



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

THREE APPROACHES TO PEACE

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exploring varieties of peace**

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VARIETIES OF PEACE

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Abstract

For decades, peace and conflict studies have devoted more attention to conflict than to peace, and despite its centrality, peace itself has been under-conceptualized. In this paper, we propose a theoretical framework and methodologies to make peace beyond the absence of war researchable. The framework is designed to capture varieties of peace between and beyond dichotomous conceptions of positive versus negative peace, or successful versus failed peace processes. To capture the complexity of peace in its empirical diversity, our framework approaches peace in three different ways: as a situation or condition in a particular locality; as a web of relationships; and as ideas or discourses about what peace is or should be. These approaches provide different avenues for researching peace, and taken together they provide a fuller picture of what peace is, how it is manifested, experienced, and understood. We argue that this framework provides a way forward in advancing conceptual understandings and empirical analyses of peace that can facilitate systematic, comparative, qualitative analyses while at the same time accounting for the complex, multifaceted nature of peace.

Keywords: peace; post-war; qualitative research; case studies

Introduction

The meaning of peace beyond the absence of war is not well understood or conceptualized (Davenport et al. 2018; Höglund and Söderberg Kovacs 2010; Diehl 2016; Regan 2014). Peace is a fluid concept, associated with all sorts of laudable goals and embedded in visions of a good society, but the specific meaning of peace, or its constituent components, is rarely analytically clear. Indeed, peace and conflict studies have tended to devote more attention to conflict than to peace, and peace has long been grossly under-conceptualized (Gleditsch et al. 2014; Mac Ginty 2006). Ever since Galtung introduced the distinction between negative and positive peace to peace and conflict studies, these have constituted the two basic categories of peace employed in the field (Galtung 1969). However, over the past several years the need for a more nuanced conceptualization of peace, that can capture the many real-world situations that exist between the ideal-typical negative and positive peace categories, has been increasingly recognized and debated (Wallensteen 2015; Davenport et al. 2018).

In this paper, we propose a theoretical framework and methodologies to make peace beyond the absence of war researchable. This framework is designed to capture varieties of peace between and beyond dichotomous conceptions of positive versus negative peace, or successful versus failed peace processes. Clearly, empirical cases of post-war peace are often placed somewhere in between these categories, and these two dichotomies do not provide adequate ground for identifying different variations or types of peace.

For instance, the peace in Sri Lanka is evidently different from the peace in Bosnia Hercegovina or the peace in Namibia, but existing conceptualizations of peace do not provide analytical tools for systematically comparing these varieties of peace. Thus, our framework is not aimed at articulating a single, intermediate definition of peace, but to develop approaches that can identify, characterize and theorize the multiple, diverse forms of peace that can be empirically observed in post-war societies.

In developing our framework, our point of departure is a general conception of peace as a complex, dynamic process of becoming rather than an end state. Thus, a comprehensive analytical framework needs to be able to capture multifaceted aspects of peace as well as dynamics of change. Like Firchow and Mac Ginty, we argue that the complex phenomenon of peace is “unlikely to be rendered accurately through a single methodological, ontological, and epistemological lens” (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2017, p. 23). Therefore, we propose a framework that approaches peace in three different ways: as a situation or condition in a particular locality; as a web of relationships; and as ideas or discourses about what peace is or should be. These approaches provide different avenues for researching peace, and taken together they provide a fuller picture of what peace is, how it is manifested, experienced, understood and by consequence, how it can be analyzed. We argue that this framework provides a way forward in advancing conceptual understandings and empirical analyses of peace that can facilitate systematic, comparative work while at the same time accounting for the complex, multifaceted nature of peace.¹

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First, we provide an overview over previous conceptualizations of peace and associated research. Thereafter we turn to a comprehensive description of the three approaches to peace that make up our framework, and give examples of how these approaches can be applied in qualitative case studies. The framework serves as a conceptual point of departure for sorting different peace concepts related to debates in the current literature, and helps to facilitate future comparisons and synthesis across cases. Importantly, the framework also outlines how empirical work can be pursued within each approach, thus providing much needed tools for empirically grounded work on peace. To conclude, we discuss how the three approaches together can provide a more comprehensive, multifaceted understanding of varieties of peace, thereby significantly advancing the field of peace studies.

Previous conceptualizations of peace: peace with adjectives

Our endeavor is, of course, not the first attempt to theorize the concept of peace. There have been numerous attempts to define what peace is and can be, in a more or less systematic manner. Roughly, they can be divided in four different categories, plus a few assorted definitions and concepts. These are a) definitions of peace based on notions of what peace is linked to and caused by; b) ideal types that attempt to capture the character and quality of peace; c) definitions of peace aiming to capture different understandings of peace; and d) a few attempts to conceptualize and/or operationalize peace as a scale, index or a typology, for the purpose of either measurement or systematic comparison.

First, the concept of peace has been closely connected to other societal phenomena presumably causing peace. Examples of such definitions are *democratic* peace (see e.g. Doyle 1983, 1986; Maoz and Russett

¹ The paper presents a tentative joint framework for the Varieties of Peace research program, financed by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (The Swedish Foundation for the Social Sciences and Humanities), project number M16-0297:1. While the framework is generic, the scope of the research program is limited to The Varieties of Peace program focuses on cases where peace processes were initiated during the 1990s, aiming to analyze and learn from long-term processes in order to improve our understanding of how peace in the aftermath of war varies. However, the framework is intended to be applicable beyond this specific population of cases.

1993; De Mesquita et al. 1999), *liberal* peace, *institutional* peace, *constitutional* peace (see e.g. Pospieszna and Schneider 2013; Richmond 2006), *capitalist* peace (see e.g. Gartzke 2007; Choi 2011; Schneider 2017) and *republican* peace (see e.g. Hölzing 2009; Barnett 2006). The starting point of all these definitions is that peace occurs in contexts where people are free to make their own choices and able to settle their differences in a non-violent manner. Whether it is the electoral system, state institutions, free markets or the form of government – these definitions start from a causal relationship between peace and something else, thus implicitly or explicitly outlining what needs to be in place in order for peace to exist. This huge field of research is mostly centered on questions of correlation, proving and disproving significance of different conditions for peace; and causation, theoretical discussions on mechanisms how for example democracy, capitalism or liberalism lead to peace. However, the contribution of this field to our understanding of observed differences when studying peace, especially in different post-war contexts, is rather limited. To the contrary, the notions of democratic and/or liberal peace have sometimes made it more difficult to capture intricate nuances of peace by overemphasizing internationally accepted norms to the detriment of local and culturally specific understandings of peace. In addition, the concepts are commonly conflated with each-other and used interchangeably to mean the same or very similar things (Johansson and Saati 2019).

