

2 (Re)search Methodology

Empiricist and rationalist methods function as a defence against anxiety. [...]

No, my point is not that this method is incorrect. Rather, I am arguing that method is a way of making some things count while discounting other things.

(Romanyshyn, 2007:208,212).

With the desire to find out, what transrational peace research entails, I conducted an analysis of fellow peace researchers that refer to transrational peace concepts in their work.⁴ Although Kathleen McGoey (2013) recently published a beautiful and brave example of transpersonal research, there are no other published accounts that suggest methods for transrational knowledge seeking strategies. Such methods however have been the topic of discussions as well as teachings not only in the realms of the *Innsbruck School of Peace* but also while I was at the *University for Peace* in Costa Rica. It was during the analysis, that I (re)-remembered (and yet it seems for the first time (re)-realized) that there is no such thing as a transrational peace research methodology when it comes to academic research and writing.⁵ However, I consider the discussion on research methods as a vital aspect missing from the *Transrational Peace Philosophy* as taught at the Innsbruck School of Peace.

Given that the *Transrational Peace Philosophy* is a relatively new approach to contemporary peace studies, the absence might not come as a surprise. Nevertheless, behind the apparent lack is a conscious reason for the absence of prescriptive suggestions. Dietrich, in his second volume of the *Many Peaces Series*, *Elicitive Conflict Transformation and the Transrational Shift in Peace Politics* (2011, 2013) provides a comprehensive explanation on, as well as examples of elicitive conflict transformation methods. His wonderful book theoretically captures the practice behind the *Transrational Peace Philosophy*. Dietrich further shows, that awareness towards transrationality is emerging on a global scale when it comes to response to conflict (diplomacy, military peace operations, aid politics as well as in socio-economical spheres) and peace studies (topics that

4 See: Dietrich 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013; McGoey, 2013, Vallejo Piedrahita, 2012, Dueck 2012, Lozano Mancera, 2012, Bukuluki 2011, Ditzel Facci, 2011, Buchleitner, 2010, Kumar 2010.

5 To explain myself further, I (re)-remembered and (re)-realized because I knew before, we talked about this during my time as a student in Innsbruck but I had forgotten to an extent that when I rediscovered a wave of excitement soaked me in with the intuition that it is important to write about a transrational approach to research within peace studies.

concern healing, trust, awareness and consciousness). Nonetheless, he does not give a research paradigm or methodology on how to seek or understand knowledge in a transrational manner when it comes to academic writing and enquiry. Dietrich deliberately refrains from suggesting a methodology because transrational peace research is an elicitive rather than a prescriptive practice (Dietrich, 2013, Lederach, 1996). Therefore, there is no such thing as a toolkit or method catalogue on how to conduct research. Methods for elicitive conflict transformation are defined situationally and can come in various forms and shapes (Dietrich, 2011:386). This ultimately means not relying on a fixed set of rules or a prescriptive methodology.

However, I want to understand how the *Transrational Peace Philosophy* can shape as much as inspire research. Merging my product design education and peace studies background, I designed my own research methodology that shall guide me through my research process. Thus, I will be adapting the elicitive approach and exploring how a transrational approach to knowledge seeking might look. I will continue to outline why I find it important to explore transrational research methods and towards the end, I introduce the tools that will act as structured elements for my research frame.

2.1 Why Transrational Peace Research?

Nations are losing the ability to hear each other's heartbeats. Many international negotiations break down because they are built on mutual accusations instead of mutual confessions.

(Yevgeny Yevtushenko, 1991:365).

Pained by the occasional attacks, suicide bombing, and kidnappings in Kabul as much the heartbreaking social isolations I experienced in Germany, I am searching for opportunities to actively support the transformation of human relations. I am especially interested in living artfully and how we can incorporate this style of living not only in the private spheres of the personal social surroundings but also in public domains such as in academia. Transrational Peace Research appears to be a suitable method for me because it provides me with the opportunity to integrate rational, emotional, cognitive and spiritual awareness in my (re)-search. Merging those elements in my opinion becomes a key component of this methodology and a way forward for Peace Studies research.

Much of the destruction and harm we inflict upon each other occurs out of unawareness and banality (Arendt, 2012), or what philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt (2012) provocative called the *banality of evil*. Arendt's observations, at times controversial, are built on the Israeli trial and execution of

the German National Socialist administrator Adolf Eichmann, who organised the transports to the concentration camps during the Second World War. She maintains that neither fanatics nor sociopaths executed humanity's greatest evils, nor, in this particular case, the Holocaust. Instead she puts forward that in fact ordinary people, accepting the premises of their ruling powers, participated in a banal manner, seeing the execution of evil or any other inhumane actions towards Otherness as normal. Like many before me, I read her work as telling us that the *banality of evil* is in all of us and in all of our bureaucratic systems.

