absolutization and strong attachment to a particular view arise from the lack of insight into the nature of conceptually constructed reality. In short, the aim of sunyata is to provide an insight into conceptually constructed reality, which enables us to attain the eradication of attachment or clinging to a particular view as absolute and consequently achieve liberation from suffering.

Thus, sunyata doctrine demonstrates itself as of epistemological significance: by providing an insight into the conceptualization of the real, one will be able to know the ultimate unreality of attachment to one’s own view as absolute and of aversion for others’ views. The revelation of nature of reality, through sunyata doctrine, as Murti asserts, “frees the human mind of the cobweb of false views and wrong perspectives” (1955: 233-234). The objective of Buddhist sunyata is not to advance a certain view in order to describe the world but to reveal the potential danger of conceptual thought or mental fabrication and unreality to absolutize and cling to a particular view. In other words, as Garma Chang claims, sunyata is “a therapeutic device for the cleansing of men’s innate clinging” (1971: 98) due to misunderstanding of nature of the real.
However, how the nature of the real or more specifically, conceptually constructed reality can be revealed must be analyzed.

5-6 Buddhist dialectic and an insight into the real

The main aim of Buddhist dialectic is to purify the mind, that is, freeing us from an extreme attachment to certain conceptual thought (Cheng, 1981). As a matter of fact, we select a particular pattern of thinking from various exemplified in phenomena, which is essential in leading daily lives or engaging in intellectual enterprise. Without building a particular conceptual thought or view, it is impossible for us to make sense of reality including ourselves. While Buddhist dialectic acknowledges that, it also purports to warn us of the potential danger of constructing certain conceptual thought. From the Buddhist dialectic viewpoint, when we choose a particular thought, in some cases we are prone to absolutize it and take an exclusive view towards others (Murti, 1955). What should be asserted here is that, from the Buddhist viewpoint, building certain conceptual thought or view has two dimensions: as its positive side, it enables us to make sense of reality: and as its negative side, it can cause us to have a dogmatic view and make us unable to broaden our view when consciously or unconsciously absolutized. And Buddhist dialectic seeks to break through the latter dimension by revealing an insight into conceptual thought-construction or view.
Buddhist dialectic aims to demonstrate that all intellectual enterprises that try to absolutize or universalize some concepts or categories to construct experiences are ultimately unintelligible. Buddhism, especially Madhyamika believes that the concepts we use to construct reality will reduce to contradiction or absurdity when exposed to logical analysis (Kakol, 2002). Any attempt to use concepts or conceptual systems to describe the true or absolute status of the real accompanies contradiction and inconsistency and must be negated (Cheng, 1981) since as McEvilly asserts, the mind’s attempt to project conceptual categories ontologically, or to make experience conform to a concept-system, ends up in suffering and delusion (1982).

The Buddhist dialectic, especially Madhyamika dialectic, purports to move the clinging mind beyond any conceptual structures, beyond any form of discourse, or philosophical view and beyond any ontology (McEvilley, 1982) by gaining an insight into conceptualization of any kind that is seen as absolute. Waldo asserts that, from Buddhist perspectives, “no concepts are immune from the dynamic process of interdependence in the sense that they refer to an absolute stratum of reality presupposed by all other concepts” (1975: 288). Our views are essentially defined by their opposites (Hanh, 1992).

However, the Buddhist examination of conceptualization provides a deeper analysis
than merely exhibiting the relative nature of concepts of any kind, to show the ultimate unreality of each conceptualization. As Kakol claims, “all views, when analyzed, imply their own negation, which means that they are logically dependent on opposing views that contradict them” (2002: 212). Put another way, any concept or view, while claiming its own absolute validity, inherently possesses a contradictory nature and cannot describe the absolute or ultimate nature of the real, which is demonstrated by Nagārjuna. For instance, in Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness, he states, “Without one there cannot be many and without many it is not possible to refer to one. Therefore, one and many arise dependently and such phenomena do not have sign of inherent existence” (Komito, 1987: 80). This statement demonstrates that mutually opposing or contradictory concepts actually need to be interdependent to make sense. His other works also assert the fundamental interdependency of conceptual thoughts and the ultimate unreality of their inherent existence or independency. The Catustava, or Four Hymns to Absolute Reality is one of them. It states, “If there is existence, there is non-existence; if there is something long, similarly (there is) something short; and if there is non-existence, (there is) existence; therefore, both (existence and non-existence) are not existent” (Tola and Dragonetti, 1995: 128). It also states, “Unity and multiplicity, and past and future, etc., defilement and purification, correct and false – how can they exist per se?” (ibid). Further, it claims, “Since a thing that is per se does not exist, that which (thing) – whatever it be – exist? That (thing) which is
called ‘other’ does not exist without an own being of itself” (ibid). Finally, as a corollary of these statements, “Since for things, there is not an own being neither there is the being ‘other,’ then which devotedness to the holding to the belief in things, being dependent (on non-existential things) could exist (with ground)?” (ibid).

Nagarjuna’s Mulamadhyamikakarika also critically examined the ultimate unreality of conceptualizations of any kind to describe the real. In the karika, the following verses are read to reveal the contradictory nature of the concept of time. “If, indeed, the present and future are contingently related to the past, they should exist in the past moment”; “If, again, the present and future do not exist there (in the past), how could they be contingently related?”: “Again, it is not possible for both (present and future) to establish themselves without being contingent on a past. Therefore, there is no justification for the existence of a present and a future time: It follows from the above analysis that the remainder of the two periods likewise can be taken up and that concepts such as above, below, middle, etc., or identity, etc., can be similarly described or treated” (Inada, 1970: 117-118). Conventionally, the concept of time – past, present and future – are seen as that which signifies different moments of time and are believed to be describing the objective reality of time. However, as the above verses assert, a careful analysis exhibits the contradictory nature of our assumptions about the concept of time and the ultimate unreality or impossibility of it.
This critical analysis can be applied to all concepts, which is demonstrated in other
verses: “We provisionally assert that impurity cannot exist without being mutually
dependent on purity and that, in turn, purity exists only as related to impurity.
Therefore, purity per se is not possible: We provisionally assert purity cannot exist
without being mutually dependent on impurity and that, in turn, impurity exists only
as related purity. Therefore, impurity per se does not exist.” (Inada, 1970: 139). These
verses reveal the fundamental contradiction or inconsistency of conceptualization of
forms; while one concept needs the other that opposes it, the latter needs the former to
make sense. However, the former itself requires the latter and eventually infinite
regress continues without end, which leads to the realization of the ultimate unreality
of conceptualizations of any kind to exist.

As Kakol claims, the central approach to the revelation of the unreality of
conceptualization of the real is to expose all views to “bi-negation.” (2002: 212).
Views are negated by the function of “reduction ad absurdum” and then the opposing
views that have arisen by the negation are also nullified in the same manner (Kakol,
2002). Through this process, the untenability or unreality of concepts of any kind is
revealed. What must be emphasized in this process is that Buddhist dialectic does not
aim at the achievement of nihilism. The reason is clear: in order for nihilism to exist as
a concept to describe reality, it requires the opposing view. Our mind, as is its nature,
tries to project some conceptually constructed view upon phenomena, objects or entities to make sense. However, as exhibited in Buddhist dialectic, all forms of concept, although they tend to be absolutized, innately possess a contradictory nature, and accordingly, the fundamental untenability of concepts to describe the real is realized, which is stated in Lanakavata-sutra: “False-imagination teaches that such things as light and shade, long and short, black and white are different and are to be discriminated; but they are not independent of each other; they are only different aspects of the same thing, they are terms of relation, not of reality. Conditions of existence are not of a mutually exclusive character; in essence things are not two but one. Even nirvana and samsara world of life and death are aspects of the same thing, for there is no nirvana except where is samsara and no samsara except where is nirvana. All duality is falsely imagined” (Suzuki, 2003: 25).

From the Buddhist sunyata, or emptiness perspective that reveals the inherently contradictory nature of conceptualization of the real, what can be known as the true nature of the real? Asvaghosha states, “All things in their fundamental nature are not namable or expressible. They cannot be adequately expressed in any form of language. They are without the range of apperception. They, in their fundamental nature, have no signs or distinction.” (Suzuki, 2001: 56). Lankavatara-sutra claims, “By emptiness of individual mark is meant that all things have no distinguishing marks of
individuality and generality.” (Suzuki, 2003: 29). These demonstrate what Buddhism regards as the true nature of the real: beyond any kind of conceptualization. We try to project some conceptual thought upon things or objects to make sense and believe it as reality, but, since any concept or view lacks inherent existence, it is absurd or contradictory to absolutize conceptualizations of any sort. From a Buddhist sunyata viewpoint, conceptualization and clinging to it are merely a speculation indulged in by the ignorant mind (Murti, 1955) and once an insight into the nature of concepts or views is known, one will realize that a true nature of the real is beyond any conceptualization and fundamentally remains unaffected by our imaginative or conceptual construction (Ramanan, 1978) and that imagination or belief that some inherent attributes or qualities are possessed by objects or entities is our own responsibility - consequently, negative feelings such as anger, hatred, aversion accompanied by clinging to certain attributes of phenomena are to be known as our mental projections.

The examination of pratityasamutpada and sunyata has unearthed some of the important elements of Buddhist epistemology: the mental or conceptual construction of attributes or nature of the real; the fundamental contradiction and untenability of any forms of conceptualization of the real and realizing an emptiness or voidness of conceptualization of the real as a true nature of the real, that is, the real beyond
conceptualization. These fundamentals of Buddhist epistemology can reasonably break through svabhava-thought, which is the central element of avidya or ignorance that causes suffering. However, more analysis must be made in order to enhance the practicality of these Buddhist epistemological features to address practical issues including conflict. As briefly mentioned, nihilism, when subjected to Buddhist dialectic, demonstrates its inherently contradictory and untenable nature and accordingly, a Buddhist epistemology is to be understood as far from nihilism. However, mere disclosure of a “true” nature of the real, that is, the real beyond conceptualization, cannot wipe out a nihilistic view of sunyata categorically: more constructive elaboration must be made to explore the potential for practical engagement within a Buddhist epistemology in the phenomenal world. The Two Truths system plays the central role in examining this potential.

5-7 Analyzing Buddhist Two Truths

Buddhist pratityasamutpada and sunyata fill an important role in breaking svabhava-thought, which constitutes the underlying element of avidya or ignorance that is the fundamental cause of suffering. Nevertheless, the nature of the real as depicted by pratityasamutpada and sunyata, that is, the real beyond or free from conceptualization, attributes or qualities, gives us an impression that Buddhist liberation from suffering is achieved in the realization of the world as nothingness, or
in the transcendental realm beyond our daily world. However, Buddhist soteriological achievement is not to be actualized in such a nihilistic and ontologically transcendental manner. In order to overcome such a misunderstanding, the Two Truths doctrine must be examined.