Second, there are several concepts aiming to define different ideal types of peace focusing either on the character or on the quality of peace. Most take their starting point in Galtung's definitions of *negative* and *positive* peace, meaning absence of direct violence or absence of structural violence and aim to further specify what a "good peace" or "less than good peace" might mean (Galtung 1996). Thus, we have *quality* peace (Wallensteen 2015), *just* peace (Aggestam and Björkdahl 2013), *elusive* peace (Zartman 1995), *conditional* peace (George et al. 2000), *cold* peace (see e.g. Sakwa 2013; Aran and Ginat 2014), *precarious* peace (see e.g. George et al. 2000; Nilsson 2006), *victor's* peace (Richmond 2006), *imposed* peace (Turner and Kühn 2015), and many more (see e.g. Umoh and Udoh 2011, p. 2; Diehl 2016). Most of these conceptualizations can be sorted as either variations of positive or variation of negative conceptualization of peace (Umoh and Udoh 2011, p. 2). Furthermore, there have been attempts to structure *peace with adjectives* definitions on a positive-negative peace scale (Klein et al. 2008). While they all contribute to our understanding of what peace is and might be in a particular case or even a group of cases, they are stand-alone concepts that do not relate to one another in a way that would enable a coherent and systematic study of variety. At best, these concepts can have an either/or dichotomous relationship, but still cannot capture the nuances in observed differences across space and time, making them useful for studies of particular cases, but not for comprehensive comparative studies of peace.

Third, researchers have tried to re-conceptualize peace in attempts to critique the notions of liberal peace and liberal peacebuilding by including local aspects and cultural diversity in studies of post-war peace. Most notably, the concept of *hybrid* peace was introduced to juxtapose international and local/indigenous perceptions of peace (Mac Ginty 2010; Richmond and Mitchell 2012). *Agonistic* peace can also be considered a part of this school of thinking (Shinko 2008), as well as Dietrich's typology of understandings of peace as either *energetic*, *moral*, *modern*, *post-modern* or *trans-rational*, arguing for a culturally pluralistic understanding of peace (Dietrich and Sützl 2006). All these conceptualizations point to the need to broaden the understanding of peace as something complex, cultural, and context-dependent. Yet, once again, systematic comparative studies of peace are not much helped by these definitions. They are useful as they deepen the understanding of what peace is and might be in some cases, yet less suitable for efforts at capturing variety.

Fourth, there are few notable examples of more complex conceptualizations of peace for the purpose of capturing variety and/or the purpose of measuring the quality of peace. First, there is the Global Peace Index, a set of indicators aiming to measure the quality of peace around the world. While not a definition of peace in itself and not a ‘peace with an adjective’, the GPI defines peace as the level of security, extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict and degree of militarization, thus measuring the “peacefulness” of countries. However, this index includes a range of indicators that come close to capturing everything that could be said to characterize a good society (such as low levels of incarceration and corruption) rather than defining what is specific about peace in contrast to other laudable goals such as democracy and development.

Another, more conceptually advanced endeavor is the *peace continuum* developed by Davenport, Melander and Regan (Davenport et al. 2018). In this understanding, peacefulness and peace can also be measured and compared, yet with far more detailed indicators sorted in three groups; perceptual, procedural and relational. In contrast to all “peace with adjectives” definitions, both GPI and the peace continuum are examples of attempts to stringently conceptualize peace in a manner that enables systematic quantitative measurement. This is a valuable contribution for quantitative research that can provide a bird’s eye view of how peace varies. However, these peace scales are concerned with differences in the degree of peace, and are not primarily designed to capture differences in the character of peace. Moreover, alongside efforts to make peace measurable for quantitative analysis, a more qualitative approach is needed to capture local, case-specific dynamics and complexities of different varieties of peace.

In the category of more complex conceptualizations of peace there are a few that are useful for qualitative analysis. Höglund and Söderberg Kovacs aim at capturing the diversity of peace in societies where peace agreements have been reached. Their model stems from Galtung’s conflict triangle model and outlines the types of post-war peace based on attitudes, issues and behaviors. They are *unresolved, contested, restored, partial, regional, insecure, polarized, unjust and fearful* peace, that jointly constitute a coherent set of nine types of peace in societies where peace agreements have been reached (Höglund and Söderberg Kovacs 2010). While useful to study the problems of such societies, this model does little to conceptualize peace as such, what it is and what it consists of, and instead focuses on the shortcomings of peace and remnants of conflict that exist after a peace agreement has been reached.

Themnér and Ohlson aim at a conceptualization of peace which is ‘more demanding than the mere absence of violence, but more attainable, in the mid-term, than positive peace’ (Themnér and Ohlson 2014, p. 62). They present legitimacy as key, and distinguish between vertical legitimacy, which captures whether the population at large believes that the state has the right to rule them, and horizontal legitimacy, which concerns mutual tolerance at elite and mass level and encapsulate elite and popular perceptions about inclusion in the demos. Rather than an ideal type of peace they seek to grasp *improvements* in vertical and horizontal legitimacy. While this work is useful for our understanding of peace in relational terms, it does not clearly identify under which conditions and situations such improvements take place.

In sum, peace is far more complex than being the opposite of war. It has many different meanings in different contexts and there have been numerous attempts to define the concept. Definitions have been proposed and used in the last decades, whether for the purpose of studying what causes peace, or for the understanding of different problems in post-war peacebuilding, or for the purpose of measurement and comparison across cases - a number of ‘peace with adjectives’. However, despite the plethora of existing conceptualizations and definitions, we argue that they are not adequate for a systematic and stringent understanding of the variety of ways in which peace manifests itself in the aftermath of armed conflict. To capture this complexity, we build on previous conceptual efforts and propose a new framework for studying

peace in qualitative case studies. We suggest that approaching peace in three different but interlinked ways – the situational, the relational and the ideational – can help move the field forward and enable a more comprehensive analysis of variation across cases in a systematic, yet multifaceted, manner.