I am alerted by Arendt's words and they inspire me to keep on looking, to keep on thinking and to keep on feeling for myself. This alerted stage inspires me to search for methods that assist me in opening the flow of freethinking. Certainly it could be argued if thinking is ever truly free but I do not intend to open this philosophical debate now. For now, in a time when we fight wars and do business in a way that dehumanizes fellow human beings because of their social-political background, caste, ethnicity or general Otherness, I find it necessary to find ways that improve the way we accumulate and value knowledge. Practicing my self-awareness through reading and writing has been healing for me. I have been more imperialistic than I had imagined, was more deeply touched by the helper syndrome than I like to admit and confronted the shadow side of development aid work right in the face. Inspired by the experiences, I have dared the process of writing this book as an intellectual journey to find out more about myself, which I see as one key element in becoming a peace and conflict worker.

What I see as the ontology of transrational peace research (which I explain in more detail in the following chapters) seem to fit most closely with my current cosmovision that assumes that, firstly, we live in a state of flux, secondly, that the human subject is a contact boundary at work, and finally, that not even this assumption is not totally certain.

There is such a multitude truths and ways of perceiving *Dasein* on this earth. Those truths of perception come and go, dissolve and burst when coming in contact with each other and, for me, Transrational Peace Research is the most appropriate method to mirror this understanding of the world. John Paul Lederach writes:

In the process of professionalization we too often have lost a sense of the art, the creative act that underpins the birth and growth of personal and social change. I fear we see ourselves to be – and have therefore become – more technicians than artists.

(Lederach, 2005:73)

I was close to becoming a technician of peace building by screwing around with best practice guides, empirical evidence and a blown-up ego. Luckily I read *The*

Moral Imagination (Lederach, 2005) and remembered my heart and soul. Inspired by his call of “listening to the deeper inner voice” (Lederach, 2005:176) I find it necessary to provide alternative methods for the practice of accumulating knowledge. Like Romanyshyn (2007) above, by no means do I intend to say that objective methods are incorrect. I can see their usefulness at certain times in certain contexts but find it necessary to provide alternatives. With that in mind, I will “start close to home” as Dietrich (2011:383) says and explore my inner space in order to learn about my patterns and neuroses. This is a much needed practice for peace and conflict workers as it helps to disentangle the inner space and in turn allows room to support others in their processes (Dietrich, 2013).

A further reason, on why I find transrational peace research a timely and important method is well reflected by methodologists Anderson and Braud who, fittingly recommend:

that all people world wide become perfectly themselves in their own time and space. No people or group need to imitate another. Now is the time to understand that our diversity and otherness is an asset and not a liability to global conviviality and peace. As a species, ultimately, we cannot survive without our diversity.

(2011:304)

Triggered by my past experiences of dehumanizing otherness and inspired by the above suggestion I choose to conduct transrational peace research, with the hope of coming closer to my self and adding my voice to our global diversity. In the following chapter, I propose a potential transrational peace research epistemology. Not with the aim to present prescriptive procedures but with the hope to inspire more endeavours into the realms of transrational peace research.

2.2 A Definition of Transrational Peace Research

The secret... is to regard... intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heart of flaming imagination.

(Maria Montessori in Anderson & Braud, 2011:15).

Inspired by Norbert Koppensteiner’s seminar lectures on *Transrational Interpretations of Peace* during January 2011 in Innsbruck, as well as by the curiosity of my UPEACE neighbours in Costa Rica, I ventured to gather information on what I understood a transrational approach to knowledge seeking to be. This is slightly confusing because the theory can be explained under the label transrational peace philosophy whereas the practice that puts that same philosophy into action is named elicitive conflict transformation (Innsbruck School of Peace Studies, 2014).

I have attempt to fuse the philosophy with an action plan for my upcoming research and take the term ‘transrational’ from Wolfgang Dietrich’s (2012) interpretations of peace in history and culture. He uses the word to define transrational peace concepts, which as he understands it, is a way of going beyond the limits of modernity and postmodernity by recombining the rational (modern) element with the energetic aspect of peace. The Innsbruck school differentiates between five so-called ‘families of peace(s)’ where perceptions of peace understandings can be categorised. This is not the space to go into a more detailed description but for further explanation on energetic, moral, modern, postmodern and transrational interpretations of peace please refer to Dietrich (1998, 2011, 2012, 2013).

