

Beyond the absence of war: the diversity of peace in post-settlement societies

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Abstract. This article introduces a novel way of conceptualising variations of peace in post-war societies. The most common way of defining peace in the academic literature on war termination is to differentiate between those cases where there is a continuation or resumption of large-scale violence and those cases where violence has been terminated and peace, defined by the absence of war, has been established. Yet, a closer look at a number of countries where a peace agreement has been signed and peace is considered to prevail reveals a much more diverse picture. Beyond the absence of war, there are striking differences in terms of the character of peace that has followed. This article revisits the classical debates on peace and the notion of the Conflict Triangle as a useful theoretical construction for the study of armed conflicts. We develop a classification captured in a Peace Triangle, where post-settlement societies are categorised on the basis of three key dimensions: issues, behaviour, and attitudes. On the basis of such a differentiation, we illustrate the great diversity of peace beyond the absence of war in a number of post-settlement societies. Finally, we discuss the relationship between the different elements of the Peace Triangle, and the challenges they pose for establishing a sustainable peace, as well as the implications of this study for policy makers concerned with peacebuilding efforts.

Introduction

In the last two decades, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of civil wars that have ended through the signing of negotiated settlements between the warring parties.¹ But merely looking at the frequency of peace agreements that lead to the

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¹ Between 1989 and 2005 a total of 144 peace agreements were signed in one-third of the 121 armed conflicts active since the end of the Cold War. 43 of these agreements were comprehensive peace agreements, where the warring parties agreed to settle the incompatibility at stake. The remaining agreements were either partial agreements regulating only parts of the incompatibility or so called peace process agreements, aiming at the initiation of a negotiated settlement. See Lotta Harbom, Stina Höglbladh and Peter Wallensteen, 'Armed Conflicts and Peace Agreements', *Journal of Peace Research*, 43:5 (2006), pp. 617–31. In the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) dataset, an armed conflict is defined as 'a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both

ending of large-scale violence does not tell us much about the reality of peace beyond the absence of war. A closer look at the post-settlement societies where peace is considered to prevail reveals a very diverse picture. Within this category of cases, there are striking differences in terms of the character and quality of peace that has followed. In spite of this, the great majority of scholarly works within mainstream peace and conflict research is still predominantly concerned with explaining why peace sometimes fails and sometimes succeeds, based on an examination of the presence or absence of warfare alone.² It is not until recently that the academic community has begun to explore a more multidimensional picture of peace and its implications for both our understanding of the local realities of these societies, and our most common policy tools for ending violence and promoting peace in countries devastated by civil wars.³

In this article, we aim to contribute to this emerging research agenda by introducing a novel way of conceptualising variations of peace in post-war societies. This is done theoretically by revisiting some classical concepts within the field of peace research, in particular the notion of the Conflict Triangle as a useful analytical tool for the study of armed conflicts. Instead of lumping all cases of peace together, we believe it is more fruitful to distinguish between different types of peaceful post-war societies. The article therefore maps out various paths a society may take in the wake of a peace agreement and develops a classification captured in a Peace Triangle, where post-settlement societies are categorised on the basis of three key dimensions: issues, behaviour, and attitudes. As such, we want to expand the concept of peace to include not only a focus on the belligerents' conflict behaviour, but also the actors' attitudes and to what extent the main grievances of the parties are managed or resolved. We suggest that this heuristic device is helpful in portraying a more fine-grained and nuanced picture of the empirical reality of peace in post-war societies that have just come out of civil wars, while retaining a more narrow, short-termed, and conflict grounded focus on peace that falls short of the notion of positive peace in its most ideal form. The categorisations emerging from the Peace Triangle are illustrated by empirical examples from a range of different societies where a peace agreement has been signed and where large-scale violence has ended, such as Guatemala, Sierra Leone,

where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year'. It is limited to conflicts where at least one of the parties is the government of that state. *Ibid.*, p. 626. Updated information and more detailed definitions are available at {<http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP>}.