Three approaches to the study of peace

Implicitly, previous research on peace often approach it either as ontologically located in the situation in a specific location; in the nature of relationships between conflict parties or other groups in society; or in the construction of political ideals, aspirations or visions of the good society. As such, the three approaches to peace we introduce here are not new. However, these different approaches to what peace is are often conflated and used interchangeably, rather than analytically separated and theorized. We argue that this is problematic, because these approaches to peace have very different implications for how peace should be studied empirically. Thus, analytically separating these analytical approaches makes for sharper, more precise conceptualizations and studies of peace. Below, we outline some suggestions on how these approaches to peace can be developed and applied to empirical studies.

Notably though, while it is important to keep these approaches analytically distinct, they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, we argue that together, these approaches can provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how peace is manifested in specific cases, and how it varies across cases and over time. To illustrate, the complementarity of the approaches, the case of Sri Lanka is useful. In the context of a war victory for the government, the general security situation has improved fundamentally and the situation proved stable against political turbulence (at least initially). However, to get a deeper understanding of the prevailing peace in Sri Lanka, we need to also consider relational and ideational dimensions of peace. This will reveal stark differences in how people from the “winner” and “loser” sides respectively perceive the legitimacy and experience the quality of the emerging peace. Thus, while the three approaches can be analytically distinguished and used separately in empirical analysis, combining them can provide a fuller understanding of the nature of peace and reveal patterns from which theoretical insights can be generated. Further, this opens up for the possibility to trace how situational, relational and ideational aspects of peace shape, reinforce, or contradict each other, and how these dynamics may drive changes in the nature of peace over time. Below, we discuss the situational, relational and ideational approaches to peace in more detail.

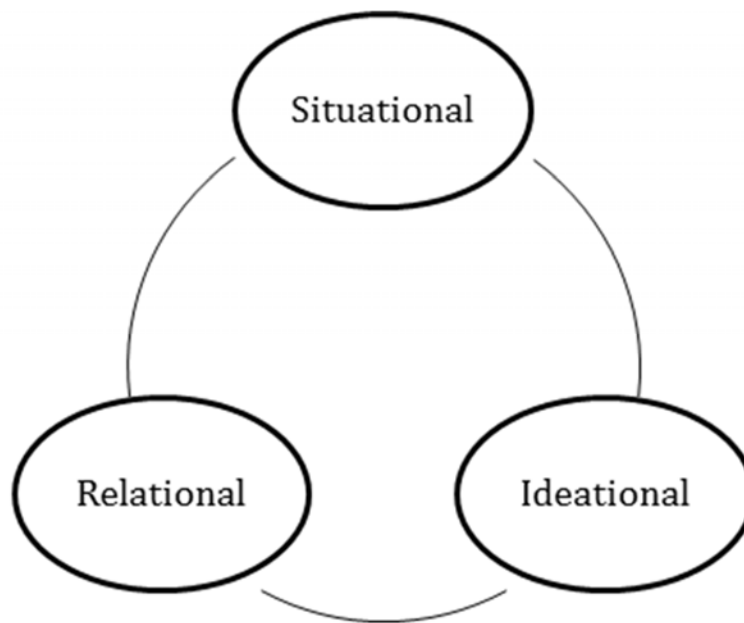


Figure 1: Three approaches to the study of peace

A situational approach to peace

Peace can be understood as a situation, as describing a state or condition in a society. The typical unit of analysis in a situational analysis of peace is a geographical area at different levels, including the national, regional and community level. This approach studies peace as a structural, institutional and aggregated societal phenomenon. This is arguably the most common way of approaching peace, not least in quantitative conceptualizations such as the Global Peace Index, where a number of indicators capturing structural and institutional factors or patterns are combined to provide an aggregated measure of the level of peace in a state. Moreover, many of the “peace with adjectives” concepts discussed above define a certain type of peace based on a characterization of the situation in a particular area or location. For example, concepts such as democratic peace, constitutional peace and capitalist peace define a particular type of peace based on the presence or absence of institutions such as elections or a free market economy. Moreover, the concept of precarious peace is used to describe a situation where insecurity persists and the peace is uncertain and fragile.

Based on a systematic review of conceptual definitions of peace in previous literature, Davenport, Regan and Melander suggest that “Upon observation, we see that many of the definitions share a common understanding that peace is *fundamentally about not engaging [...] in violence while having alternative social and political mechanisms for managing conflict constructively* – something quite close to Deutsch’s ‘security community’ concept on a social scale” (Davenport et al. 2018, pp. 40-44). In our framework, we build on previous research and define situational peace as *a condition in a given locality where people enjoy security and where there are institutions and norms for managing conflicts without resorting to violence that allows people to participate on an equal and just basis and exert influence in decision-making*. As this implies, our situational analysis of peace departs from two broader dimensions: *security* and *political order*.

Hence, our point of departure is that peace as a situation can be manifested differently depending on two main aspects; the characteristics of the *political order* in a given locality, and the state of *security* in a given locality. We discuss each of them below.

First of all, *security* roughly corresponds to the notion of negative peace, or absence of direct violence. This is at the core of most conceptualizations of peace (Davenport et al. 2018, p. 54), and can be considered a minimum requirement or baseline for identifying different varieties of peace. However, this needs to be somewhat qualified by noting that peace and violence can sometimes coexist in close proximity, as not least the literature on zones of peace demonstrates (Hancock and Mitchell 2007). Thus, even when peace is approached as a situation in a specific spatial location, the boundaries between peace and war are not always clear-cut. As noted by several scholars, a problem with a negative peace conception is that it defines peace as what it is not; as “not-war” (Diehl 2016). This critique is clearly relevant to the dimension of security in our framework. However, as our initial fieldwork as well as studies such as the Everyday Peace Indicators project demonstrates (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2017), in the view of people experiencing war, security is not just about the absence of organized armed violence. Security is also defined by the presence of aspects such as freedom of movement, where people are able to travel to work or to the market without harassment or fear of violence. Furthermore, Wallensteen suggests that for people to enjoy security there must also be an element of predictability. Thus, stability and predictability is a defining element of Wallensteen’s concept of quality peace, which is defined as “post-conflict conditions that make the inhabitants of a society (be it an area, a country, a region, a continent, or a planet) secure in life and dignity now and for the foreseeable future” (Wallensteen 2015, p. 6). Thus, in a situation of peace people must reasonably expect that peace will endure.