Although Dietrich is not the first to introduce the prefix *trans* into the realm of peace studies, Dietrich is the predecessor of the transrational interpretations as introduced here in my text.⁶ When introducing the terrain that opens up after the twisting of modern and postmodern peaces, Dietrich clarifies that modernity’s rationality, as well as energetic spirituality are preserved within the transrational interpretation of peace. With the aspiration to reintegrate the cosmic dimension and to neutralize reason’s monological aggressiveness, transrationality is embedded in the larger concept of peace, beyond reasons’ ultimate validity (Dietrich, 2012). This means that while acknowledging the rational aspects of modern science, transrationality can transcend this construct to incorporate emotional, cognitive and spiritual human experiences that cannot be explained purely by logic (Dietrich, 2013).

Born in the postmodern counterculture, the transrational approach has grown up with *unmodern* influences from India’s philosophical and spiritual traditions as well as within the field of psychology (Walch 2009, Dietrich 2012).⁷ Jiddu Krishnamurti is one of the several key figures from India that influenced Western thinking and consequently the study of peace.⁸ Krishnamurti profoundly criticised any form of religion and state institution and instead urged people to be their own guide. To look at ourselves and to face our self rather then rely on wisdom of churches, spiritual leaders, books or institutions was one of his core teachings.

6 Johan Galtung and Dumiko Nishimura seemed to have introduced the word *trans* to the realm of peace studies when they founded TRANSCEND, A Peace Development Environment Network in 1993. (Transcend International, 2013).

7 The term *unmodern* here describes influences that can neither be clarified as modern nor postmodern because they have not gone through the European mind-set. This might sound disrespectful in a non-European setting but it is not intended so. Rather this is based on the idea of the European enlightenment (Kors, 2003) that aimed to reform the way of thinking, using reason and scientific methods to completely rule out any kind of superstition or any unreasonable events.

8 Dietrich (2011) also introduces Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Dalai Lama as well as Osho and discusses their influence on peace studies. I choose to focus only on Krishnamurti because he seems most appropriate to explain my thoughts.

Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or to coerce people along any particular path. If you first understand that, then you will see how impossible it is to organize a belief. A belief is purely an individual matter, and you cannot and must not organize it. If you do, it becomes dead, crystallized; it becomes a creed, a sect, a religion, to be imposed on others. This is what everyone throughout the world is attempting to do. Truth is narrowed down and made a plaything for those who are weak, for those who are only momentarily discontented.

(Krishnamurti, 1929)

In order to be able to work elicitively, a peace worker needs to know her or himself (Dietrich, 2013). Looking at ourselves thus becomes a key element in understanding transrational research. We destroy beings because we do not know ourselves, stresses Krishnamurti (1929). Religion and (state) institutions, he argues, are mechanisms of control with fear (ibid). In a fear driven institutional environment, labels sadly become more relevant than actual states of affections, love and kindness (in Dietrich 2012).

Apart from investigating oneself, the awareness that everything is connected in a pulsating and expanding network of relations is another key aspect of transrational research that determines the research approach. Connectivity influences the planning, the process and the outcome. Inspired by Fritjof Capra (2002), ‘hidden connections’ in the realm of biological, cognitive and social dimensions are stitched into the larger fabric of methodology to form a depth inquiry into the unknown. Having established what transrational refers to, I will now outline the word transpersonal because both terms are intertwined and inform each other.

Etymologically speaking, the transpersonal comes from the Latin words *trans*, which means beyond/across/through and the Latin word *persona*, which indicates a mask or façade (Dietrich, 2012). Transpersonal in other words means “beyond, across or through the personally identified aspects of self” (Anderson and Braud 2011:8). Subsequently, I have to inquire on how to conduct research which not only goes beyond, cross or through that which I already know, but uses this path to understand what I know.

There is no such thing as a golden rule that defines transpersonal research; in fact its strength is the open ended and fluid approach to understanding and seeking of knowledge. This allows and even urges each researcher to develop her/his own tools. As professor of clinical psychology Kaisa Puhakka in relation to transpersonal psychology states: “The best way to guard against [mistaking egoistic functioning for something beyond it] and to ensure the continued vitality of inquiry in Transpersonal Psychology is to consider its theories, methods and definitions ... as provisional and open-ended” (cited in Anderson and Braud 2011:9).