² This perspective is particularly predominant in comparative and quantitative studies on war termination, see for instance, Fen Osler Hampson, *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail* (Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace Press, 1996); Caroline A. Hartzell, 'Explaining the Stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43:1 (1999), pp. 3–22; Caroline Hartzell, Matthew Hoddie, and Donald Rothchild, 'Stabilizing the Peace After Civil War', *International Organization*, 55:1 (2001), pp. 183–208; Roy Licklider (ed.), *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Thomas Ohlson, 'Power Politics and Peace Policies: Intra-state Conflict Resolution' in Southern Africa, PhD dissertation (Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998); Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).

³ Such critique has for example been expressed by Paul Richards, *No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts* (Athens/Oxford: Ohio University Press/James Currey, 2005); Oliver Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005) and Roger MacGinty, *No War, No Peace: The Rejuvenation of Stalled Peace Processes and Peace Accords* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006).

Cambodia and Northern Ireland. We use the term post-settlement or post-war society as short hand to denote the types of cases that are of concern in this article. These include the countries mentioned above which have experienced organised violence such as a civil war or an intra-state armed conflict and where the warring parties subsequently have signed a peace agreement.⁴ Yet, the peace emerging in each country displays fundamentally different features.

We contend that this re-conceptualisation of peace in post-war societies is motivated by two reasons above all. First, if we do not move beyond a dichotomous categorisation of civil war outcomes it cannot fully be understood why it is so difficult for many post-war societies to reach a peace that can prove sustainable beyond the brief period of life-support provided by international peacekeeping missions and other forms of short-term external peacebuilding efforts. As noted, a large number of these societies are characterised by a 'no war, no peace' situation, with lingering violence, continued social polarisation and a failure to adhere to democratic norms and processes.⁵ The current focus on the simple dichotomy of 'failed' and 'successful' peace accords in the war termination literature, while useful in many respects, not only fails to capture this complex reality, but is unable to provide the answers to why we see this diversity and why some post-war societies appear to face greater obstacles than others in establishing a more sustainable peace. While this simplification of the real world is understandable given methodological concerns, we also run the risk of missing or prematurely disregarding key factors explaining the different outcomes of civil war peace processes.

Second, a re-conceptualisation of the peace concept is motivated by policy concerns. Critical differences in peace outcomes have implications for which tasks and resources that should be prioritised by the policy-making community in order to create and support the conditions for peace in that particular society. The responses required are fundamentally different in cases where there is peace in the respect that large-scale violence have ended, but where the main issues over which the war was fought are unresolved and where the society remains highly polarised, and cases of peaceful societies where the main issues at stake have been resolved, violence has ended and conflict attitudes have been significantly moderated. As such, this article links up with those writers and scholarly works that have questioned the usefulness of a uniform and standardised model for conflict resolution based on the liberal democratic template in contemporary peace processes.

This article is divided into four parts. We first present a brief overview of how peace has been conceptualised in previous research. Thereafter, we introduce the Peace Triangle as a conceptual tool to capture various dimensions of peace. On the basis of this differentiation, we present a classification that is intended to illuminate the diverse character of peace in post-war societies. Empirical examples will be

⁴ The term post-conflict society is often used for the type of situations we are interested in, but many scholars see this term as a misnomer in the sense that violence and conflict tend to remain in countries that recently have experienced an armed conflict or a civil war. See, for instance, Christopher Cramer, *Civil War is Not a Stupid Thing* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006).

⁵ This term has been used to describe the situation in a set of countries in transition, such as Sri Lanka, Cyprus and Kosovo, but has also given rise to academic books, such as the volumes by Richards, *No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts* and MacGinty, *No War, No Peace: The Rejuvenation of Stalled Peace Processes and Peace Accords*.

given in order to illustrate the great variations in terms of conflict issues, behaviour, and attitudes that may exist in locations emerging from civil war. In the fourth section, we discuss the relationship between the elements of the Peace Triangle, and the different challenges they pose for the establishment of a sustainable peace. We also discuss some reasons for why we see a pattern of divergent peace outcomes. Last, some concluding remarks and implications for future research and policy are discussed.