The second dimension that we use as a point of departure when characterizing varieties of peace concerns the *political order*. Here, we emphasize the presence of formal institutions and informal mechanisms and norms for managing conflicts peacefully. Such mechanisms and norms facilitate different voices to be heard, and make it possible for people to exert influence over decisions that affect their everyday lives. In the literature political and social institutions for managing conflict are frequently emphasized as key to peace because they can provide avenues for non-violent political contestation and conflict resolution. This idea is widely endorsed by scholars in schools of thought as far apart as democratic peace theorists and agonistic peace theorists (Shinko 2008; Maddison and Diprose 2017; Ish-Shalom 2013). To be sure however, academic debates about the relationship between peace and democracy have by no means reached consensus. Nevertheless, regardless of whether democracy is held up as normatively desirable for peace in a post-war context, how a given political order manifests itself will clearly have an effect on the peace that emerges. There is a large literature on different forms of political order. One strand of this literature focuses on political, territorial and military power sharing where former belligerent groups are included in national or local government or the armed forces (see e.g. Hartzell and Hoddie 2007; Jarstad and Nilsson 2008; Roeder and Rothchild 2005; Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Sriram 2008; Mukherjee 2006; Jarstad 2009; Cammett and Malesky 2012; Lijphart 1969; Mehler 2009). A recent study covering peace accords shows that provisions for political and military power sharing are more likely to be signed in non-democracies, whereas different forms of federalism, decentralization and autonomy arrangements that are included in the category territorial power sharing are more common in democracies. It also shows that there is no difference between the implementation patterns between democracies and non-democracies (Jarstad and Nilsson 2018).

Furthermore, our dimension of political order also refers to the space for civil engagement, political activism, debate and discussion. Thus, to what extent is it possible for people to speak, act and influence

the circumstances of their lives without repression or violence? Framed differently, this captures the extent of political freedom that characterizes the situation at hand. A key aspect of analyzing political order, and participation in central institutions, is to attend to the question of “peace for whom?”, acknowledging that a certain variety of peace cannot be generally conceptualized or understood without being sensitive to how the effects or benefits of peace are distributed, for example in terms of how degrees of and opportunities for participation differ along axes of inequality such as ethnicity and gender. Thus, who can participate in the peace and how? These concerns are central not least to feminist debates about peace, and conceptualizations such as just peace and gender-just peace (O’Reilly 2016; Björkdahl 2012b; Aggestam and Björkdahl 2013).

Table 1: Dimensions of peace as a situation

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Features of situational peace</i>
SECURITY	<p>Absence of violence and fear of violence.</p> <p>Freedom of movement.</p> <p>Predictability, possibility to trust the current situation and make life choices based on it.</p>
POLITICAL ORDER	<p>Institutions and norms for non-violent conflict management/resolution.</p> <p>Freedom, openness. Possibility to have a voice, contribute to change in society, criticize things that are wrong.</p> <p>Legitimate political order, forms of governance.</p>

In a situational analysis of peace, peace needs to be operationalized through selected indicators, representing key aspects or dimensions of peace that will guide data collection and facilitate comparisons between different varieties of peace identified in different cases (be they states, regions or villages). We argue that the dimensions of security and political order are broad enough to allow the design and focus of case studies to adjust to the specificities of a particular case, yet provides enough direction to enable comparison and theoretical synergies across cases.

Analyzing peace as a situation based on these two dimensions means that as different cases display varying levels and forms of security and different forms of political orders, these variations can be used to distinguish between different varieties of peace as situation. While we recognize that every situation is unique, we are not aiming at identifying an individual variety of peace for every case, but a limited number of varieties – empirically comprehensive and analytically useful. To roughly illustrate this logic, the dimensions security and political order could be placed in a matrix with four main types of peace to which empirical cases can belong more or less clearly.

Political order	C	D
	A	B
Security		

Figure 2: Types of situational peace

In line with the descriptions of these dimensions above, a post-war situation can be characterized by residual violence in certain areas or by the hands of certain actors. There may be widespread criminality, enhanced by the availability of weapons in the aftermath of the war, making people feel insecure and limiting their freedom of movement. The commitment of former warring parties to a peace agreement or to the outcome of future elections may be in doubt, increasing the perceived risk of a return to war and making people hesitant to invest in peace. The armed conflict may have undermined people's interest in, and ability to, organize themselves in political parties, non-governmental organizations, etc. In addition, the post-war situation may continue to be precarious to the extent that people are simply too afraid to organize in a manner that would facilitate their effective decision-making authority in relation to matters that affect their everyday lives. Such circumstances would place a post-war situation somewhere in the bottom-left quadrant of the table, making it a case of predominantly A-Type peace, characterized by a low degree of security combined with weak/few political and social institutions for managing conflicts and limited space for people to have a voice and influence change in society.

Similarly, a post-war situation predominantly characterized by a high degree of security combined with weak political and social institutions and limited space for people to have a voice would be B-Type peace, a low degree of security in combination with extensive political and social institutions for managing conflicts and greater space for people to have a voice would constitute C-Type peace, and D-Type peace would combine a high degree of security combined with extensive political and social institutions for managing conflicts and greater space for people to have a voice. A matrix like this can be a useful tool for comparing and grouping cases, although such an aggregated comparative analysis would be preceded by a more detailed analysis of each case, where more fine-grained differences in levels and types of security and political order, and different aspects of these dimensions, are explored.

This framework can be used to trace individual cases over time, and see whether and how they move between different types of peace. Importantly, we do not conceive of the difference between the types as

strictly either/or. Instead, we argue that cases can belong to or constitute examples of the types to varying degrees. This can be operationalized and analyzed in different ways, but the details of this goes beyond the ambitions of the present paper.

Further, the way cases move between the types could be the result of factors both internal and external to the framework itself. Internally, it is possible (but not certain) that cases will tend to move over time from lower toward higher levels of both dimensions as peace becomes more entrenched and self-reinforcing. For factors external to the framework, our own focus will be on a number of factors broadly related to conflict resolution and the post-war situation: the role of civil society during and after peace processes; the aims and capacities of the signatories to peace agreements; the contents and comprehensiveness of peace agreements; the types of institutions (re)built or strengthened by peace processes; and the form and impact of international involvement.