What must be stressed above all is that the denial of nihilistic and ontologically transcendental view of sunyata is clearly claimed by Buddhism itself. Nagarjuna acknowledges the critique of Buddhist sunyata by the opponents of Buddhism in his work. The opponent of Nagarjuna claims, “Delving in sunyata, you will destroy the reality of the fruit or attainment, the proper and improper acts, and all the everyday practices relative to the empirical world” (Inada, 1970: 145). This opponent’s critique contends that sunyata annihilates daily phenomena in our lives, as a consequence of which, sunyata comes to be seen as if it were advocating nothingness: Nothing exists in this world and accordingly phenomena we experience in daily lives do not make sense. The opponent’s argument on sunyata demonstrates his/her understanding of sunyata as nihilistic and transcendental entity since he/she believes that the aim of Buddhist sunyata is to invalidate everything in this empirical world and achieve salvation by reaching a transcendental realm beyond our daily lives.

In order to elaborate the counter-argument to the nihilistic view of sunyata, the
doctrine of Two Truths plays a crucial role, which is explicitly elucidated by Nagarjuna: “The teaching of the Dharma\textsuperscript{169} by the various Buddhas is based on the two truths: namely, the relative (worldly) truth and the absolute (supreme) truth” (Inada, 1970: 146). He also asserts, “Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths cannot understand the profound nature of the Buddha’s teaching” (Inada, 1970: 146). Put differently, without knowing the Buddhist two truths, one will easily fall into the wrong views of sunyata such as nihilism and ontological transcendentalism. Therefore, it is essential to acquire the characteristics of conventional truth and the ultimate truth and examine how these two are related.

According to Nayak, ‘samvrti’ means “that which is conventionally true or is of practical use” (1979: 482). Therefore, as Garfield argues, samvrti-satya or conventional truth is an ordinary or everyday truth or truth by collective agreement (2003). Conventional truth is formed by the collection of ideas, values and customs that have come to be regarded as truth by the common sense of community (Wright, 1986). Conventional truth can be understood as the conception and form of truth that is habitually or customarily recognized as valid and efficacious in the practical matters of daily life (Wright, 1986). As social beings, we live in a society: conventional truth

\textsuperscript{169} According to Garma Chang, Dharma signifies “Buddhist doctrine or teachings: that which is true and good” (1971: 253). He also states that Dharma can be used to indicate “Buddhism as an organized religion” (1971: 253).
is a set of truths that are necessary for us to make social intercourse unproblematic, at least in its fundamentals.

However, while conventional truth is essential for empirical daily life, there is another feature that must be mentioned regarding conventional truth. According to Murti, samvrti also means “the covered or the covering activity: superficial reality or appearance” (1955: 349). Garfield also states that samvrti denotes “concealing, hiding, obscuring or occluding” (2003: 5). Based on these meanings, Garfield asserts that samvrti-satya signifies “something that conceals the truth, or its real nature, or as it is sometimes glossed in the tradition, something that is regarded as a truth by an obscured or a deluded mind” (2003: 5).

What is most conspicuous about the second aspect of samvrti-satya is the assumption, in one’s thought or conceptualization, that objects of thought or concepts possess their own being or self-nature, that is, a svabhava-nature (Wright, 1986). In conventional truth, objects or entities of experience are seen as real and substantial in themselves independent of all other objects or entities and of one’s thought or conceptualization of them (Wright, 1986). Accordingly, it comes to be believed that each object or entity innately has its own unique and fixed quality or nature. Furthermore, in conventional truth, one tends to have emotional and intellectual attachment to what one conceives
as true (Cheng, 1981): as one selects some specific viewpoint or idea on phenomenon, he/she clings to it as the true nature of the phenomenon. Thus, samvrti-satya or conventional truth, while necessary and helpful to lead a daily life based on social intercourse, possesses the potential to be the cause of suffering.

According to Murti, ‘paramartha’ means “the ultimate or noumenal reality or the Absolute” (1955: 347). Therefore, paramartha-satya or the ultimate truth denotes “the absolute or transcendental truth or the truth of the ultimate or the beyond” (Chang, 1971: 258). The fundamental nature of the ultimate truth is that it transcends and negates the norms of conventional truth (Wright, 1986) and asserts that the real is beyond conceptualization, which clearly exhibits that the core element of paramartha-satya is sunyata. While in the conventional truth, concepts, views or attributes of objects and phenomena are recognized as true and necessary for us to lead daily lives, in the ultimate truth, every concept or view is empty in terms of being without essence (Nayak, 1979) or lacking independent existence.

5-8 Nonduality between samvrti-satya and paramartha-satya

When the Two Truths are comparatively analyzed, it seems prima facie that they are respectively describing two different realities: the samvrti-satya delineates the samsara, that is, our daily life world or what Inada calls “the empirical life-death cycle” (1970:
158) while the paramartha-satya refers to nirvana or the realm of enlightenment that has achieved liberation from suffering. Put differently, the Two Truths ostensibly give us an impression that they are reflecting two ontologically opposed or incompatible realities. Further, as the paramartha-satya tries to reveal the ultimate unreality of samvrti-satya or truth/knowledge conventionally recognized as valid and pragmatically useful, it seems that it denies or eliminates the latter to attain enlightenment. In short, at first glance, it could be considered that the samvrti-satya and the paramartha-satya are mutually antithetical truths and accordingly refer to the truth in ontologically distinct realms.

However, Buddhism denies these views and tries to demonstrate different features of the relationship between the samvrti-satya and the paramartha-satya. In order to realize the true relationship between these two truths, the correct relationship between samsara and nirvana must be grasped. How are these two seemingly different realms or realities related? Buddhism emphasizes the fundamental nonduality between samsara and nirvana. The nondualistic relationship between seemingly antithetical or incompatible realms is asserted, for instance, by Nagarjuna. He claims, “Samsara (that is, the empirical life-death cycle) is nothing essentially different from nirvana. Nirvana is nothing essentially different from samsara” (Inada, 1970: 158). Further, he states, “The limits (that is, realm) of nirvana are the limits of samsara. Between the two, there
is not the slightest difference whatsoever” (Inada, 1970: 158). What these statements
assert is that the ideas of samsara or our empirical world and nirvana, or the world of
enlightenment that overcomes our suffering are ultimately referring to one world. In
short, our empirical daily world filled with suffering can be transformed into the
enlightened world in which suffering has been addressed. Ultimately, there is no
ontological difference between samsara and nirvana.

The ontological nonduality between samsara and nirvana and the attainment of
nirvana within samsara as the corollary have important implications for the
samvrti-satya and the paramartha-satya. If samsara and nirvana are ontologically
nondual, it is a matter of our mind’s perception, conception, feeling and acting that
makes a difference between them (Cheng, 1981). In other words, the major difference
between samsara and nirvana is epistemological and the samvrti-satya and the
paramartha-satya play the major role in this epistemological dimension in approaching
samsara and nirvana.

What must be highlighted above all is that since there is ontological nonduality
between samsara and nirvana, the samvrti-satya and paramartha-satya are not
reflecting two ontologically different realities; rather, the two truths are essentially the
two modes of understanding one reality. How can these two truths that reflect the
same reality be characterized? According to Chinn, the difference between them is a “distinction between ordinary consciousness, which is fraught with the dangers of misconceptions influenced by all kinds of desires (the desire for certainty, for eternal existence and so on) and an enlightened consciousness purged of all the needs and fears that bring about suffering” (2001: 70). As Loy argues, our everyday world is conceptually and socially constructed by our delusive attribution of inherent self-existence to phenomena (1996). In other words, normal daily life and discourse is in the realm of conventional truth, but we “unfortunately contaminate conventional truth by imputing inherent existence to it” (Mansfield, 1990: 68): we project conceptually constructed views or attributes upon phenomena and believe that they innately inhere in those phenomena and cling to them, which causes suffering.

As Chang claims, “each and every concept man holds is inherently svabhava-bound” (1971: 86): one tends to have a strong belief in some conceptually constructed view of reality and clings to it as independently existing and absolute, which can be overcome by the paramartha-satya. The paramartha-satya or the ultimate truth refers to the awareness that samsara, that is, the empirical world of forms is a phenomenal appearance that is ultimately empty of svabhava or inherent fixed nature or quality (Mithcell, 1976). The ultimate truth is the truth of an enlightened mind that has realized an ultimate unreality or contradiction of absolutizing a particular view or
reality by gaining an insight into conceptual thought-construction (Vladimir, 2004), as a result of which, one can attain “tattva.” According to Nayak, tattva means a true or real nature of our ordinary discourse (1979) or conceptualization. The paramartha-satya enables one to realize the svabhava-sunya (essencelessness) of all concepts (Nayak, 1979) and once essencelessness or an ultimate emptiness of all concepts or conceptualization of any kinds has been known, one will be able to realize an ultimate unreality or contradiction of absolutizing and clinging to certain conceptual thought.

However, what must be remarked is that while it is indispensable to know the paramartha-satya in order to achieve liberation from suffering, it does not mean that the samvrti-satya should be eliminated. Rather, as an essential feature, there is an interdependent relation between the samvrti-satya and the paramartha-satya. This is explicitly asserted by Nagarjuna: “Without relying on everyday common practice (that is, relative truth), the absolute truth cannot be expressed.” (Inada, 1970: 146). As this verse states, the ultimate truth is key to achieving nirvana. However, what must be clarified more explicitly is that only through the conventional truth, can the ultimate truth be known or revealed. Whereas liberation from suffering cannot be achieved without the realization of the paramartha-satya, that is, an ultimate emptiness of conceptualization of any kinds as absolute, there is no approach to the ultimate truth
without relying on the conventional truth (Mipham, 2002). Here, we can see an important and interesting relationship between the conventional truth and the ultimate truth. While the aim of the ultimate truth is to demonstrate the ultimate unreality of the conventional truth, the former does not negate the latter per se. Both truths actually refer to one world, that is, our daily empirical world and if the ultimate truth denies the conventional truth that assumes a crucial role in our empirical world as worthless, it results in annihilating our world within which we seek to be enlightened to overcome suffering and acquire serenity in mind. In other words, if the conventional truth is nullified by the ultimate truth, it becomes impossible to obtain the ultimate truth itself.

As the paramartha-satya must be realized within samsara, it is not separate from phenomena: rather, it is the very nature of phenomena (Mipham, 2002). The ultimate truth is what the conventional truth is and the conventional truth is the way the ultimate truth appears; “they merge and coincide in phenomena” (Mipham, 2002: 19), which means that eventually nondualistic relationship must be realized. This ultimate nonduality makes us realize that the conventional truth cannot be dismissed as worthless since the conventional truth must be presupposed to know an ultimate truth of the real.
Truly, the realization of sunyata or the paramartha-satya, that is, an ultimate unreality of conceptualizations of any sort to describe the real is indispensable to breakthrough the svabhava-thought that is fundamental element of ignorance. Nevertheless, the doctrine of sunyata is a double-edged sword: if understood rightly, it brings about liberation, but if understood wrongly, it can cause a spiritual and moral corruption (Mipham, 2002), which results in suffering. If one eliminates the reification of phenomena with some view but reifies and clings to emptiness, that arouses a new grasping and craving, that is, grasping and craving for emptiness as absolute and a new round of suffering (Garfield, 1994). While overcoming svabhava-thought through the realization of sunyata is essential for liberation from suffering, if one clings to or absolutizes sunyata or the notion of the real beyond conceptualization, that creates another svabhava-thought of emptiness, which nullifies or abandons engagement in samsara and one falls into nihilism that is essentially critiqued by Buddhism as a cause of suffering. In short, the doctrine of emptiness must be a remedy for all views including emptiness itself (Olson, 1975): attachment to any views including sunyata or the paramartha-satya must be overcome to attain liberation from suffering.