The concept of peace in previous research

As noted, peace is a term that encompasses a whole range of meanings and has highly subjective connotations.⁶ In peace and conflict research an important distinction has traditionally been made between ‘negative’ versus ‘positive’ peace.⁷ Negative peace usually denotes the absence of violence or war, while positive peace has come to mean the absence of violence plus the presence of some valuable features, such as justice, equality or development.⁸ Or, following Galtung, the absence of direct violence as well as the absence of structural and cultural violence in a society.⁹ Negative peace has been the prevailing object of study in both International Relations and Peace Research. In the scholarly field of war termination in particular, the most common way of defining peace has been as the absence of war, and the ending of such large-scale violence has generally been considered to equal peace.¹⁰ A disproportional share of studies of peace has consequently studied war and its termination rather than peace. This notion of peace as absence of war is also reflected in a set of related concepts within this literature, such as for example ‘conflict resolution’.¹¹ A large number of these

⁶ Richmond, ‘Patterns of Peace’, *Global Society*, 20:4 (2006), p. 372. See also Oliver Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*.

⁷ A cogent account of the different understandings of peace would require a deep study into the many historical and contemporary sources within not only the social sciences, but also in other fields, such as for example philosophy, social anthropology, and theology, which is beyond the scope of this article. For excellent discussions on the concept of peace, see for example Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace* and David Cortright, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁸ Kenneth Boulding has been credited with introducing this distinction. See Kenneth E. Boulding, ‘Toward a Theory of Peace’, in Roger Fisher (ed.), *International Conflict and Behavioural Science: The Craigville Papers* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1964); Kenneth E. Boulding, *Stable Peace* (Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1978). All sorts of terms and categorisations have been used to describe different variations in peace, but mainly pertaining to international conflicts, such as; stable, precarious, conditional, cold, warm, and normal. For a useful overview, see Arie M. Kacowicz, Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Ole Elgström, and Magnus Jerneck (eds), *Stable Peace Among Nations* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

⁹ Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p. 43.

¹⁰ Most prominent data-collection programmes in the field focus on the presence or absence of different types of violence, and apply a threshold of fatalities to determine what classifies as an armed conflict or war. This data is frequently used for the purpose of determining when there is peace following a war. For a useful overview of conflict-related data programs and collections, see Kristine Eck, ‘A Beginner’s Guide to Conflict Data: Finding and Using the Right Dataset’, *UCDP Papers* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2005).

¹¹ Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System* (London: Sage, 2007, 2nd edn.), pp. 9–10.

studies deal with the resolution or settlement of a violent conflict rather than the peace that is meant to follow.¹² Recent scholarly work has begun to question this one-sided usage of the peace concept and ascribes it to an ontological and methodological bias in the literature.¹³ In particular, it has been suggested that contemporary research displays a tendency to assume a causal relationship between negative peace and positive peace: if only the physical and immediate violence can be stopped, a positive peace will follow.¹⁴ It should also be noted that many scholars working within the field of war termination are not directly concerned with, or envisage, a world in which positive peace is widespread or even possible, but are more concerned with peace defined as stability.¹⁵

Interestingly, this notion of peace as the absence of war does not correspond with much of the practice and policy of international involvement in post-war societies. The multidimensional peacekeeping operations that became more common after the end of the Cold War not only sought to separate the belligerents and end large-scale violence, but also to promote institutional, political and economic reforms. In particular, peace was promoted through the Western account of democratisation.¹⁶ ‘Liberal peace’ or version thereof emerged as the leading conceptualisation of peace in most policy circles.¹⁷ As noted by a range of authors, such attempts to impose a particular version of peace from the top-down by external actors have in many cases had negative and unforeseen consequences for the peace envisaged.¹⁸ Importantly, they have often come into conflict with local perceptions and understandings of peace and peacebuilding.¹⁹ In this context, it is sufficient to note that such a framing of peace clearly falls within the conceptual definition of positive peace, which almost always implies large-scale reforms of the

¹² In the field of civil war termination, several authors measure the durability or success of negotiated settlements in terms of violence intensity. See, for instance, Caroline Hartzell, ‘Explaining the Stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43:1 (1999), pp. 3–22; Caroline Hartzell, Matthew Hoddie, and Donald Rothchild, ‘Stabilizing the Peace After Civil War’, *International Organization*, 55:1 (2001), pp. 183–208; Roy Licklider (ed.), *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).