In sum, by studying institutions, structures, norms and aggregated behaviors in a defined locality along two central dimensions – security and political order – we suggest that this approach can be useful both to capture central features of peace in a particular area more in-depth and enable comparisons between different peace localities to describe and explore important varieties of peace.

A relational approach to peace

Our second approach to peace analyzes it in terms of relationships between actors or groups, from former warring parties to majority/minority groups in society to interpersonal relations. This is an actor centered approach to peace. This approach has been developed at greater lengths by Söderström, Åkebo and Jarstad elsewhere, and the following section builds on and summarizes this approach. This perspective is particularly concerned with agency. The typical unit of analysis is dyads, i.e. pairs of leaders or other individuals representing groups or formal organizations, or larger actors such as municipalities and states. Central to this approach is the recognition that societies are made up of a web of relationships, and that each one of these relationships can be studied in terms of their peace characteristics. By paying attention to the actors that are at peace and the characteristics of their relationships, this approach provides a better understanding of how peace and war can coexist in webs of multiple interactions (Söderström et al. 2019a, 2019b).

A relational approach essentially turns attention to how the actors in a dyad associate and interact with each other. Relational peace underlines the importance of patterns of non-violent interactions, attitudes towards each other as well as the actors' ideas of the relationship as a whole (Söderström et al. 2019a). While a study of relational peace can devote attention to a single dyad, this approach accordingly also recognizes that multiple dyads make up social systems. For characterizing and understanding relational peace in a particular context, analyses should preferably consider the social system of multiple relationships, but crucially focus on dyads with political ramifications, or dyads that have a history of conflict.

A relational approach to peace can be found in works in different sets of literature, including in the IR-oriented literature which is predominantly interested in the peacefulness of relationships between state actors (Goertz et al. 2016), as well as in the more sociology-oriented conflict transformation literature which is generally concerned with the quality of relationships between actors and groups at the societal level. Despite differences between these literatures they thus share a common view that the quality and characteristics of relationships and interactions is fundamental for understanding peace. Some scholars

motivate this approach by pointing to conflicts as being inherently relational, and that peace accordingly also must be understood as relational (Kriesberg 2007; Davenport 2018). Others ground their argument in that there are differences in the ontological meaning of *war* and peace, arguing that war is an event or a condition, while peace is relational and must therefore be studied based on different premises than war (Goertz et al. 2016). This also suggests that war and peace are not mutually exclusive categories but can coexist and coevolve. One can also find motivations for studying peace as relational by looking at localized understandings of peace that emphasize relationships as central, which is evident for example in the work of the Everyday Peace Indicators project (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2017). Considering this different research that emphasizes peace as essentially concerning relationships, we suggest that relational peace can be studied at different levels of analysis, from relationships between states to relationships between groups and individuals at the micro-level in society. Relational peace can also be studied at multiple levels of analysis and across levels of analysis. As this also implies, the actors in a dyad do not need to be symmetric – it can be e.g. relationships between the government of a state and a particular group of citizens.

If we turn to how peace as a relationship can be studied, we can discuss different approaches to measuring relational peace. The components of *relational peace* include behavioral interactions such as non-domination, deliberation and cooperation; attitude components such as mutual recognition of each other and mutual trust; and ideas of the relationship as one of legitimate co-existence and friendship (Söderström et al. 2019a). In short, the essence of *non-domination* is that of being free from domination by another and of being free from arbitrary power (see e.g. Barnett 2006; Pettit 1996; Young 2005). In any relationship there are inevitably power-imbalances, but non-domination implies that the power-imbalance does not lead an actor to be dominated by the other without legitimate reasons (that are recognized by both actors). This kind of behavioral interaction is central to peace due to the relational entanglement that is experienced in conflict settings. *Deliberation* aims to capture a dimension of non-violent political engagement. In essence, it implies an exchange of views and that the actors involved at the same time also give reasons for their positions. Particularly in post-war contexts an important aspect of deliberation is that it allows for differences to be expressed, recognized and affirmed. Also, rather than striving for consensus it views disagreement as an essential and vital part of political engagement and of peaceful transformation of relationships (see e.g. Dryzek 2005; Holdo 2015; Björkdahl 2012a). The third element of behavioral interaction is *cooperation*, which implies that actors work and act together on shared issues instead of competing (see e.g. Goldstein 1992; Miall 2007). It is important here that cooperative behavior can take place at the same time as violent actions. While violence for example between the state and an armed group continues, civilians can engage in cooperation. In this way, traces of relational peace can be identified at the community level.

In terms of the attitudes held towards the other, *recognition* can be described as a way of extending respect to another actor, and at the most basic level is the acceptance of the others existence (see e.g. Lindemann 2011; Strömbom 2010). *Trust* is often emphasized in the literature as a key component of peace and it is also often noted that trust is key for cooperation, which points to the interconnectedness of the different components (see e.g. Oelsner 2007; Rousseau et al. 1998). In terms of the ideas that actors hold about their relationship, the actors can describe them as a form of *legitimate coexistence*, which simply means an acceptance of the existence of the other and that the other is deemed to be a legitimate partner to interact with if one wishes to do so, suggesting a sense of equality between the actors, or the relationship is thought of as one of *friendship*.

Table 2: Components of peace as a relation (Söderström, Åkebo and Jarstad 2019)

<i>Component</i>	<i>Relational Peace</i>
<i>Behavioral interaction</i>	Non-domination, Deliberation, AND Cooperation
<i>Subjective attitudes toward the other</i>	Mutual recognition AND Mutual trust
<i>Idea of relationship</i>	Legitimate co-existence OR Friendship

In table 2, we demonstrate how relational peace can be conceptualized. Based on this we propose that an ideal typical definition of relational peace is as follows: *A peaceful relation entails behavioral interaction that can be characterized as non-domination, deliberation and cooperation between the actors in the dyad, the actors involved recognize and trust each other and believe that the relationship is one between legitimate actors or an expression of friendship.* While each component present in the table is thus part of an ideal type definition of relational peace, it is suggested that real-world cases are likely to cluster together as two types: *Peace between fellows* and *Peace between friends*. The defining difference between these types, we argue, has to do with the idea or conception of the relationship that the actors in the dyad have. In a peace between fellows, the idea of the relationship is predominantly one of legitimate co-existence, whereas in a Peace between friends, the idea of the relationship is characterized by friendship instead. Both forms of relational peace are legitimate forms of peace. The degree to which the other traits also cluster in different ways across these types is an empirical question.