According to Buddhist doctrine, there can be several steps towards understanding the true relationship between the samvrti-satya and the paramartha-satya. Firstly, all the principles and categories of conventional reality are recognized as necessary for life in
this world: their pragmatic validity must be maintained (Tola and Dragonetti, 1995). However, as a second step, those principles and categories – the samvrti-satya – must be problematized; one tends to use them without knowing their true nature and consequently falls into svabhava-thought and is afflicted with suffering or conflict. Following the second step, the true nature of the samvrti-satya, that is, the paramartha-satya or emptiness of conceptualization of any kind is to be revealed. As shown, any concept, when subject to Buddhist dialectic, reveals itself as interdependent and ultimately unreal, as a consequence of which, the real beyond conceptualization can be exhibited. However, the true relationship between the samvrti-satya and the paramartha-satya must be known in their interdependent and nondual condition: in order to overcome svabhava-thought in the samvrti-satya, Buddhist dialectic plays an important role, but Buddhist dialectic must eventually apply to the paramartha-satya as well in order to overcome the last clinging, that is, the clinging to the paramartha-satya or emptiness.

As a result of the realization of the emptiness of emptiness, one becomes free from all conceptualization or attachment to any specific concepts (Gimello, 1976). What must be stressed is that it is not the concept itself but the attachment to some specific concept that must be rid of (Gimello, 1976). What needs to be eliminated through two truths is one’s perversions and false clinging to concepts, which applies to words,
concepts, understanding or systems of understanding (Ramanan, 1978) – the subjective dimensions that frame our actual life. What two truths assert is that to state that all existing things are empty does not mean that conventional thoughts, conceptualizations or discourses should be abandoned; rather, by knowing their true nature, we will be able to engage in the conventional phenomenal world without falling into attachment to things or dynamics as absolute. One who has known the true relationship between the conventional truth and the ultimate truth transcends both by synthesing them, which can entail a positive and constructive attitude toward the empirical world by means of a nondual mind (Ramanan, 1978): by knowing the true nature of the conventional truth, that is, the ultimate truth – an ultimate emptiness or unreality of conceptualization and of clinging to specific concept as absolute, one can free him/her from any kinds of fixed views and be more creative and inclusive or holistic in approaching the phenomenal world.

5-9 Characterizing a Buddhist epistemology

As generally understood, one of the essential features of epistemology is study of knowledge. Human beings by nature need a solid epistemological foundation or framework to make sense of reality. However, while this conventional view of epistemology is not to be denied, a Buddhist epistemology adds another element to it: a soteriological element as the aim of epistemology. Kalansuriya argues that since the
Buddhist use of the word ‘knowledge’ is made within a soteriologically-oriented framework, it is not exclusively understood on an epistemological basis (1993). Put differently, from a Buddhist epistemological perspective, knowledge is never merely an accurate representation of some external reality or world (Frisina, 2001). Rather, the core of knowledge in Buddhist epistemology is purposeful: an emancipation or liberation from suffering (Kalansuriya, 1993) that is caused by a lack of right understanding of reality. Therefore, gaining a correct understanding the nature of phenomena – the objects and situations surrounding us in daily lives – which have been covered with erroneous views on them, is the most fundamental aim of Buddhist epistemology (Mipham, 2002) since that can enable us to address problems we encounter in daily lives on a deeper level.

Further, as Ramanan claims, a Buddhist epistemology asserts that the world around us is a reflection of the condition of our mind: “we do deeds that build the world for us exactly in the way we interpret to ourselves the reality of things” (1978: 71). Since the condition of reality is a reflection of mind, knowledge of any kind arises from our own mind: a Buddhist epistemology focuses on the fundamental nature of the mind (Matsuo, 1981) in order to attain liberation since as Lai claims, epistemologically, the mind is “the seat of enlightenment as well as of non-enlightenment” (1977: 250). Put another way, a Buddhist epistemology centers on the attainment and cultivation of a
correct subjective attitude towards the world and life, which arises from the experience of some transformation in the activity of mind (Suzuki, 1999). By acquiring a right knowledge, one can attain transformation of the whole system of mind (Suzuki, 1999), which can break suffering.

While a Buddhist epistemology can be understood as a study of knowledge that purports to achieve a soteriological aspiration, that is, liberation from suffering, what is the soteriological study of knowledge? The important character of a Buddhist epistemology is the critical attitude towards knowledge of any kind. While conventional epistemology, which tries to found the system or framework of certain knowledge, plays an important role in establishing a firm foundation for one’s understanding of reality or phenomena including oneself in terms of making sense of them, a Buddhist epistemology asserts that this conventional disposition of epistemology can cause trouble or suffering as one is prone to cling to some specific epistemological framework and ignore others. Once one has absorbed or chosen a certain epistemological framework to make sense of reality, one is inclined to stick to it and fixate one’s mode or pattern of thought, and consequently one can become narrow-minded toward other views and even have negative feelings such as anger, hatred, embarrassment and so on. A Buddhist epistemology seeks to reveal this possible danger lurking within the conventional disposition of epistemology by
demonstrating an insight into the nature of knowledge in any form.

However, a Buddhist epistemology characterized as critique of knowledge of any sort does not aim at denying or annihilating knowledge itself. Rather, the fundamental objective of a Buddhist epistemology is to reveal an insight into the nature of knowledge in order to break through one’s rigid attachment to certain knowledge as absolute. Buddhism asserts that the clinging to certain knowledge and expressing some negative feelings towards other knowledge or conceptualization, which brings about trouble or suffering, is due to a lack of right understanding of the nature of knowledge of any kind. By attaining an insight into the nature of the knowledge, one can eliminate one’s strong attachment to certain knowledge. As Loy claims, the goal of a Buddhist epistemology is “not to eliminate concepts but to liberate them” (1999: 10): a Buddhist epistemology aims to liberate knowledge of any sort from one’s erroneous attachment by revealing an insight into the nature of knowledge. Attachment to any definitive concepts or knowledge, whether it be affirmative, negative or synthesis, rather than bringing about liberation from suffering, impedes the attainment of it as the dogmatic assertion of any view inevitably excludes other views and the former is distinguished from others as false and conflict results (McFarlane, 1995).
Rather than an elimination of knowledge as its aim, a Buddhist epistemology can be understood as an exhaustive critique of dogmatism of knowledge of any form (Scutton, 1991), which arises from svabhava-thought. By the doctrine of sunyata, the viewpoints or various types or levels of knowledge that are developed into elaborate construction about the absolute or ultimate nature of reality are understood as interdependent variables which arise through mutual interaction and at different extents of opposition toward each other and consequently reaches the point of mutual annulment (Scutton, 1991). Accordingly, the ultimate impossibility of independent existence of knowledge of any kind and unreality or contradiction of clinging to a particular view as absolute comes to be demonstrated.

A Buddhist epistemology, as Murti claims, attains its fruition through the working of its inner dynamism (within our mind), through the three moments of the dialectic: dogmatism, criticism and intuition (1955). Initially, one chooses a view, concept or philosophy to make sense of reality and clings to it as absolute or ever-lasting and denies or excludes others, which causes suffering as a rigid attachment to one’s view and denial of others arouses anger, hatred or embarrassment. In the second stage, an insight into the nature of concepts or views is analyzed, which reveals the essential relativity of them and the contradictory nature of absolutization of them. Finally, the ultimate unreality of clinging to any forms of concept or view is intuitively understood,
which results in liberation from suffering. Thus, rather than proposing a new knowledge of reality, a Buddhist epistemology seeks to propose an insight into the nature of knowledge of any kind, that is, relativity and its ultimate emptiness in order to break through svabhava-thought. A Buddhist epistemology can be regarded as a reflective awareness of the false nature of every conceptual or philosophical view that pretends to give a complete and exclusive picture of phenomena, and which curbs the dogmatic disposition of knowledge (Murti, 1955).

By acquiring an essential insight into the real, that is, relativity and ultimate unreality to absolutize a certain viewpoint through a dialectical critique of all views or thoughts, the intension of a Buddhist epistemology is to attain mind-state free from conceptual thought-constructions while appreciating their practical values in certain circumstances within our daily lives and intellectual undertaking. The pinnacle of knowledge in Buddhist epistemology, by acquiring an insight into the nature of knowledge of any sorts, is the complete detachment from all views (Scutton, 1991).

5-10 Exploring an ultimate state of mind in Buddhist epistemology

The main thrust of Buddhist epistemology is its critical attitude towards any kind of knowledge, which seeks to show an insight into construction and nature of knowledge and demonstrate the ultimate illusion and contradiction to cling to certain view as
absolute. How can an ultimate or right state of mind be characterized in this Buddhist epistemological condition?

Since on a Buddhist view, the human mind tends to be enslaved to concepts due to a lack of right understanding of their nature, Buddhist enlightenment means liberation of mind from conceptual thinking (Cheng, 1981). As Scutton describes, the purpose of Buddhist epistemology is to liberate the mind from “the fetters of language, logic and even conceptual thinking itself” (1991: 162). This is stated in Asvaghosha’s Awakening of Faith: “Enlightenment is the highest quality of the mind: it is free from all the limiting attributes of subjectivity, it is like unto space, penetrating everywhere, as the unity of all” (Suzuki, 2001: 61-62). As Laycock asserts, the very essence of mind in Buddhist thought is “a state of absolute void,” which is claimed in the Sutra of Complete Enlightenment: “The substance of the perfect wondrous mind is by its nature spiritually clear, all-pervading, extensive, void and still; it is called absolute voidness” (Luk, 1962: 190). By knowing an insight into the nature of knowledge, one can realize an original unconditioned nature of mind that is undisturbed by or non-attached to concepts.

However, ‘detachment from conceptualization’ or ‘absolute voidness’ as an ultimate condition of mind can give us the impression that Buddhism aims at the abandonment
of thinking or cessation of thinking. Buddhism explicitly denies this view, which is stated, for instance, by Asvaghosha: “We understand by the annihilation [of mind], not that of the mind itself, but its modes (only)” (Suzuki, 2001: 83). The Lankavatara-sutra also asserts, “Disciples may sometimes think that they can expedite the attainment of their goal of tranquilization (of mind) by entirely suppressing the activities of the mind-system. This is a mistake, for even if the activities of the mind are suppressed, the mind will still go on functioning because the seeds of habit-energy will still remain in it. What they think is extinction of mind, is really the non-functioning of the mind’s external world to which they are no longer attached. That is, the goal of tranquilization is to be reached not by suppressing all mind activity but getting rid of discrimination and attachments” (Suzuki, 2003: 72-73).