A fluid transpersonal approach to research by no means equals a lazy or negligent attempt to accumulate knowledge. The point of it is that the “researcher is an embodied presence who brings to the work the fullness of who she or he is and who carries the work as more than a matter of mind” (Romanyshyn, 2007:99).⁹ I see this embodiment as a timeless companion on my journey as a travelling nomad and peace researcher. However for the purposes of a research project such as this book, the awareness towards that embodiment grows stronger and more precise for a set amount of time. Peace builder and researcher John Paul Lederach expresses the personal exploration to accumulating knowledge in the context of training and education. In his book, *The Moral Imagination* he suggests,

that education and training are incomplete in any of the fields related to social change if they do not build early and continually the space to explore the meaning of things, the horizon towards which to journey, and the nature of the journey itself. The quest is one that must take seriously the process of listening to the deep inner voice, a spiritual and deeply human exploration that should not be relegated to occasional conversations among friends, or worse, to the couches of therapy when professional life crises emerge. This is the heart, the art and soul of who we are in the world, and it cannot be disconnected from what we do in the world.

(Lederach, 2005:176)

From a modern perspective, the transrational approach to research might appear New Age, esoteric or unscientific. However, I find that the exclusion of the personal from mainstream science resembles an image of reality that has been shattered, by scientific methods as well as through accounts of human experiences as part of the human growth and potential movement research (Grof, 2006).

The paradigm-breaking observations detected by consciousness research and transpersonal psychology show that it is impossible to ban evident qualities of human experiences from core areas of research (Dietrich, 2006 and Grof, 2006). The new data collected by quantum physics as well as transpersonal psychology might be challenging at times, for instance, the discovery that there is no impartiality, and that consciousness is not a product of the brain or limited by its conceptual capacities but it can also sit in other body parts (Grof, 2006). Psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof, one of the founders of transpersonal psychology and researcher into the realms of non-ordinary states of consciousness writes: “consciousness is seen as an integral part of the universal fabric, certainly not limited to the activities contained inside our skulls” (1993:19). Disregarding scientific

9 Here I borrow Romanyshyn’s word, which he uses to express the interconnectedness of the researcher and her or his work. In his book *The Wounded Researcher*, he re-imagines depth psychology as research praxis to reunite soul work and academic research. Romanyshyn argues, that the split between the two lames both disciplines and suggest ways to reunite both fields.

data that tells us that we exist of unceasing transforming energy resembles scientific tendencies that mirror a similar fanaticism to religious fundamentalists (Grof, 2006).

I am of the opinion that science needs to rethink its methodological boundaries and look towards emerging horizons otherwise it will outdate itself. The exciting news is that this is happening. From all walks of life a growing global awareness, or what generalist and pathfinder Ken Wilber (2000) calls *global consciousness* is emerging. This is an awareness that calls for a paradigm shift and individual action on how we see and interpret the world. In times where the Internet and TV resemble global campfires, allowing the sharing and connecting of stories, the impact our actions are having on a global sphere become increasingly apparent.¹⁰ ‘Think globally — act locally’ initiatives and advocates such as *Economy of Happiness* (Norberg-Hodge, 2013) and *Transition Town* (Hopkins, 2008) but also communal living experiments such as *Tamera* (Duhm, 2007) are emerging, and not only in the so called Western part of this globe.

From a research approach this means that collective attributes, feelings and memories move back into the sphere of research. The researcher needs to define her/his own perspectives as well as boundaries and argue for or against them. Before I continue and because of the inherent scepticism I am confronted with when mentioning transrational peace concepts, I feel inclined to mention that the transrational peace philosophy does not suggest being the new answer to solve world problems. On the contrary, I see it as an attempt to act with the understanding that world’s problems cannot be solved! Instead, what is possible from a transrational interpretation is, a transformation of concrete problems. This will never lead to a worldwide conflict-free peace but a diversity of peacees that include conflicting tendencies, which also find their space in research projects.

To explain further, the transrational approach is a framework of thinking and embodied living that borrows from humanistic and transpersonal psychology, quantum physics and system theories, deep ecology and the Gaia hypothesis as much as from different Eastern and Western spiritual practices. Within the transrational, a variety of the above perspectives are reflected upon, which are seen as overlapping. By integrating transpersonal dimensions, the transrational frame adds a diversion and opens space for the acceptances of non-rational measures of perception. In other words, my rationality is not seen as depraved, but mind’s limits are acknowledged and other modes of perceiving such as from the heart, intuition and transrational intelligence are acknowledged to the same extent.