In order to investigate relational peace in a specific empirical study, these components also need to be further operationalized. Key elements in the design of a particular study include what actor dyads and levels of analysis that are of interest, which also shape the operationalization. For instance, deliberation can be observed in parliamentary and public debates and cooperation can be observed with regards to political alliances and peace agreements between former foes, mixed marriages across former conflict lines. Attitudes can be studied by asking questions concerning e.g., engaging in business relations with a former enemy actor, attitudes towards integrated schooling, attitudes toward inviting someone from a previous political enemy group to dinner, feelings about children marrying across former conflict lines, etc. The involved actors' understanding of the relationship ultimately requires access to how the two actors involved think about each other, whether this has been openly expressed in text or in speech, or whether interview data needs to be collected.

What explains shifts in relational peace? The repeated interaction over time is likely to push the relationship towards deeper peace, or toward more shallow forms of peace. This does not mean that external shocks do not matter as well; the introduction of additional actors in the relationship, shifting interests, shifting resources, and shifting contexts are likely to impact the relationship as well. In this sense, relational peace is not a static condition, but a phenomenon with a limited or extended durability, and one where in particular shifts in the understanding of the relationship, are important to study. Furthermore, to grasp and understand the characteristics of peaceful relationships in a particular conflict context, it is also interesting to consider changes in terms of what are the dominant relationships post-war. For example in Sri Lanka following the Sinhala dominated government's military victory over the militant Tamil liberation

movement the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the chart of conflict relationships has been transformed. For instance, it can be suggested that relationships between the Sinhala majority and the country's Muslim minority are of greater importance today for understanding the characteristics and dynamics of the post-war peace than what most analysts earlier considered as key to characterizing war-time interactions and relationships. This suggests that an analysis of relational peace should not automatically, and at least not solely, consider the relational interactions that were most manifest during the war. Instead, one should map and explore how the chart of relationships has been transformed.

To summarize, the relational approach adds to our understanding of peace by considering the actors that are at peace and the qualities of their relationships. While studies of relational peace can devote attention to a single peace dyad, others can contribute with a more comprehensive description and understanding of peace as a web of multiple relational interactions between a variety of dyads (Söderström et al. 2019a).²

An ideational approach to peace

Many would argue that there has been an “ideational turn” in political analysis (Blyth 2010; Gofas and Hay 2010; Béland and Cox 2010; Schmidt 2010; Vedung 2018a). This turn takes issue with the behaviorist claim that we should focus only on observable phenomena and behavior, measure attitudes and gather mass data. It also takes on structural-functionalism that postulates that ideas only reflect structures and contexts. For ideational scholars, ideas are not merely instruments to promote interests; human cognition has its own independent force and ideas have power over decisions and actions. Although there is no consensus on how to define ideas, many ideational scholars would agree that they are products of cognition, entities with a certain degree of continuity, which separates them from fleeting impressions or casual attitudes. They also argue that we cannot make sense of politics, peace or conflict without paying analytical attention to actors and their ideas (Vedung 2018a, p. 169). The third strand of our framework builds on this argument and takes an ideational approach to peace. But what does it mean to approach peace from an ideational perspective? We argue that to study ideas about peace is to link thought to matter and approach ideas as constitutive. In other words, ideas about what peace is, or should be, shape policy, build institutions and inform political decision-making. Researching ideas about peace involves studying how people understand the world, and how they interpret the world around them, which in turn is important for how people act in the world, in relation to the concept of peace. In other words, identifying ideas about peace enables an examination of how the concept of peace is envisioned and comes to shape political developments and processes of change. An ideational approach can also critically examine how the concept of peace is employed as a political tool to legitimize certain agendas, pursue particular forms of change or stability, and reshape or reify existing relations of power. Expressed differently, it draws attention to “the way people define peace, what actions they legitimize with it, and how these conceptions change throughout history or differ between contexts” (Klem 2018).

An ideational analysis of peace can open up to how peace is envisioned or articulated in a wide range of contexts and materials. The analysis could focus on the aspirations and experiences of grassroots, victims, and marginalized populations, or the dominant ideas among privileged actors such as states, international organizations, mediators, or peacekeepers. Suitable primary data for the study of ideas about peace depend of course on actors and contexts but could on the one hand include written sources ranging from

² Söderström, Åkebo and Jarstad are currently working on an anthology of various case studies employing this framework.

governmental publications, policy documents and speeches to books, articles and archive data. On the other hand, it could also include interviews and other texts and documents that give access to the respondents' worldview.³

The meaning of peace is likely to vary across individuals, groups, generations and regions in a society shattered by war. Hence, any empirical study of peace in this sense needs to consider which groups to focus on either for direct comparisons, or because their position make them have a more pivotal role in defining peace in each case, and focus any empirical investigation on these groups. Such analyses can then trace how competing conceptions of peace relate to each other and explore the clash between them in different empirical contexts. For example, Paarlberg-Kvam has analyzed how feminist visions of peace in Colombia relate to and challenge the conceptions of peace that are contained in the 2016 peace accords (Paarlberg-Kvam 2018). As argued by Klem, studying ideas about peace in terms of aspirations reveals how disagreement over the meaning of peace often generates new conflicts (Klem 2018). This is evident in Myanmar, where the military has historically perceived of their counterinsurgency operations targeting ethnic armed groups as well as civilian communities as necessary measures to guard against chaos and state disintegration. Thus, a vision of peace as stability and order within a unitary Burmese state has been central in legitimating armed violence against challengers. In contrast, for ethnic insurgent groups, ethnic self-determination and equal rights within a federal, democratic state lies at the heart of the peace they are aspiring to, and have taken up arms fighting for (Callahan 2005; Brenner 2015). The lack of progress plaguing the ongoing national peace negotiations is in large part due to these widely divergent visions for peace, and demonstrates the importance of better understanding the political effects generated by different, and sometimes competing, ideas about peace (Olivius and Hedström 2019).