These statements show that it is a grave mistake to consider that the purpose of Buddhist epistemology is the denial or cessation of conceptual thought and construction of knowledge. Rather than signifying an elimination or absence of thought, the ultimate state of mind in Buddhist epistemology refers to the condition of not being trapped in thoughts and not adhering to a certain conceptual habit or disposition (Muller, 1998) as absolute. Buddhist no-thought or no-mind means the function of a mind free from any attachment to conceptual thought-construction even when we are engaged in it (Loy, 1986). This means non-abiding in any specific
conceptual constructions since ultimately it is a mere illusion or even a cause of trouble to cling to the certain habit of reified conceptual thought (Muller, 1998).

The merit of this non-abiding condition of mind is that we can appreciate or even enjoy any form of knowledge that is of use in certain circumstance, but at the same time can be detached from it by knowing the nature of conceptual thought-construction. By being liberated from an attachment to any particular view while perceiving its practical value in certain situation, within Buddhist enlightened mind, the conceptualizing faculty, rather than being wiped out, functions well or even better than before as it no longer has to operate in a rigid, constricted and clinging mode in approaching our daily phenomena reality (Muller, 1998).

5-11 Implications of Buddhist epistemology for conflict resolution

Buddhist epistemology claims that once one has attained an insight into knowledge one is to be freed from “conceptual prisons” (Hanh, 1992: 61). However, gaining an insight into the nature of knowledge does not allow an attachment to the ultimate truth, that is, the ultimate emptiness of any forms of knowledge as their nature. Rather, the attainment of the ultimate truth of emptiness of knowledge or conceptualization, while recognizing its pragmatic values, reconnects us to praxis and convention in an enlightened mode: the ultimate truth of sunyata, rather than disabling or terminating
the conventional truths, reinforces them without making us their slaves (Barnhart, 1994). The fundamental interdependence between the conventional truth and the ultimate truth stresses the kind of flexibility regarding our perspectives to approach phenomenal world: the functional ability to tailor the ultimate truth to the conventional truth and the conventional truth to the ultimate truth presupposes a flexibility within human mind, which “undermines any insistence on closure within a given scheme” (Barnhart, 1994: 653) and enables us to act upon and engage in worldly affairs in more creative, open-ended and inclusive manner.

How can a Buddhist epistemological approach to our phenomenal daily world from a deeper and broader dimension of mind-state contribute to contemporary conflict resolution that has been founded upon Western epistemologies? Clearly, a contribution of Buddhist epistemology to contemporary conflict resolution would be an analysis of human mind in a deeper and more profound dimension. Although a Buddhist epistemology does not deny objective or material and structural dimensions of conflict dynamics, what it emphasizes is that those dimensions are essentially manifestations of mind, since the character or attributes of objective reality are projected by the human mind, individually and/or collectively.

As examined (especially in the third chapter), the human subjective dimension and its
role in an analysis of conflict has been exhibited, which is represented by subjective epistemology and critical epistemology. While a Buddhist epistemology appreciates their contributions to contemporary conflict resolution and pragmatic values, it is able to penetrate into a more profound level of mind to explore a deeper psychological and subjective dimension of conflict. One of the important critiques of subjective epistemology and critical epistemology from a Buddhist epistemological perspective is that both have clung to certain dimensions of mind and ignored a deeper dimension of mind to transform conflictual situation. However, this critique from a Buddhist epistemological aspect must be taken constructively and positively. As repeatedly stressed, a Buddhist epistemology never denies any forms of epistemology and their pragmatic values, as a corollary of which, the epistemologies and their contributions to contemporary conflict resolution must be appreciated.

What a Buddhist epistemology seeks to propose is a deeper and more profound analysis of mind than made in subjective epistemology and critical epistemology, so that a richer nature of mind can be explored, which will contribute to expanding the framework of contemporary conflict resolution that has been based on Western epistemologies. An ultimate goal of this dissertation that seeks to contribute to expanding the framework of contemporary conflict resolution is not the denial or replacement of Western epistemologies and their understanding of conflict and
conflict resolution with those of a Buddhist epistemology. Rather, by penetrating into a deeper level of epistemologies and their applications to contemporary conflict resolution, a Buddhist epistemology wants to analyze conflict from deeper and more profound perspectives, which will enable us to explore new theories on conflict dynamics and conflict resolution and even new types of praxis in the future.
Chapter Six: Constructing a Complementary Relationship between Western Epistemologies and Buddhist Epistemology for an Expansion of the Framework of Contemporary Conflict Resolution.

Introduction

So far two themes have been dealt with: a critical analysis of Western epistemological foundations of contemporary conflict resolution and an examination of Buddhist epistemology. Following these analyses, the aim of this concluding chapter is to explore what contributions Buddhist epistemology can make to contemporary conflict resolution. What must be noticed here is that the objective is not to establish a Buddhist conflict resolution to replace or stand in addition Western conflict resolution. Rather, the core goal, as it has been established, expanded and evolved, is to enrich the conflict resolution enterprise.

Firstly, the theoretical and conceptual contribution will be examined. In this part, what has been underdeveloped in Western conflict resolution will be argued and then what kind(s) of contribution(s) Buddhist epistemology can make to contemporary conflict resolution will be examined. Following this, how a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology can contribute to unfolding practical implications for contemporary conflict resolution will be explored.
Here, how dynamics and key elements of contemporary conflict resolution founded upon Western epistemologies can be reconfigured by establishing a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology will be explored. Finally, how further research following the argument of this chapter can be unfolded will be explored.

6-1 Considering Buddhist epistemological contributions to the theoretical and conceptual development of contemporary conflict resolution

6-1-1 Individual deep psychology as a core element of conflict resolution

The practice of conflict resolution has always been informed by a very large theoretical literature – and this is essential as any sustained analysis of the sources of human conflict entails either implicit assumptions or explicit discussion of quite fundamental philosophical topics, mostly turning on questions of human nature.

Part of the rationale for introducing Buddhist epistemology into the context of Western conflict resolution is that contemporary conflict resolution has been largely socially-oriented. This is understandable, since as we saw, the origins of conflict resolution are rooted in the destructive tendencies of state and/or large scale violence at sub-state or collective levels. Intellectually, too, conflict resolution has been rooted in the social sciences – International Relations, politics, anthropology, social
psychology and the rest. In addition, the body of practice of conflict resolution has been built up around inter-group dynamics.

The social orientation of contemporary conflict resolution has had a profound effect on its theoretical development, particularly with respect to the sources and dynamics of violent conflict. The social manifestations of violence (war, genocide, ethnic cleanings) are aggregations of individual acts – the purposeful acts of adult human beings who possess moral agency. Although the purpose of this dissertation is not to discount the importance of social, socio-cultural, socio-economic and other large scale drivers of violent conflict, it remains a striking deficiency of contemporary conflict resolution theorizing that so little attention has been given to individual psychology and the quality of individual potential within a conflict resolution context.

This is not to say that there are not very considerable bodies of work dealing with human psychology and violence, ranging from biology, cognitive studies and psychopathology. However, these have had little impact on the theoretical development of conflict resolution in general or in relation to the sources of conflict or violent conflict.

Of course, Buddhism as a religion and as an epistemology has its own standing,
separate from the theory and practice of contemporary conflict resolution: and its
many schools and branches have their own traditions, literatures, doctrines and even
ritual practices. As mentioned in the introduction, “Buddhist epistemology” as
characterized in chapters 4 and 5, is an abstraction from this rich tradition. The
purpose of this dissertation in presenting a broadly applicable Buddhist epistemology
has not been to flatten differences between Buddhist variants, but to present a
fundamental orientation – an epistemology – that is common to the largest part of
practicing Buddhists.

Furthermore, although Buddhist scripture has been cited for explanatory and
illustrative purposes, the presentation of Buddhism in the context of this dissertation,
which seeks to complement Western conflict resolution, is philosophical – specifically
epistemological – not doctrinal. It should be also emphasized that the intention of this
research in examining Buddhist epistemology within a contemporary conflict
resolution framework is complementary, not an argument about either truth or
superiority. As emphasized in the chapter 5, there is a broadly shared Buddhist
appreciation of the practical importance of what is commonly referred to as
‘mundane/conventional truth,’ which comprises socially or culturally constructed
views, values, and discourses that are necessary for us to live a meaningful life in the
collective world. The main argument of this dissertation does not rely on a
non-Buddhist subscribing to Buddhist doctrine: and in fact, the first and foremost
contribution of this study is its contextualization into a contemporary conflict
resolution framework an entire epistemological orientation which locates the sources
of conflict in individual/human psychology.

The implications of this for the theoretical development of contemporary conflict
resolution are considerable and they are not contingent on an acceptance of
dependent-arising or enlightenment (or any Western variants on them, in the language
of cognition, or one or more specialist branches of psychology). Therefore, the sense
in which Buddhist epistemology is complementary to Western conflict resolution is
not merely that it can stand in parallel to conflict resolution as it has developed to date,
but that it can expand its theoretical and explanatory framework by introducing and/or
restoring fundamental psychological perspectives to our thinking about human
conflict.

Actually, as mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, in contemporary conflict resolution, in
which social psychological approach assumes a major role, it is generally recognized
that conflict is not simply a phenomenon of psychological and subjective dynamics.
Rather, it is rooted in material, objective or structural elements although psychological
and subjective factors play important roles. However, the incorporation of Buddhist
epistemology, which critically examines how the human psychological and subjective disposition itself can cause suffering or conflict, allows us to analyze how psychological and subjective elements can be a root cause of conflict. And this re-centering our attention on the source of conflict toward individual deep psychology enables us to reconfigure the way we view social psychology as a means of understanding conflict.

6-1-2 Qualitative enhancement of the potential of individual agency in conflict resolution

The incorporation of individual deep psychology onto the conflict resolution center stage will unavoidably have an impact one of the long-standing debates in contemporary conflict resolution, that is, the relationship between society and individual agency. Especially, the introduction of individual deep psychology into Western conflict resolution that has been socially or culturally-oriented allows us to engage in qualitative enhancement of the potential of individual agency in conflict resolution. In the conflict resolution literature, there have been few arguments on the role of individuals or on how individual agency can contribute to resolving conflict or transforming violent and antagonistic inter-group relationships.

Truly, the introduction of basic human needs theory into conflict resolution has shed
light on human beings/individual human beings. According to this theory, as basic human needs are universally applicable, states or sub-state groups should address the failure to satisfy basic needs of every individual person, which has caused violent conflict. However, the basic assumption of individual human beings in the context of basic human needs theory and conflict resolution is biological orientation or biological conditionedness.

There are some approaches of social psychology that focus on individual agency to resolve conflict or violence: the problem-solving approach and contract hypothesis as the theoretical foundation to analyze the problem-solving approach or any other inter-personal meeting to address mutual misunderstanding and misperception are good instances. However, the major problem of social psychological approaches is that only a limited number of individuals can participate in them. Only a handful of top-level elites or other influential figures are the targets of social psychological approaches.

As examined in chapter 1, since the end of the Cold War, the critique of traditional conflict resolution represented by problem-solving that entails only a handful of high-profile individuals for resolution has been actively made. This vigorous critique has borne fruits in creating arguments on peacebuilding from the bottom or grass-roots
based peace approach, and in the concept of conflict transformation with its potential and significance for reconciliation and justice. What is outstanding about these approaches is that they demonstrate that conflict and conflict resolution are not exclusively the concern of a handful of individuals. Rather, each individual or everybody must be incorporated.