¹³ Richmond, ‘Patterns of Peace’, p. 367.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

¹⁵ See Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*, p. 217, for a useful overview of different ontological perspectives on peace.

¹⁶ It has been suggested that there are essentially two versions of the democratic peace: 1) the establishment of democratic institutions, which in its most minimal version equals democracy with elections, and 2) the establishment of democratic norms, where democracy and its focus on non-violence is projected as a conflict resolution tool. See for example, Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (eds), *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996).

¹⁷ For instance, Richmond in *The Transformation of Peace*, refers to ‘liberal peace’, while MacGinty in *No War, No Peace*, refers to ‘liberal, democratic peace’.

¹⁸ For criticism of the policy of imposing the liberal peace model by international actors in post-war societies, see for example Simon Chesterman, *You, The People: The UN, Transnational Administration, and State-building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton* (London: Pluto Press, 2000); MacGinty, *No War, No Peace*; Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper and Mandy Turner, *Whose Peace? Critical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Peacebuilding* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*.

¹⁹ John Heathershaw, ‘Peacebuilding as Practice: Discourses from Post-conflict Tajikistan’, *International Peacekeeping*, 14:2 (2007), pp. 219–36.

political system and the ordering of society.²⁰ This conceptualisation of peace has subsequently filtered into the academic community, in attempts to defining and applying the term “successful peace” in empirical studies of post-war societies. For example, Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis seek to capture aspects of positive peace in post-war societies by focusing on what they term ‘participatory peace’, which denotes a direction towards more participation in democratic processes.²¹

Another way of conceptualising peace followed in the footsteps of the increasing number of peace agreements signed in the 1990s. This strand in the literature has primarily been concerned with the conditions determining the successful implementation of the stipulations of a peace accord. Peace is here viewed as equal to peace accord implementation. If only an agreement is implemented and carried out by the signatories, peace will prevail.²² However, it has been well recognised that while a peace agreement is often a first step on the path to ending a war, ‘[p]eace agreements sometimes contain the seeds of their own destruction’.²³ Roger MacGinty therefore sees many of the peace agreements brokered today as problems rather than as solutions: ‘To recommend the full implementation of a peace accord without critically examining the nature of the accord and its implementation process may compound the problems of a post-accord society.’²⁴ Hence, if a peace agreement is faulty, successful implementation may not necessarily imply peace.

A different way of relating to peace in previous research has been through the conceptual lens of ‘conflict transformation’. From such a perspective, peace is achieved through sustainable changes in the relationship between individuals and groups, from destructive relations to constructive ones, with a strong emphasis on the process of transformation. The term was first launched by John Paul Lederach in the late 1980s and has since become highly popular among researchers and practitioners.²⁵ Lederach argues that making use of the terms ‘conflict resolution’ and ‘conflict settlement’ carries with it a potential risk of focusing too narrowly on the short-term objective of ending the war, and forgetting to deal with the underlying causes of the conflict. Conflict transformation prescribes major changes in attitudes as necessary: it entails both a ‘positive orientation towards conflict’ and ‘a willingness to engage [...] to produce constructive change and growth’.²⁶ From such a perspective, reconciliation – at all levels of society – is central to the

²⁰ Richmond, ‘Patterns of Peace’, p. 369.

²¹ Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: UN Peace Operations* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 18–9.

²² From such a perspective, the greatest threats to peace are threats to the implementation process, such as spoilers or incomplete DDR processes. See in particular the influential volume by Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elisabeth M. Cousens (eds), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

²³ Fen Osler Hampson, *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail* (Washington D.C.: USIP Press, 1996), p. 3.

²⁴ MacGinty, *No War, No Peace*, p. 5.

²⁵ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: USIP, 1997).