There are a number of existing literatures on the meaning-making around peace, that we would consider examples of an ideational approach to peace. One strand of the meaning focused literature on peace and war belongs to psychology or political psychology, and conceptualizes meaning in terms of cognitive and emotional responses to these societal developments (Schok et al. 2008). Another strand of literature focuses on meaning-making in relation to anthropological approaches (see e.g. Bräuchler 2017; Randazzo 2016; Autesserre 2010; Buckley-Zistel 2007; Autesserre 2014; Nordstrom 2004; Shaw et al. 2010). The anthropological approach focuses on the relational, the social process connected to meaning-making. This is in part related to the local turn or what is sometimes referred to the everyday. Related to this field, but separate, is what can be termed interpretive phenomenological analysis concerning meaning after war; this literature more squarely belongs to political psychology (Binks and Cambridge 2018; Burgess et al. 2007). This literature attempts to get an insider's understanding of their experience and living conditions, and how that informs their decision-making. Finally, another strand of this literature departs from a more educational perspective (see e.g. Horner 2013; Hakvoort and Hägglund 2001; Kagaari et al. 2017; Sacipa et al. 2006). Here, the meaning-making is focused more on linguistic and/or content analysis of how peace is talked about.

There are plenty of analytical tools available for the study and analysis of ideas about peace. Some tools help identify how ideas legitimize certain courses of action and challenge or strengthen relations of power, other tools help map out what ideas people lean on in processes of meaning-making. Yet other tools aim to describe ideas and trace their effects. Whether we refer to description and analysis of discourses, cognitive maps or frames, it is the ideas that underpin them we want to identify and understand within this approach. Next, we discuss two examples of how we think ideas about peace can be studied empirically.

³ For example diaries and biographies.

To begin with, one way to study ideas about peace is through a prism of *cultural bias*. Dzenan Sahovic has developed a four-field model of ideal types of peace, building on a body of literature of Douglas, Wildavsky, Thompson and others (Thompson et al. 1990), where individualist, hierarchical, egalitarian and fatalist cultural types have distinct views on just about everything that is human and social. Stemming from this Neo-Durkheimian theory, a set of culturally biased views about peace and peacebuilding are derived and used to explore the culture clash between locally present and internationally promoted ideas about what peace is and how it can be reached in the case of post-Dayton Bosnia Herzegovina (Sahovic 2007, 2019). Perceptions of peace are cultural, explained by different modes of social organization and corresponding preferred strategic behaviors. The model enables a systematic mapping of perceptions of peace and peace discourses, and can provide new insights about how varying conceptions of peace shape peace processes and outcomes, and may at times generate new conflict or cause well-intentioned peace efforts to produce unintended effects.

Second, we argue that descriptive and functional ideational analysis (Vedung 2018b) have much to offer anyone interested in ideas about peace. Descriptive analysis approaches ideas with a set of questions and interprets their meaning. It needs sharp analytical tools, such as ideal types, dimensions or frames. Functional analysis focuses either on the origins of ideas or on their effects resting on different kinds of written sources and documents, including transcribed interview material. Ideas about peace can express both strong normative views about what peace *should be* and be reflective of what peace *is* in descriptive terms. Ideas about peace, therefore, can be expressed in both situational and relational terms. They can also represent a combination of both. Consequently, ideas about peace in a variety of cases could be approached with a set of questions derived from both situational and relational approaches, as suggested in the sections above: to what extent (if at all) do ideas reflect a relational view of peace? To what extent (if at all) do ideas reflect a situational view of peace? Are such ideas based on description or prescription?

One example of this particular approach is a forthcoming analysis of Russian ideas about peace as expressed in academic, governmental and popularizing scientific texts. In a descriptive ideational analysis, we ask to what extent (if at all) these ideas reflect a relational view of peace? Starting to address this question we argue that there is a core notion, or what we call a *carrier idea* particularly recurrent in the Russian literature on conflict resolution among the post-Soviet countries that does concern relational peace. To be more specific, it concerns the relational peace between the different peoples and nations in the post-Soviet sphere. The formula runs as follows: When the Soviet Union still existed, there was peace, but when it disintegrated there was conflict, confusion and outright war (see also Blishchenko and Solntseva 2014; Koval'chuk 2015). A typical example is Zhirov's seminal book *Semena Raspada*, the title of which translates as *A Broken Family*. In line with the carrier idea, Zhirov argues that the majority of armed post-Soviet conflicts such as in Abkhazia, Transnistria or Nagorno-Karabakh have been wrongly construed as inter-ethnic. Rather, Zhirov says, the collapse of the union simply liberated violent forces and interests, some of which may prove impossible to alleviate without recourse to some form of political super-structure, such as in the form of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Zhirov 2012, pp. 670-671).⁴ The carrier idea about a broken family of nations bound together by historic experience and geopolitical reality precludes the idea that post-Soviet states are truly independent. Rather, their interrelationship is characterized by family ties. Although such a carrier idea might seem politically self-serving or even quaint,

⁴ It is important to note that Zhirov does not simply echo some of the earlier Soviet literature, in which the different peoples and nationalities of the Soviet Union were considered siblings, i.e. one and the same Soviet people. The vagaries of Soviet imperialism are thoroughly described and lamented by Zhirov, but his main point is that all post-Soviet peoples are bound together in a special relationship, ostensibly with a common security interest.

it nonetheless represents an important Russian idea about the prerequisites for peace as a relation in the second decade of the 2000s.

Having identified, described, analyzed and interpreted certain ideas about peace, a possible next step is to examine their effects. For example, descriptive ideas can be functionally related to peace negotiations, peace agreements and peacebuilding efforts. Such a step involves wrestling with the question of how exactly effects can be traced which, in turn, is linked to issues of both causality and change. With Béland and Cox, we argue that ideas “provide guides for action. Ideas help us to think about ways to address problems and challenges we face, and therefore are the cause of our actions” (Béland and Cox 2010, pp. 2, 14). Further, “[t]he nature of change, whether it is slow or rapid, radical or incremental, is largely the result of choices people make” (Béland and Cox 2010, p. 14). It is in this vein we think of causality and change when we analyze ideas about peace and their effects; ideas are guides for action and to study their effects is to trace their influence on outcomes. However, even if action is motivated by ideas, people’s goals, strategies and interactions also affect, shape and change those ideas. Ideas have staying power but they are also reconsidered and redefined when actors relate to each other in a dynamic situation of post-war peace (Béland and Cox 2010, p. 4; see also Schmidt 2010).