Critical epistemology has been examined in the third chapter as the epistemological foundation of many conflict resolution approaches in the post-Cold War era. As discussed, critical epistemology insists that socially/culturally constructed views or discourses and even social structures do not represent objective reality, but are intersubjectively built by those who live in the social/cultural world. Further, it is also argued that those views or discourses themselves are a cause of asymmetric relations between/among groups in society and of conflict or violence. However, the intellectual pinnacle of critical epistemology is that the socially/culturally constructed view is in essence fluid and contingent and subsequently can be subject to critique, deconstruction and transformation by those who are in the social/cultural world. In short, the active engagement of individual agency is one of the central features of conflict resolution the post-Cold War era.

However, while the importance of the active role of individual agency is recognized as
a key to conflict resolution, qualitative argument on the potential of individual agency
per se has remain underdeveloped in Western conflict resolution. Even in critical
epistemological approaches to conflict resolution, individual agency is confined to
social/cultural influence and consequently the social/cultural deterministic nature of
individual agency remains, which renders it highly difficult to create self-reflective
and self-critical individual agency. In short, an asymmetric relationship remains
between society and individual agency, in which the former is still prioritized over the
latter even though the importance of the latter’s active role has been increasingly
accepted. Therefore, by introducing individual deep psychology into Western conflict
resolution, less socially-oriented, more qualitative analysis of the potential of
individual agency can be made. This does not mean to dismiss the social/cultural
influence on individual agency: rather, the introduction of individual deep psychology
into Western conflict resolution and establishment of their complementary relationship
can reconfigure the relationship between society and individual agencies in the
context of Western conflict resolution itself, in which the former has been the main
focus.

6-2 Exploring the practical implications of a complementary relationship
between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology

As discussed in the previous section, the introduction of Buddhist epistemology into
contemporary conflict resolution based on Western epistemologies brings psychology back to the center stage of conflict resolution, and it does so at a deep level. Of course, Western conflict resolution has examined psychological and subjective dynamics to understand and address inter-group conflict. Doubtless, its examination, which is made mainly by social psychologists, has made an invaluable contribution to the conflict resolution enterprise. However, the introduction of Buddhist epistemology that makes a critical and deeper analysis of psychology as a root cause of conflict allows us to engage in a deeper and more profound analysis of psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict and conflict resolution. This is not a dismissal of social/cultural psychological dynamics of conflict resolution. What must be stressed here is that by constructing a complementary relationship between Buddhist epistemology that studies individual deep psychology and Western epistemology that have mainly focused on socially-oriented conflict resolution, we can make a deeper analysis of social/cultural psychological dynamics and subsequently new views or values can be added to the social/cultural dimensions of human psychology itself.

Based on this expansion of psychological perspectives, this section explores how a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology can develop practical implications for the conflict resolution enterprise. As examined in chapters 4 and 5, the core theme of Buddhist epistemology is a critical
analysis of social/cultural views or conceptual thoughts. It analyzes how social/cultural subjectivity itself can become a root cause of suffering or trouble and how it can be addressed. From a Buddhist epistemological perspective that incorporates individual deep psychology into conflict resolution, while it is essential for us to ascribe certain attributes to the phenomenal world in order to make sense of reality, such meaning-making itself can be a root cause of conflict.

6-2-1 Critical analysis of socially/culturally-engaged mind

6-2-1-1 Characterizing a general feature of Western understanding of mind

The long history of Western intellectual enterprise has made a valuable contribution to the study of human subjectivity or nature of mind: Descartes, Kant, Husserl, Jung, Wittgenstein, Foucault, to name a few. Although it is highly difficult and perhaps impossible to fully characterize the nature of mind, Zeuschner asserts that in the West, there seems to be some general agreement that mind can be understood in terms of such things as “thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, acts of deliberation, discrimination, concepts, judging and so on” (1978: 69). The various approaches to understanding human mind and the construction of a generally agreed nature of it have promoted and developed analysis of how human subjects affect the phenomenal world including the resolution of conflict.
As examined in the first, second and third chapters, Western conflict resolution has developed psychological and subjective dynamics in conflict resolution, especially in order to investigate how groups in conflict interact. A main theme of Western approaches to psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict resolution has been an examination of how conflictual intergroup relationship can occur, how the conflictual circumstance negatively affects intergroup communication and how it can be improved to build a non-violent and more cooperative relationship. Put differently, it seems that intersubjectivity or collectivity has been presumed as a core in understanding human mind in Western conflict resolution.

Further, as shown in the third chapter, amongst Western epistemologies, subjective and critical epistemologies have been a foundation for understanding mind in Western conflict resolution. Although they have respectively distinct approaches to psychological and subjective dynamics in conflict resolution, there is one thing that can be commonly recognized between them, that is, the socially or culturally-oriented nature of mind as their foundation to characterize nature of human mind. This can be also interpreted that in subjective and critical epistemological approaches to human mind, social or cultural conditionedness is an essential feature of human mind. The conditioned mind has been presupposed as a central pillar of Western conflict resolution.
The conditioned mind can be characterized as mind framed by “the entire corpus of ideas, values and customs that come to be presupposed or regarded as truth by the common sense of a community” (Wright, 1986: 21). It is also to be understood as the belief and forms of truth that are conventionally accepted as valid and effective in the practical matters of daily life-world (Wright, 1986). As argued in the second chapter, since we are essentially social entities, we are prone to get our minds conditioned by socially or culturally constructed views or conceptual thoughts. Based on the conditioned mind that is formed by socially or culturally-oriented conceptual thoughts, we cultivate a capacity to engage in the collectively and habitually structured world (Wright, 1992).

The conditioned mind constituted by social or cultural conceptual thoughts becomes a lens through which to choose aspects in the stream of human subjectivities, experiences and attitudes to construct the real (Streng, 1975). Put differently, the conditioned mind can be seen as “a power for assembling aspects of the flux of existence into patterns” (Streng, 1975: 431). Through the conditioned mind, human beings project socially or culturally patterned conceptual categories upon reality and make experience conform to their own conceptual systems (McEvilley, 1982). Based on those patterned views, human beings establish certain discourses on reality or on the contents of identity of one’s own group and others’ and certain patterns of
intergroup dynamics would be also created. In short, getting mind conditioned by social or cultural views or conceptual thought is essential for us to make sense of reality and acquire ways to think, behave and interact with other people in certain manner.

Thus it can be posited that in Western conflict resolution, a main focus of analysis of mind has been the conditioned mind that is socially or culturally framed: Western understanding of psychological and subjective dynamics in conflict resolution has been established upon socially or culturally conditioned mind. In short, Western conflict resolution has presupposed conditionedness as mind’s essential nature.

6-2-1-2 How can the conditioned mind become a cause of conflict?

While appreciating that socially or culturally conditioned mind is essential to construct a meaningful life, Buddhist epistemology claims that the same conditioned mind can become a critical element that causes or protracts conflict. Therefore, a Buddhist epistemology makes a critical analysis of the potential danger of the conditioned mind in terms of how or when it can be a cause to arouse or make conflict intractable.

From a Buddhist epistemological perspective, the conditioned mind can turn into a
cause of conflict when it gets absolutized and clung to as such: a potential danger of the socially or culturally conditioned mind can emerge when it gets consciously or unconsciously absolutized by extreme attachments. Once we have got minds conditioned by certain conceptual thoughts or views, we are inclined to cling to them as absolute and that results in fixating the real – objects, persons or groups of people, events and so on – with some supposedly unchanging or permanently lasting attributes or qualities (Chang, 1971). Due to an absolutization of and strong clinging to socially or culturally conditioned mind, sedimented and habitual ways of understanding the real are formed and come to limit the objects, people and other phenomena to a static essence with a fixed nature (Lipman, 1982).

Buddhist epistemology argues that the absolutization of the conditioned mind and strong attachment to it accompanied by fixation of views of the real is connected to a human eagerness for the establishment of sense of security and stable sense of self or identity. According to Loy (2002: 8), security is “the conditions where we can live without care, where our life is not preoccupied with worrying about our life” and that entails stabilizing ourselves by controlling and fixating the real including ourselves with putatively fixed and unchanging attributes or qualities. Therefore, the fragility or instability of constructed identity or sense of self would be seen as a threat to security (mainly psychological or subjective sense of security) and consequently, establishing
identity by putting supposedly fixed or immutable attributes can come to be felt as crucial.

Buddhist epistemology, while recognizing the importance of forming a sense of self or identity by getting mind conditioned by social or cultural conceptual thought or views, wants to reveal a negative side of that. As sense of self with the belief in fixed and unchanging nature or quality becomes strong and extreme, it tends to be imagined to be absolute and exclusive of other identities or views of identity (Ramanan, 1978) and can drive us to enact extreme behaviours towards others with distinct attributes of identity (Der-lan, 2006).

Why can those extreme and exclusive phenomena occur? It can be attributed to a pattern of thought caused by an absolutization of and extreme attachment to the conditioned mind. An excessive attachment to our conceptual thought or view as absolute is inclined to turn into “accepting a dichotomy of either affirmation or negation as the standard for its modus operandi” (Nagatomo, 2000: 220). The “either-or” thought is a logical attitude that prioritizes one over the other and results in one-sidedness of absolutizing our own view and downplaying others (Nagatomo, 2000). In other words, an extremely egocentric view emerging from an absolutization of and excessive attachment to our socially or culturally conditioned mind is prone to
make us criticize or attack different views possessed by others and avoid putting a
critical eye upon or challenging our own view.

What a Buddhist epistemology offers through its critical analysis of socially or
culturally conditioned mind is not to negate the conditioned mind itself and the
identity constructed by it. Rather, under a Buddhist epistemological critique, the
conditioned mind itself can be seen as a cause of trouble if mistreated or misconstrued
by those who have got their minds conditioned by certain conceptual thoughts or
views. As examined, the conditioned mind, when absolutized and clung to as such,
can have a negative impact upon our thoughts and behaviours towards others.
Therefore, from a Buddhist epistemological critique of socially or culturally
conditioned mind, it can be posited that when conflict occurs or becomes protracted or
intractable, it is because that each group’s conditioned mind has got absolutized and
clung to as such. As a consequence, each group’s view of the other becomes fixed and
that makes it highly difficult not only to see the other differently, but also to engage in
critiquing one’s own view. Consequently, that hampers constructive intergroup
interaction or dialogue to explore the possibility of a peaceful relationship.

As demonstrated in chapters 1, 2, and 3, contemporary conflict resolution established
on Western epistemologies examines how negative feelings such as hatred, anger, and
antagonism and subjective phenomena such as prejudice and discriminatory attitudes towards different groups affect intergroup relationships. While it should be appreciated that this has made a significant contribution to analyzing psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict resolution, the introduction of Buddhist epistemology into Western conflict resolution enables us to step further to explore how those negative psychological and subjective phenomena can emerge. It is ascribed to a conscious or unconscious absolutization of socially/culturally conditioned mind. On this view, as a result of absolutization of and extreme attachment to socially/culturally built views, we are prone to fall into believing that they are objectively right and show negative feelings towards those who have different or opposing views as inferior or even threatening.