²⁶ John Paul Lederach and Michelle Maiese, ‘Conflict Transformation’, in Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (eds), *Beyond Intractability* (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado: Boulder, 2003). Available online at: {<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/transformation/>}. Last accessed 15 August 2008).

conceptualisation of peace. Embedded in this vision is also a strong sense of justice. In this view, social and legal justice is not only a precondition for peace, but also the essence of the peace concept. Conflict transformation also requires fundamental social change addressing the root causes of the conflict. As such, the approach is concerned with the establishment of a positive peace that goes far beyond the notion of negative peace.

In recent years, several studies in the field have emphasised the need to move beyond the traditional dichotomy of peace versus war.²⁷ For instance, Paul Richards objects to the oftentimes ‘sharp categorical distinction between “war” and “peace”’ and urges us to rather think ‘in terms of a continuum.’²⁸ He argues that a war mode is the norm in some societies. In such places, war is interrupted by periods of peace, rather than the other way around. Roger MacGinty makes use of the concept ‘no war, no peace’ to conceptualise situations where a stalled and dysfunctional peace process manages to control much of the organised direct violence but fails to deal with the indirect violence of intimidation, ethnic tensions, militarisation, continuing violence, and endemic corruption. Such a view closely corresponds with the recent shift in the field concerning security, away from national security to human security, which focuses strongly on the individual and community aspects of security.²⁹

Previous research – focusing on divergent dimensions of peace – have made critical contributions to our knowledge of both what peace is and the conditions under which peace is likely to both emerge and endure. In particular, recent works, primarily from the field of critical studies, emphasising a more inter-disciplinary and multidimensional approach to the study of peace have been instrumental in opening the debate on the peace concept. We believe that the divide between different research traditions is unnecessarily wide. Those researchers who are primarily focused on a more narrow approach that only look at negative peace measured in the absence of violence and the more recent works that question such approaches seldom engage in meaningful dialogue and constructive exchange. Coming from a tradition of peace research more firmly rooted in the first camp rather than the other, and with a strong grounding in empirical research on civil war peace processes, we suggest in this article an alternative approach that provides for a step in the direction of closing this gap. While retaining a more narrow view of peace that falls short of positive peace, we want to expand on the concept of negative peace beyond the absence of war and conflict behaviour alone, to include a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the complex and diverse realities of peace, that also takes into account the incompatibilities at stake and the parties’ conflict attitudes. We are convinced that such an analysis is instrumental in providing at least part of the answer to why some post-war societies are more likely to experience sustainable peace than others. Sustainability is here understood as something other than merely the continued absence of war over time. It also

²⁷ Ibid; Richards, *No Peace, No War*; Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*.

²⁸ Richards, *No Peace, No War*, p. 5.

²⁹ ‘Human Security’ is a concept that gained ground within academia and policy circles after having been introduced in the 1994 UN Development Report. Its main pillars are ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’. See Richmond (2005) and the *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

contains a qualitative dimension, which concerns the consolidation of peace. When reaching this phase of the peace process, the termination of the war is no longer in focus, but rather the prevention of another one.³⁰

The Peace Triangle

It has been suggested that different war-endings yield different post-war societies or environments.³¹ For instance, government victories produce environments in which the rebels or guerrillas are either eliminated or co-opted into the winning side, while negotiated settlements create a situation in which former enemies have to find a way of co-existing. Equally true is that similar war endings – in this case negotiated war endings – generate different types of peace. A richer classification of the concept of peace provides a useful analytical tool to understand the various dimensions of peace. In the seminal work of Johan Galtung, he depicts social conflicts as consisting of three key elements: the *conflict* itself, *conflict behaviour*, and *conflict attitudes*. These three elements interact and reinforce each other in self-reinforcing cycles of dynamic effects. Together, they make up the three cornerstones of the Conflict Triangle.³² The conflict may, in theory, begin in any one of the corners, although Galtung in later works appears to give more prominence to the contradiction over issues between at least two actors as the most logical point of departure.³³

The ‘conflict itself’ concerns the issues at stake or the incompatibility in question. It is common in the literature to make a distinction between the parties’ positions – their articulated aspirations and demands – and their underlying interests, values or needs.³⁴ When two parties’ aspirations or demands concerning the same resource cannot be met at the same time their positions are incompatible.³⁵ This component of the Conflict Triangle underlines the importance of actors that are interested and willing to manifest these incompatibilities into conflict issues and formulate and pursue these demands. In the absence of such

³⁰ Thomas Ohlson and Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, ‘From Intra-State War to Democratic Peace in Weak States’, *Uppsala Peace Research Papers*, No. 5, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Universitet, 2002, pp. 20–1.