In sum, we argue that acknowledging ideas about peace and studying these ideas on their own terms is equally important for characterizing peace as the situational and relational approaches. How people understand and interpret the world around them is important for their actions and decisions, and analyzing these ideas is central for understanding different varieties of peace.

Concluding discussion

In this paper we have outlined an analytical framework that approaches peace in three different ways: as a situation or condition in a particular locality; as a web of relationships; and as ideas or discourses about what peace is or should be. We argue that this framework makes three distinct contributions to the field of peace studies. Firstly, it systematizes previous literature and attempts to conceptualize and study peace. We argue that distinguishing between approaches where peace is ontologically conceived of as a feature of the situation in an area; as located in the nature of relationships; or articulated through ideas is important for more precise and nuanced theories and analyses of peace. We suggest that each of the three approaches can be used separately in empirical studies of peace, and each in itself can provide important insights into specific aspects of peace.

Secondly, the framework develops analytical tools that can facilitate systematic comparisons across qualitative case studies, while remaining flexible enough to allow for in-depth, context-specific empirical analysis. It provides points of departure for data collection and analysis that will enable theoretical comparison and synthesis, making it possible to move our understanding of how peace varies beyond theoretical dichotomies, stand-alone concepts, and single case studies.

Thirdly, we argue that the framework in its entirety, combining and drawing on the specificity of all three approaches, provides for a richer understanding of peace in particular empirical contexts. By approaching peace from different vantage points, we arrive at a more holistic understanding where the complexity of the phenomenon of peace can be more adequately captured. To illustrate, in an analysis of the character of peace in Northern Ireland today, 21 years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, different understandings would emerge depending on the lens through which the analysis is conducted. Applying a situational approach, the peace in Northern Ireland appears to be characterized by a rather high

and stable level of security, and a political order where institutions for peaceful management of conflict are consolidated. Although occasional outbreaks of violence occur along the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, the security situation at large is fairly good. Business owners and workers, even in the border region, are able to conduct their businesses and productions without disturbances, and people in general are able to move freely without fear of being attacked or targeted by individuals or organizations who were predominant actors during the years of conflict. There are formal political mechanisms and instruments in place for purposes of solving conflicts in a peaceful manner; the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Executive were both institutionalized by the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and include prescriptions for cross-community voting as well as power-sharing (Hart 2001).

Analyzing the same post-war context through the lens of a relational approach to peace, however, renders a different view of the state of affairs. The relations between the two major communities in Northern Ireland continues to be uneasy; the Nationalists (predominantly Catholics) and the Unionists (predominantly Protestants) who were on opposing sides during the conflict continue to live in segregated communities with little interaction between each other; relations between leaders of the different main churches (the Presbyterian, the Anglican, the Methodist, and the Catholic) also differ along a continuum of suspicion to trust and friendship; and lastly, relations between the political leaders of Unionist parties and Nationalist parties are also manifested differently, depending on their abilities and willingness to contribute to a constructive climate for solving issues peacefully (Brewer and Teeney 2015).

Last but not least, if we approach the Northern Ireland case with an ideational perspective on peace, yet another depiction presents itself. Ideas about what peace is, or ought to be, among political leaders, grassroots initiatives, non-governmental organizations, and even international actors and organizations have an impact on decisions contributing to, or counteracting, peace in the region. For example, the political turmoil caused by Brexit and its potential repercussions is a case in point. In all, this illustrates how the three approaches render different interlocking images of peace in Northern Ireland. An analysis drawing on one approach can in itself make valuable contributions, but inevitably but inevitably conveys a limited view of what constitutes a larger socio-political landscape. Combined, the three approaches provide a more comprehensive view.

Another aspect of the framework's ability to capture complexity is its usefulness in analyzing change over time. Similarly as in work of Sahovic mentioned above, where social relations, strategic behaviors and cultural bias are interlinked and changes in one effect the other, the three approaches framework opens up for studies of dynamics where situations, relations and ideas are interlinked and interplay in a post-war peace process. Conceivably, a changing situation or changing ideas about peace influence shifts in relationships; changing situations or relationships influence thinking about peace; and changes in relationships or ideas influence changes of peace as a situation. Taken together, our three pronged approach to peace thus opens up avenues for analyzing changing dynamics of peace in a long-term perspective which can provide a better understanding of how peace evolves in a particular context.

In continuation, a long-term perspective on peace brings to the forefront the trade-off between change and stability which is fundamental to many peace processes. Stability has been central to theoretical debates about peace, as well as peacebuilding policy and practice. Most notably, stability is at the center of the liberal peacebuilding paradigm, which has been criticized for being preoccupied with "stabilization" at the expense of striving for a just or sustainable peace (Jabri 2010; Mac Ginty 2012). However, this critique can be taken further by examining how short-term stability may sometimes impede the long-term capacity for peaceful change. Stability cannot be considered a generally desirable feature of a situation; violent,

repressive situations can be stable just as peaceful situations can be stable (Johansson 2018). Likewise, resilience can characterize both peaceful and warlike situations. The status quo often tends to favor the winner of a war and the signatories of the peace agreement rather than the population at large. The implementation of a peace agreement, or other ways to address the root causes of the conflict, often involve change. Therefore, adaptability and mechanisms for peaceful changes in society – that is, less stability rather than more – can be important for peace in the longer term. The balance between stability and change is likely to shift over time and considering changes and continuities in situational, relational and ideational terms can provide insights into this equilibrium.

To conclude, we argue that the three approaches discussed above provide different fruitful avenues for researching peace, and taken together they provide a fuller picture of what peace is, how it is manifested, experienced, and understood. By not being overly restrictive, the framework allows for context sensitive, qualitative empirical work, while still providing enough common ground to facilitate theoretical cross-fertilization, comparison and synthesis across case studies. Thus, this framework provides a way forward in advancing conceptual understandings and empirical analyses of peace that can facilitate systematic, comparative work while at the same time accounting for the complex, multifaceted nature of peace.

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