Therefore, a critical point that Buddhist epistemological critique of the conditioned mind is how we can address the force of mind tied down to specific frameworks of ideology, cultural value, religious dogma, ethnic or racial values (Ichimura, 1997). A key to conflict resolution is a sustained criticism of the essentialist fallacy that makes us fixate views on the phenomenal world, which arises from an absolutization of our socially/culturally conditioned mind as our ultimate nature. In order to critique and challenge our own conditioned mind, Buddhist epistemology suggests that we need to explore a mind or mind-state that is not conditioned by social/cultural conceptual
thoughts or views.

6-2-1-3 Unconditioned mind

Although engagement in social/cultural conceptual thought is essential in order to construct a meaningful reality or make sense of the phenomenal world, the same conditioned mind can become a cause of conflict when mistakenly absolutized and clung to. As an antidote to address the potential danger of the conditioned mind, Buddhist epistemology proposes the idea of unconditioned mind.

The unconditioned mind can be characterized as a mind-state that overcomes an absolutization of and extreme attachment to a particular conceptual thought or view by gaining an insight into social/cultural conditioning and consequently achieves a detached or non-abiding state that can save us from falling into dogmatism. From a Buddhist epistemological perspective, a root cause of absolutization of and extreme attachment to a particular view can be attributed to a lack of insight into conceptual thought. Therefore, by knowing an insight into socially/culturally constructed views in terms of how they are built or how they are related to other views including opposing ones, we can be given an opportunity to engage in a critical reflection on our socially/culturally conditioned mind. The unconditioned mind makes us realize that socially/culturally built views or discourses are actually relative to and rely on views
or discourses that they want to criticize or oppose as inferior or threatening.

On a Buddhist epistemological view, by knowing the unconditioned nature of mind, we can be conscientized that we do not necessarily have to restrict ourselves to a particular social/cultural conceptual thought pattern (Murti, 1955). When we realize the unconditioned nature of mind, we will be able to avoid getting tied to any extreme egocentric or self-centered perspective (Blass, 1996) and be empowered to be open to others’ views to explore more inclusive and synthetic views.

There might be various approaches to overcome extreme egocentric or self-centered views and promote intergroup communication and accordingly, the concept of unconditioned mind proposed here is not the only way. Nevertheless, by providing us with an insight into social/cultural conceptual thought in general, the unconditioned mind can enable us to engage in critical analysis of our own views from a deeper and more fundamental perspective.

6-2-1-4 Analyzing how individuals with conditioned and unconditioned nature of mind can engage in conflict resolution

What Buddhist epistemology claims is that social/cultural conditionedness is not the only disposition of individual human mind. While appreciating the conditioned nature
of mind, Buddhist epistemology suggests that there is also an unconditioned nature or side of individual human mind. What must be emphasized here is that the objective of showing different characters of human mind is not to judge which is superior as an approach to the phenomenal world. Rather, the main point is that individual human mind has both socially/culturally conditioned and unconditioned nature and when both are put together and appreciated, the potential of individuals in conflict resolution can be expanded.

As critically examined throughout this dissertation, the main character of human mind in contemporary conflict resolution based on Western epistemologies is social/cultural engagement or conditionedness. In other words, the purview of individual human mind has been largely focused on its collective nature and this restriction of individual mind to socially/culturally conditioned nature has certain limitations in resolving conflict and transforming antagonistic inter-group relationships into peaceful and positive ones.

As argued, since an absolutization of socially/culturally constructed views or discourses is a root cause of antagonistic and discriminatory intergroup relationships, those views prevalent in groups must be critiqued and transformed. However, if the nature of individual minds remain socially/culturally-oriented, through which those
views or discourses that give rise to negative intergroup relations and make conflict protracted or intractable are built, we would find it highly difficult to critique and transform them. From a Buddhist epistemological perspective, in order to critique socially/culturally constructed beliefs or discourses, we need to step outside them. In order to problematize socially/culturally framed views, individuals should be empowered with the potential or power to know that there is something wrong with dominant views or discourses and to transform them into more peaceful and harmonious ones that can be shared with other groups. In short, to critique and eventually transform socially/culturally constructed views that have become a cause of antagonistic intergroup relationships as a result of getting absolutized, transcendental mind or mind-state beyond social/cultural engagement need to be engaged.

The unconditioned mind that Buddhist epistemology proposes is aimed at addressing socially/culturally built views, which cause negative feelings, subjectivities and antagonistic intergroup relations by knowing an insight into conceptual thoughts. In the middle of conflict or violence of any kind, each group believes that its own view is absolute and consequently fixed attributes or images are mutually projected and they believe that those attributes or natures, though they are essentially projections of their own subjectivities, are possessed by those who have got them projected. And these subjective phenomena must be exposed to critique and their ultimate unreality must be
known by those in conflict. The transcendental mind-state accompanied by an insight into conceptual thoughts can enable us to engage in critical analysis and transformation of erroneously absolutized views or discourses.

One of the central elements of conflict resolution is transforming intergroup relationships: without transforming conflictual and antagonistic relationships into harmonious and cooperative ones, we cannot achieve lasting peace. This transformation entails changing views of one’s own group as well as of other groups. In order to transform antagonistic relations into peaceful ones, currently predominant discourses or views that frame ideas of one’s own group as well as of opposing groups must be critiqued and transformed by group itself. Transforming negative relationships into positive ones requires dialogical relation between/among opposing groups to explore views that can be shared across groups. However, what must be stressed here is that in order to promote dialogical intergroup relationships, reflective self-critique within each group needs to be enhanced.

As Blackburn claims, people tend to shrug off or close their ears to criticism of their own views and believe that their values are essentially incommensurable and antithetical with those of others (1999). Once a certain discourse or view has been created and absolutized, it is prone to become a close circle and those who hold the
view can be primed to feel outraged by criticism or the questioning mind that casts a doubt upon the view (Blackburn, 1999), as a result which, transformation of one’s own view and promotion of constructive dialogical intergroup relationships is hampered. However, it is also clear that it is those who have got their minds conditioned with discourses or views prevalent in social/cultural groups themselves who can problematize and transform them. Therefore, individuals should be empowered to put a critical eye on their own groups’ dominant views that tend to be extremely self-centered and exclusive and individuals with unconditioned mind-state that makes them examine an insight into socially/culturally built views or discourses and realize an unreality to absolutize a particular view along with conditioned dimension of mind, can engage in a reflective self-awareness and critique of their own groups’ predominant views. Reflective self-awareness of our existing views or discourses can enable us to step back and to see our perspectives as distorted and consequently open the avenue to criticism (Blackburn, 1999), which can promote dialogical intergroup relations.

Thus, from the viewpoint of a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology, to resolve conflict and transform negative and antagonistic intergroup relationships into positive and harmonious ones, mind or mind-state beyond social/cultural frameworks needs to be explored. However, this is
not a dismissal of socially/culturally engaged mind: what is proposed is that if individuals’ minds remain within the socially/culturally conditioned frameworks, it is almost impossible to for them to critique and transform them into more non-violent and inclusive ones. What is needed to empower individuals to engage in self-critique and open themselves actively to different or formerly opposing groups is the achievement of holistic consciousness or mind. Holistic mind consists of socially/culturally engaged mind that is necessary to make sense of reality plus transcendental mind, represented by the unconditioned mind, that transcends the social/cultural framework of mind to critically reflect absolutized socially/culturally built views. Holistic mind denotes a realization that everything is related to everything else by virtue of inter-relational origination (Matsuo, 1981) and that it is unreal or contradictory to absolutize our own view as self-evident or independently right. As a consequence of realizing the interdependent nature of conceptual thought and the ultimate unreality of absolutizing our view, we can be conscientized with a potential of creative and synthetic construction of discourses or views with other groups to broaden our views and explore harmonious intergroup relationships. The achievement of holistic consciousness or mind that seeks to overcome an extreme egocentric view shows that self-transcendence is one of the crucial keys to conflict resolution and transformation of negative intergroup relationships. Here, self-transcendence is not ontological but epistemological: as conscious or unconscious absolutization of our
socially/culturally conditioned mind and subsequent fixation of the phenomenal world with certain views or attributes cause antagonistic intergroup relations, expanding our view of reality must be explored by revealing the unreality of absolutization and fixation of our existing thought or thought mode. When we realize this, we can open ourselves to criticism constructively and be creative and inclusive in constructing new views or discourses.

As conflict between/among groups is a collective phenomenon, intergroup or collective approach to resolution is crucial. However, unless individuals in each group are empowered to problematize thoughts or views that are prevalent in the group, collective violence cannot be addressed. The empowerment and qualitative enrichment of individuals in a group enable them to engage in self-critique and transform their thoughts, so that collective madness can be critiqued, sublimated and transformed into constructive dialogue.

6-3 Reconfiguring key elements of psychological and subjective dynamics of Western conflict resolution

In the previous section, the potential of individual agency in conflict resolution has been explored. By constructing a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology, we can establish a constructive view that
individual mind has both a socially/culturally-oriented nature and an unconditioned nature beyond social/cultural conditionedness and that they are not antithetical or incompatible. Further, individual agency with the unconditioned mind-state can engage in reflective self-critique of their own views or discourses on a deeper level and be open to more synthetic or inclusive views other groups.

Based on this enhancement of the potential of individual agency, in this section, key elements of psychological and subjective dynamics of Western conflict resolution will be reconfigured. As discussed in chapter 3, cultural dynamics in the construction of human consciousness, social identity dynamics, and a critical approach to social/cultural construction of human subjectivity have assumed important roles in Western conflict resolution. So, they will be re-examined from an individual deep psychological viewpoint.

6-3-1 Reconfiguring cultural analysis

As generally recognized, culture has been one of the crucial elements in contemporary conflict resolution. Culture is a system of shared understandings and symbols of reality that connect us mutually and provide us with implicit guidance on the way to express ourselves and to make meaning in our lives (LeBaron, 2003). Culture constitutes our worldviews that provide foundational ideas of the meanings of life and
give us ways to learn as well as reasoning to order what we know (LeBaron, 2005).

Further, culturally constructed worldviews are deeply embedded in our consciousness and frame our meaning-making and identities (LeBaron, 2003): culture plays a vital role in constructing our identity as it is forged through cultural groups and according to the cultural worldviews and patterns prevailing in those groups (Vayrynen, 2001). Thus, culture can be understood as what conditions our minds by forming our norms, values, worldviews and truths that are shared collectively, shaping our basic thought-mode in understanding reality.