³¹ Karl Jr. DeRouen and David Sobek, ‘The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 41:3 (2004): pp. 305.

³² Johan Galtung, ‘Conflict as a Way of Life’, in Hugh Freeman (ed.), *Progress in Mental Health* (London: Churchill, 1969), pp. 486–91. The Conflict Triangle has since been further developed by a number of scholars. See, for instance, Christopher R. Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict* (London: Macmillan, 1981) and Håkan Wiberg, *Konfliktteori och fredsforskning (Conflict Theory and Peace Research)*, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell Läromedel, 1990, 2nd edn.). The triangle has also been modified and discussed in relation to conflict resolution and peace building. See for example Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, pp. 54–6, and Anna Åkerlund, *Att omvandla konflikter och bygga fred (To Transform Conflict and Build Peace)*, (Stockholm, Forum Syds förlag, 2001), pp. 54–6.

³³ Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 70–3.

³⁴ See, for instance, Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004, 3rd edn.), pp. 199–203; Wiberg, *Konfliktteori och fredsforskning*, pp. 12–21.

³⁵ Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, p. 14.

actors, the conflict will remain latent in society.³⁶ ‘Conflict behaviour’ refers instead to the way that the conflict is acted out by the relevant parties in question when they pursue these issues. These actions may range from direct violence to threats, boycotts or sanctions, with the intention to force the opponent to abandon or modify its goals.³⁷ Lastly, ‘conflict attitudes’ is meant to capture the psychological states or conditions – attitudes, emotions and perceptions – that develop between the parties in a conflict. Conflict attitudes may be emotional or cognitive in nature, and serve to create or reinforce destructive ways of perceiving each other. Examples of such emotions are anger, distrust and fear, while common negative perceptions include the formulation of stereotypes and generalisations along, for example, ethnic, religious, or racial lines.³⁸ These attitudes are at the same time both a result of the conflict and serves to further reinforce and exacerbate it.³⁹

The Peace Triangle includes the same key component as the Conflict Triangle. But instead of making use of this classification as a way to analyse the dynamics of armed conflicts, we use it as an analytical tool for identifying the empirical varieties of peace following civil war peace agreements. While Galtung does not give actors much weight in his conceptualisation of conflict, we perceive of actors as central to the analysis of all three aspects – incompatibilities, behaviour and attitudes – in a post-war society. It is the actors, be they political parties, rebel groups, paramilitary groups, armed criminals, or governments, that formulate demands, act on attitudes and carry out conflict behaviour. As such, they should not be considered in separation from issues, behaviour and attitudes, but rather form an integral part of all these three elements. We make no claim that these three broad aspects can accommodate all the factors necessary for analysing all the conceivable factors of a particular post-war society. For example, a number of structural factors likely to be of relevance to many post-war societies are omitted from the analysis for the sake of conceptual clarity. However, in our view these three basic and fundamental elements are at the same time both so general and so specific that they carry a particularly high degree of explanatory value for a comparative analysis of different post-war societies.

Issues, behaviour and attitudes are thus used as the key indicators of peace, and on the basis of such differentiation we arrive at a classification scheme of different categories of post-war societies. This classification of peace thus retains its grounding in a conflict definition. In this way, it is a distinct phenomenon, which sets it apart from peace concepts that include notions of social justice, development or reconciliation, concepts that are closely associated with notions of positive peace. Naturally, not all the conceivable aspects discussed below are relevant in each and every empirical case, and some post-war societies display characteristics that may place them in several of the identified categories. Hence, the components of the Peace Triangle, like those of the Conflict Triangle, are not mutually exclusive categories. A particular post-war society can display such characteristics that it may place itself in several different categories at the same time. For this reason, it

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Wiberg, *Konfliktteori och fredsforskning*, pp. 24–6. See also Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict*, pp. 29–32.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 29–30. See also Mitchell 1981, pp. 25–9.