I see intuition, intention, transpersonal dimensions, the human spirit or soul and connectivity between everything as the key chorus in transrational peace

10 This is not the space to discuss the control of those networks but it is important to consider who has the power to shape the agenda of what is shared; where, when and how.

research. In Dietrich's words: "Interaction of the individual aspect beyond the exterior and beyond the rational is the topic of transrational peace research" (2012:257). Transrational peace research thus acknowledges spirituality but not in an esoteric, moral, religious or romantic way. Transrational peace research is rather concerned with recognising spirituality as a conscious knowledge inseparable from human life such as from social, business, economic, cultural and political spheres. Dietrich, who actively optimises the state of the art in the field of elicitive methods to conflict transformation builds, among other theories, on system theory. In order to raise awareness towards relational and situational dependencies in context to applied peace work, he notes the following:

According to general system theory: complexity, dynamic exchange, interactions, and self-organisations are inherent properties of systems, and they must therefore be expected to surface in conflict work. Accordingly, elicitive conflict transformation does not work towards predetermined goals, but instead brings workers into the exchanges and interactions. In the process, the available choices increase, while the self-organization of the system remains intact.

(Dietrich, 2013:226)

As part of my methodology I take Dietrich's above explanation to elicitive conflict transformation that suggests applied means and adapt it to research. Even though there is no fixed methodology for a transrational peace research approach, I think there are certain characteristics, such as the above-mentioned key words: intuition, intention, transpersonal dimensions, spirit and connectivity, which can guide a transrational methodology. When designing a transrational peace research system those aspects become the sources of the endeavour and at least some of them need to be woven into the method. Before I introduce the method tools that I am using for this piece of work, I would like to highlight a summary of what I see transrational peace research to be.

- Transrational peace research is grounded in the human experience of the researcher who needs to open up to share internal processes.
- Transrational peace research becomes a process that resembles a perpetual interplay of inner and outer influences.
- Transpersonal research encourages the researcher to reflect on personal behavioural patterns, deconstruct psychological schemas as well as dares to challenge existing cosmovisions.
- Transrational peace research interconnects ageless wisdom and the latest knowledge in academia.
- Transrational peace research includes rational, physical, and psychological as well as spiritual domains of awareness.

- Transrational peace research not only informs but also transforms the writer as much as the reader of the research subject.
- Transrational peace research is interested in exploring and recognising transpersonal aspects on different research topics.
- Transrational peace research encourages knowledge-seeking tools that access altered stages of consciousness and multiple modes of knowing such as dreams but also breath, voice and movement orientated approaches.
- Transrational peace research is a deep and holistic process that can be referred to as a vocation on the work of the self.

In that regard, Wolfgang Dietrich's (2011) argumentation of embodying situated knowledge as a call to take responsibility for my own truth claims. This I consider as inherent to the practice and research of peace work in the twenty-first century. In order to 'walk the talk,' I position myself as the peace worker as well as researcher within my work. In the spirit of Dietrich (2011:383) to "avoid idealistic projections into far away lived realities of others," I, too, see the future of peace work in a knowledge making that is situational and not universally applicable. With the intention to find alternatives to the current dominant narrative that sees a peace worker as a practitioner with prescriptive intervention techniques, I am searching for something that suits me better. With the intention to portray this, it is indeed possible to include transrational aspects in academia; I will continue to explore tools that I provide as a frame to validate this work. For inspiration on how to conduct a research project that helps me to understand who I am as a peace worker and that guides me through my process to find answers to my research question, I turned to depth psychology (Romanyshyn, 2007) and transpersonal psychology (Anderson and Braud, 1998, 2011). Anderson's and Braud's pioneering work on transpersonal research inquiry is not just inspiration for my methodology. Their work also influenced the way I decided to take the journey as the researcher. I wanted to experiment how I could possibly cultivate the 'ways of the heart' rather than, what I am accustomed to by my linear and analytical left-brain attributes.¹¹ Instead of disrespecting my rationalism with polemic aggression, I seek to recognise its qualities and balance the structure with flexibility, the thinking with feeling, the exterior with interior.¹² With the intention to research from the outlined transrational approach I thus turn to what I call: 'autobiographical embodied writing' and 'flow inquiry' as research tools. Those two tools I will now introduce below.

11 They way of the heart refers to accepting alternative methods of cultivating knowledge. Details matter, secrets matter, and the ordinary is extraordinary while the practical is favoured such as in intuitive inquiry (Anderson and Braud 2011).

12 See Dorit Netzer in Anderson and Braud, 2011.

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