While it is essential to establish a meaningful reality and construct identity, culture can also cause conflict or violence. Culture, by providing us with basic components to make sense of reality including ourselves, constitutes a core of our social identity. This close link between culture and social identity can be interpreted that cultural differences between/among groups come to be seen as a threat to each other (Francis, 2002) and they are prone to engage in conflict. From a cultural perspective, conflict can be considered as the struggle to impose one’s culturally established ideas of reality upon others, the central point of this struggle being whose culturally founded view of reality is taken seriously and appreciated (Vayrynen, 2001). Negative feelings such as hostility, anger, hatred or antagonism associated with conflict are awakened and exacerbated by cultural differences (Francis, 2002). Cultural difference, rather than
being a source or opportunity of enrichment of our own views, is a cause of mutual
alienation, misunderstanding or misinterpretation, which arouses hostility, affront and
antagonism (Francis, 2002) and can result in conflict or violence.

From a deep psychological perspective shown in this chapter, cultural difference itself
does not cause a sense of threat between/among distinct cultural groups. Rather, it can
be ascribed to a conscious or unconscious absolutization of and extreme attachment to
culturally conditioned mind. On this view, what should be highlighted in examining
cultural dynamics in conflict resolution is how culturally conditioned mind itself is
understood and treated. Since culture frames the way we think and behave, when our
minds become culturally conditioned, the way we think is prone to be fixated. In
conflictual situations, culturally conditioned mind is consciously or unconsciously
absolutized and clung to, in which identifying others having different cultural views
with negative or antagonistic characters or projecting negative or unacceptable parts
of ourselves upon them becomes cultural habit (LeBaron, 2005) resulting in
discriminatory attitudes or violence. Therefore, in order to resolve conflict, individual
members need to overcome their own deeply habituated practice of seeing other
cultural groups as inferior to their own (LeBaron, 2005). However, as in Western
cultural dynamics of conflict resolution, individual minds are confined mainly to
cultural conditionedness, how they can achieve what LeBaron suggests remains
unclear. So, empowerment of individual cultural members with the unconditioned state-of-mind allows them to engage in reflective self-awareness of their cultural dispositions and step outside their culturally habituated way of thought.

In order to address the projection of negative feelings or perceptions upon other groups, it is crucial for those who have different culturally conditioned minds to promote mutual understanding and explore values that can be shared across groups. In other words, a new understanding or view of reality that can be shared needs to be constructed to explore a form of cooperation to transform conflictual relationship into harmonious one (Vayrynen, 2001). In order to achieve this mutually cooperative and transformative process, it becomes essential to contemplate and accept the idea of thinking and doing differently if past cycles of violence and systems of inequality and disadvantages that have arisen from a conscious or unconscious absolutization of culturally constructed minds are to be broken (LeBaron, 2005).

On a deep psychological view, individuals can be empowered to be aware that they do not have to confine themselves to one particular cultural mode of thought to approach the phenomenal world. Individual members with unconditioned mind-state can take a detached attitude towards their own existing cultural discourses or views (as they know those discourses or views are not absolute) and problematize them to explore
shared views with other cultural groups. It is through deepening awareness of our own cultural starting points and boundaries by critiquing them that we can appreciate and absorb richer understandings of other cultures (LeBaron, 2003).

The process of being aware of our own cultural assumptions, understanding other culturally conditioned minds and absorbing other cultural views does not mean disregarding the culturally constructed self or completely abandoning our own cultural perspective (Broome, 1993). Rather, what should be stressed is that in resolving culturally caused conflict, it should be presupposed that human understanding is provisional, open to present and future change (Broome, 1993) and that one of the key factors to bridge cultural differences is creativity (LeBaron, 2003). Put differently, our horizons of understanding should not be confined to our own cultural dimensions: what should be conscientized in promoting inter-cultural communication to resolve conflict is that though it is indispensable, individual mind should not be confined to culturally conditioned state. Through the unconditioned side of their own minds, members of a cultural group can make a critical reflection on their own cultural views from a deeper perspective, which will be the first step towards constructive dialogue with other cultural groups.

Further, as LeBaron highlights, in order to address culturally-oriented conflict, cultural
members should be aware that culture is “neither a fixed entity nor an insurmountable
barrier” (2005: 18). Rather, it should be recognized as a process; and this idea of
culture as a process is crucial to resolve conflict and transform violent relationships
into peaceful ones. The unconditioned mind can be of help in making us aware of
culture as a process. The idea of culture as a process can be understood as being that
our way of thought is in constant change. When cultural members are conscientized of
an unconditioned side of mind, they come to know that they do not have to cling to a
particular view as fixed or permanent and obtain a non-abiding state. Consequently,
they can be empowered to engage in constant critique of existing cultural views or
values and exploration to create new views or visions of culture since they have come
to be aware that they do not have to confine themselves to certain cultural view as
unchanging or permanently true.

It is clear that the culturally conditioned mind and the unconditioned mind are not
antithetical or incompatible. When we simultaneously know the culturally conditioned
side and the unconditioned dimensions of our own minds, we can be make a room in
our minds to problematize and critique existing cultural views framing the way we
think and behave and to be open to other views to enrich our own culture. In short,
when we are conscious of the unconditioned nature of mind, we will be able to get our
minds culturally conditioned in qualitatively richer, more inclusive and synthetic
manner than ever before.

6-3-2 Re-examining Social identity

Social identity is the connection of the individuals’ knowledge of belonging to a certain social group and to the emotional and evaluated signification that arises from that belonging (Deschamps and Devos, 1998). As Jussim et al argue, social identity consists of two elements: “belief that one belongs to a group and the importance of that group membership to one’s self” (2001: 6). Identity is the way we demarcate and make sense of ourselves, which involves setting a boundary between what we are and what we are not, establishing the others and marking out their differences (Crossley, 2005). In typifying the world in terms of the division of the subject or “us” and others or “them”, social identity functions as a means to frame interactions by which differences and similarities are constructed and conceived (Jeong and Vayrynen, 1999). Thus a core of construction of social identity is a division between “us” and “them”, through which to define who we are.

Construction of identity is a subjective phenomenon. Although social identity is an existential matter, establishment of it is closely connected to our subjective condition or framework: the way we understand reality through certain conceptual thoughts or views plays the central role in creating our identity. A combination of myths,
memories, values and symbols (Kaufman, 2006a) or sociocultural discourses (Jussim et al, 2001) characterizes identity. These symbolic orders are in essence socially or culturally constructed, constitute a primary part of the practical consciousness of socially or culturally situated individuals (Jabri, 1996) and form our social identity. In short, social identity can be understood as the conditioned mind shaped by social or cultural conceptual thoughts. By consciously or unconsciously accepting having our minds conditioned by socially or culturally constructed norms, values, worldviews and truths, our social identity comes to be defined and secured.

One of the most important and generally recognized approaches in examining social identity and conflict dynamics is social identity theory that analyzes the psychological dynamism between/among different social identity groups. According to the theory, human cognition essentially requires us to differentiate our own social identity group positively from other groups (Hepburn, 2003). Deschamps and Devos argue that social identity theory is established upon two elements: cognition and motivation (1998). It is cognitive as the categorization process, in which we differentiate from others, come to overestimate intergroup differences and to underestimate ingroup differences and it is motivational as what drives differentiation and discrimination is the need for self-esteem or self-respect (1998). Accordingly, as Brewer and Gaertner aruge, there can be three generally seen features of intergroup schema: “assimilation within
category boundaries and contrast between categories such that all members of the ingroup are perceived to be more similar to the self than members of the outgroup; positive affect selectively generalized to fellow ingroup members but not outgroup members (the ingroup favouritism principle); and intergroup social comparison associated with perceived negative interdependence between ingroup and outgroup (the social competition principle)” (2003: 456). These characteristics demonstrate that there is a causal nexus between intergroup discrimination and promotion of self-esteem (Brown, 2001). As part of our self-esteem derives from the group to which belong, it is believed that making comparisons that favour and prioritize the ingroup over the outgroup and discrimination against them will lead to enhancement of our own social identity and self-esteem (Stephan and Stephan, 1996).

As perceived differences between the ingroup and the outgroup are exaggerated while ingroup differences are minimized, the multiple identities of individuals come to be dominated by one certain identity (Jabri, 1996), which results in establishing a firm boundary of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. Consequently, difference of social identity could be a cause of conflict (Black, 2003) as intergroup prejudice and hostility, which have arisen from homogenous view of the ingroup, exaggeration of difference of the outgroup and the ingroup favouritism over the outgroup to raise the ingroup’s identity, make us more likely to see other groups as threatening and have sense of
insecurity (Kaufman, 2001). Under these conditions, distorted views of other groups are prone to be maintained and discriminatory and unequal policies can be committed. These vicious or spiral cycles of mutual projection of negative feelings and discriminatory attitudes and policies make conflict protracted and intractable.

As Jabri argues, the way to resolve conflict that has been caused or made intractable by social identity is by achieving multiple identities of individuals (1996). Resolution of conflict caused or protracted by a fixation of social identity can be promoted by the critical analysis of narrowly defined identity and exploration of alternative possibilities which can disturb antagonistic inter-group identity (Jeong and Vayrynen, 1999). Jeong and Vayrynen claim that possibilities for transformation of identity lie in the fact that the boundaries of identity are not fixed and can be open to new meanings and perspectives and therefore overcoming the existing dichotomy between inclusiveness and exclusiveness defined in antagonistic terms can be within reach (1999). From a deep psychological viewpoint, approaching multiplicity of identity and constructing more inclusive identities to break through antagonistic discourses on identity requires individual members to transcend socially conditioned or restricted view of identity of their own and of opposing groups and here, empowerment of individual members with unconditioned nature can be of help to make them critically challenge their own identities that are essentially intersubjectively constructed.
As shown, from a deep psychological perspective, a core of social identity is the conditioned mind constituted by social or cultural conceptual thoughts and it can turn into a cause of conflict when it gets absolutized and clung to. Therefore, it can be argued that in order to critique and transform existing social identity or discourses on identity, individual minds tied down to a particular mind-state need to be transcended: to be critical and transformative in reconstructing social identity, individual mind-states beyond social restriction need to be made more deeply self-aware.

When the unconditioned nature is realized in addition to conditioned nature, individuals can attain a detached or non-abiding attitude towards their own existing social identities. As a result of knowing unconditioned nature, individuals are empowered to realize that existing social identities are not their own ultimate and unchanging nature. This detached and non-abiding state of mind can empower individual members to be more creative, inclusive and synthetic in thought as they have known that they do not have to confine themselves to one specific view or way of thought. This nature of unconditioned mind can help us promote multiplicity of identity. Since the nature of social identity is subjective, engaging in critical and transformative analysis of existing social identity requires us to be self-critical or self-reflective in terms of how our fixated view or thought can be broken to know our ways of thought are diverse or multiple. Put another way, when individuals are aware
that they do not have to be shackled to a particular view that shapes existing social identity, they can be empowered to construct diverse social identities as we know that their ways of thought are actually multiple. When individuals are aware that their unconditioned nature that empowers them to be reflectively self-critical of discourses or views of their own existing social identity on a deeper dimension, they can realize an unreality to absolutize their current identity and open themselves to exploring multiple identities that can be shared with formerly opposing groups.