³⁹ Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict*, p. 27.

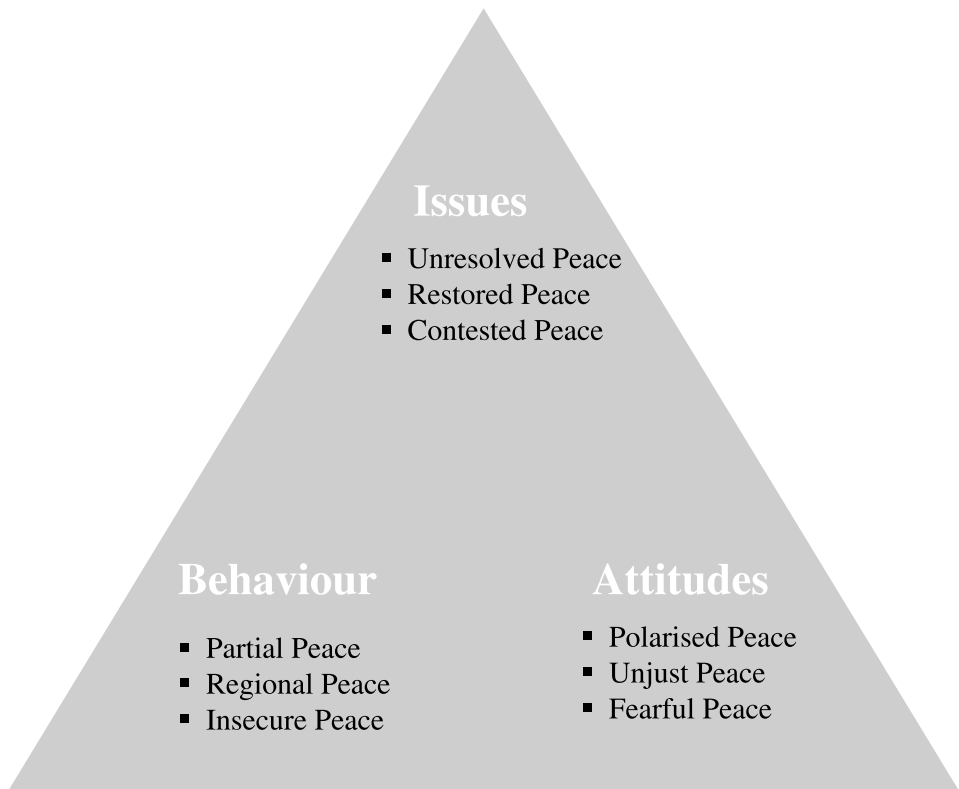


Figure 1. *The Peace Triangle.*

is not a typology in the most common use of the term.⁴⁰ The Peace Triangle is rather meant to function as a heuristic device that contributes to a richer appreciation of the empirical varieties of peace after war.

Issues: unresolved, restored and contested peace

The first corner of the Peace Triangle concerns the issues at stake. This dimension captures the relative presence or absence of remaining conflict issues in society. In some cases, key conflict issues have not been addressed in the peace agreement. This may be due to a deliberate strategy from the parties themselves or a third party to pursue a phased peace process, where the warring actors settle on some issues while postponing others for later. When doing so, they often assume or hope that remaining issues will prove easier to settle further down the road, either due to changes taking place in the attitudes of the parties and groups, or due to

⁴⁰ For more on the use of typologies and classification, see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 238–9.

changes on the ground stemming from the ending of violence or the implementation of other issues in the peace accord. At other times, the peace process has failed to resolve or manage certain issues, although the conflict behaviour has been regulated and violence may have stopped. These post-war societies thus display characteristics of *Unresolved Peace*.