6-3-3 Complementing critical epistemology

One of the most intellectually significant points of critical epistemology is its understanding of knowledge as a process not as a substance. Critical epistemology casts a critical eye on our taken-for-granted views on the real or phenomena including ourselves (Burr, 2003) as there is no fixed or unchanging relationship between signifiers and signified. Rather, the relationship is a contingent social or cultural convention that is in constant change (Baronov, 2004). Put differently, fluidity, unstableness or indeterminacy of socially or culturally constructed knowledge are emphasized (Gough and McFadden, 2001): construction of knowledge is never complete and is inevitably open to revision.

However, there are certain problems in critical epistemology itself in achieving its
own aim, that is, engaging in a constant critique of existing knowledge and making construction of knowledge an ever-lasting intellectual enterprise. Firstly, the generally agreed problem is the death of the subject where individual agency can be conceptualized only as the result of discourses in society and social structures, the implication of which is that the “individual person, either alone or collectively, has no capacity to bring about change” (Burr, 2003: 23). In other words, although critique and transformation of socially or culturally constructed knowledge is the core of critical epistemology, a qualitative empowerment of individual agency that is supposed to challenge and eventually change existing discourses and social structures has remained underdeveloped. Second, while it claims that existing discourses that have been constructed can be changed, critical epistemology tends to stop at the point of fear of reifying alternative constructions and consequently limits its action to deconstructing existing discourses without taking proactive efforts to construct new discourses or modes of thought (Burr, 1998). So, critical epistemology, while aiming at critiquing and transforming existing socially or culturally constructed discourses into new ones, has become bogged down into a mere scepticism and is forced to deny the possibility of proposing alternative systems of thought (Butler, 2002). In short, although some notion of a creative subjectivity should be presupposed to undertake a critique and transformation of existing knowledge (Torffing, 1999), as it has barely delved into the potential of individual mind, critical epistemology seems to have failed
to consummate its intellectual goal.

From an individual deep psychological viewpoint, a fatal problem or limitation of critical epistemology is that even if it insists that discourses on phenomena such as identities, social or even global structures are socially or culturally constructed, contingent and accordingly subject to critique and transformation, an actual critique and transformation would be highly difficult as long as individual agency in social/cultural group are tied to social/cultural conditionedness.

In order to problematize socially or culturally constructed conceptual thoughts or discourses, individuals in social/cultural group need to know that there is something wrong with them. However, if their minds remain conditioned in a socially or culturally deterministic way, it would be almost impossible to make a critical and transformative analysis of existing social or cultural views that condition their minds. Put another way, it is crucial for individual agencies to be able to access a transcendental mind-state that is beyond socially/culturally determined nature to step outside the socially/culturally constructed discourses or views and critique and transform them. Individuals with the unconditioned nature of their minds can penetrate into an ultimate unreality to absolutize any socially/culturally built views including existing one and engage in active deconstruction of socially constructed
discourses or views and exploration of alternative ones.

Proposing the unconditioned mind as the means to address potential limitations of critical epistemology does not purport to negate the spirit of critical epistemology, that is, challenging and transforming discourses or views that produce or constitute asymmetric relations in society. Instead, by establishing a complementary relationship between critical epistemology and the concept of unconditioned mind to overcome potential limitations or contradictions of critical epistemological understandings of individual agency, the spirit of critical epistemology becomes better placed to achieve its goal.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has been devoted to exploring an expansion of the framework of contemporary conflict resolution by constructing a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology. As a result of introducing Buddhist epistemology into socially-oriented Western conflict resolution and establishing their complementary relationship, our understanding of psychological dynamics of conflict and conflict resolution has been deepened and expanded.

Since conflict resolution is a complex and multi-faceted enterprise in line with what it
perceives to be the often complex and multi-faceted causes of conflict, it would be absurd to claim that an expansion of understanding of human mind made as a result of a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology is a panacea for all conflicts. However, it is also true that as long as conflict entails human beings, human subjectivity has a huge impact on conflict dynamics. Therefore, we need to keep deepening our view of human mind as psychological and subjective dynamics in conflict is complex and multi-faceted. This dissertation has argued the importance of broadening our view of human mind, which will be a steppingstone to the further development or evolution of the conflict resolution enterprise.

**Research Implications**

Although this chapter has been devoted to deepening and broadening psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict resolution through a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology, this research is far from comprehensive and has intellectual limitations, from which, though, we can explore implications for further research. The main theme of this dissertation has been an epistemological analysis of contemporary conflict resolution and exploring how the framework of contemporary conflict resolution enterprise can be broadened when Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology build a complementary
relationship. Establishment of a complementary relationship between them has led to the expansion of our understanding of human mind and enlarged the potential of individuals in resolving conflict and exploring positive and peaceful intergroup relations. However, from the perspectives of theory construction and introduction of practical methods to engage in actual conflict resolution, this dissertation is far from enough.

This chapter has shown a complementary relationship between Western epistemologies and Buddhist epistemology in expanding our view of human mind, in which the concepts of socially/culturally conditioned mind and the unconditioned mind have been proposed; critical analysis of the potential danger of the conditioned mind that has assumed the central role in Western conflict resolution has been made; and significance of the unconditioned mind has been explored. Further, following the proposition that our mind has both social/cultural conditioned nature and unconditioned nature beyond a social/cultural framework, key elements of psychological and subjective dynamics of contemporary conflict resolution – culture, social identity, and critical approach to social/cultural construction of human subjectivity – have been re-examined from the viewpoints of conditioned mind and unconditioned mind. However, it should be also acknowledged that how what has been discussed in this chapter can be applied to actual conflict resolution remains
unclear. On an epistemological level, Western conflict resolution and Buddhism can have a complementary relationship, which can lead to the expansion of our view of human mind and dynamics of conflict resolution, but, on more concrete theoretical and praxis levels, more elaboration must be made to give practical expression to what has been proposed in this chapter.

As demonstrated in the Chapters one, two and three, Western conflict resolution has advanced concrete theories and methods of conflict resolution, which has made an invaluable contribution to the development of the conflict resolution enterprise as a whole. Contrary to that, this dissertation has not yet done so. Therefore, what should be explored following this dissertation is an examination of what has been analyzed in this chapter in order to construct more practical theories and methods for conflict resolution. For instance, how psychological and subjective dynamics of contemporary conflict resolution in the Chapters one, two, and three can be reconfigured from the viewpoints of this chapter would be a good research agenda for the future conflict resolution endeavour. As shown, contact hypothesis and social identity theory/social categorization theory have assumed a central role in approaching intergroup relations. These theories can be re-examined by adding the ideas of the conditioned mind and the unconditioned mind. We might be able to reconfigure even reconciliation by analyzing it from the vista of two dimensions of mind.
One of the topics that have been underdeveloped in socially-oriented contemporary conflict resolution is how individual agency can engage in a qualitative self-reflexivity or critique in resolving conflict. The introduction of (individual) deep psychology provides an insight into social/cultural construction of views or discourses in terms of how it can be a root cause of conflict and how it can be addressed and empowers individual agency to make a reflective self-critique of his/her own views and discourses on a deeper and more profound level and achieve self-transformation. This does not mean to dismiss or impair social psychological approaches to understanding conflict dynamics and resolution. Rather, what must be highlighted here is that, by integrating social psychology into a broader and deeper spectrum of human psychology, new dimensions can be added to social psychology itself, which would enable us to analyze social psychological approaches to conflict resolution represented by contact hypothesis and social identity theory/social categorization theory from different angles.

There is one more point that should be discussed for the future peace research including conflict resolution. This dissertation has demonstrated that a complementary or synthetic relationship between different epistemological assumptions can enrich and broaden our understanding of conflict resolution, which allows us to add new prospects to the conflict resolution enterprise. As critically examined in the third
chapter, Western epistemologies, while having developed psychological and subjective dynamics, have confined the nature of human mind to social/cultural engagement or conditionedness, leaving an analysis of how individuals can critique and transform collectively construct views or discourses underdeveloped. Buddhist epistemology, on the other hand, critically examines how socially/culturally conditioned mind becomes a cause of trouble and how it can be tackled, which eventually seeks to achieve mind that transcends social/cultural condition. Further, it has been posited that socially/culturally-oriented mind and a transcendental mind are not antithetical or incompatible: rather, they are interdependent and when we realize both as nature of our mind, the psychological and subjective dynamics of conflict and conflict resolution become qualitatively richer and deeper. This is an example of how constructing a complementary relationship between different epistemologies can complement each other’s limitations or deficiencies they face in approaching the phenomenal world alone and this has an interesting implication for the future of peace research.

Those who engage in intellectual endeavour take a certain epistemological stance and construct a distinct view or discourse on the subject of which they make an analysis. Doubtless, this is a natural phenomenon in intellectual or academic enterprises. However, the discourse established on a particular epistemological viewpoint tends to
be intraparadigmatic and avoids engagement with alternative epistemological and theoretical formulations (Jarvis, 2000). This is not a dismissal of taking a certain epistemological stance itself. Rather, this dissertation posited that while having a particular epistemological perspective is important and advantageous, it can also restrict our scope of thought, narrow down our vision and fall into dogmatism. Therefore, what is proposed for the future peace research is that the potential merit of opening ourselves to appreciating different or opposing epistemologies and exploring a complementary or synthetic relationship with them to create new views should be actively examined.

As this research has shown, each epistemological assumption has weaknesses or limitations as well as strengths and advantages in approaching the phenomenal world. We should engage in reflective self-awareness and critique of our own epistemological viewpoint with regard to its possible limitations. Once we have established an epistemological foundation and concepts and views to examine the phenomenal world, we are prone to be unaware of them. They become our habit. However, as Blackburn asserts, human beings are “relentlessly capable of reflecting on themselves” (1999: 4). Reflective self-awareness and critique of our own normally unnoticed or tacit epistemological assumption and theories and practical methods built on it and transcending an attachment to a particular epistemological viewpoint as a result of
reflective self-critique will allow us to be creative to explore complementary or synthetic relationship between different epistemologies and create new views or theoretical perspectives. Promotion of proactive inter-epistemological dialogue along with reflective self-critique of our epistemological standpoint will have a positive impact on conflict resolution in the context of this dissertation but also on peace research in general in the long run.

Exploring new epistemological views by constructing a complementary or interdependent relationship between different or seemingly opposing epistemological assumptions might be seen as a utopian idealism. However, as Thompson asserts, “each generation of philosophers has examined established ideas, and by showing their limitations, has been able to formulate new ones” (2000: 9), which must be true with intellectual or academic endeavour as a whole including peace research. Critical self-examinations are an essential part of any disciplinary or intellectual enterprise (Jarvis, 2000): by putting a critical eye on existing and prevailing assumptions in intellectual or academic enterprise, we should seek to address problems facing us with fresh views. No one knows what will happen to the future intellectual enterprise: or, rather, we need to construct the direction of it. When we see ourselves through critical self-reflection, we can attain control over the direction in which we would wish to move to make a better world (Blackburn, 1999). As Jarvis states, intellectual
innovations are always controversial and the seeding of new ideas is always derided as unrealistic or untimely, but it requires time to germinate and grow and mature (2000). As long as a critical attitude towards status quo is the fundamental and foundational spirit of peace research, critical and transformative endeavour to create new theories and approaches to praxis will never be exhausted
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