The Israel-Palestinian peace process in the 1990s is an illustrative example. Most of the critical issues at stake – such as the status of Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees – remained unresolved following the signing of the Oslo Peace Accord in 1993. The third parties involved in the process, as well as the negotiating elites themselves, were hoping that a period of decreasing violence and the implementation of a number of critical stepping-stones, such as the establishment of a self-governing Palestinian Authority, would eventually improve the prospects for arriving at a political deal concerning the remaining conflict issues. However, even at times of relatively low levels of violence and improved relations between the main political actors, little progress was made on these issues. Instead, large-scale violence broke out again, partly due to the failure to reach a settlement on the key incompatibilities.

The case of Kosovo illustrates a different dynamic in which failure to solve the key conflict issue – the status of Kosovo in relation to Serbia – resulted in a unilaterally imposed solution. Under the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Kosovo became an international protectorate. Provisional Institutions of Self-Government were established but responsibility for upholding security remained within the authority of UNMIK and the NATO-led peacekeeping mission Kosovo Force (KFOR). A UN-led negotiation process was initiated in February 2006, in a move to find a solution to Kosovo's status. A year later a plan was presented to the UN Security Council, which would grant Kosovo a far-reaching autonomy solution termed 'supervised independence'. However, due to opposition from Russia, the Security Council refrained from voting on a new resolution. In the midst of growing frustration, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia in February 2008. Serbia has not accepted the solution and the future remains uncertain.

At other times, the main conflict issues may have been addressed and resolved in the peace agreement, yet many of the underlying causes and grievances that contributed to fuel the armed conflict in the first place are still present in society. In the worst-case scenario of such a peace, the post-war society begins to resemble the situation prior to the outbreak of the civil war. Liberia following the conclusion of the 1996 Abuja peace accord and the coming to power of former warlord Charles Taylor in the subsequent post-war elections is perhaps one of the most notorious examples. After assuming power, Taylor refused to carry out the reconstruction of the national army as envisaged by the accord, and he took advantage of his new power platform to oppress the political opposition in the country. Eventually, Taylor's misuse of power set in motion a series of events that lead to his own downfall as President. In 2003, facing military defeat, economic sanctions, and strong international condemnations, he was forced to step down from power and leave the country. Hence, peace did not entail the transformation of society, but merely its restoration. In these situations, the danger for renewed conflict is lurking beneath a façade of tranquillity. We refer to these cases as cases of *Restored Peace*.

The situation in Sierra Leone following the conclusion of its almost decade-long civil war was for a number of years also illustrative of such a peace. In July 1999, rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the government of Sierra Leone signed yet another peace agreement in Lomé to end the prolonged civil war. However, the peace agreement effectively broke down the following spring when the rebels took a large number of UN troops hostage. Subsequently, the rebels were militarily defeated by a British military intervention, and forced into compliance. In January 2002 the war was officially declared ended and multiparty elections were held shortly thereafter. In the post-election period, the security situation was significantly improved, and the last remaining troops from the UN peacekeeping force were withdrawn in the end of 2005. Most of the direct conflict issues were solved with the defeat and disappearance of the armed opposition, the conclusion of the peace accord and the transition to democratic politics. However, the post-war situation remained fragile due to widespread corruption and high unemployment, especially among the large pool of marginalised youths, and resentment among the population with the political establishment for having failed to undertake a number of promises regarding much needed political and economic reforms. Given that so many of the underlying grievances that are generally acknowledged to have caused the civil war in the first place remained unchanged and unaddressed several years after the ending of the war, analysts raised concerns about the risk of a renewed conflict in Sierra Leone.⁴¹ While the change of government in the second post-war elections of 2007 is widely regarded as promising from this perspective, there are still significant challenges to be surmounted.⁴²

There are also situations where the signing of the peace agreement itself, or the post-war political order that emerge from it, give rise to new conflict issues and may even be the very cause of a renewed armed conflict. We refer to these situations as cases of *Contested Peace*. The peace agreement in Versailles following the First World War, and the political disorder that followed during the inter-war period, is the classical example of such a post-war peace in the context of international wars. Under such circumstances, it is the ending of the war and the terms of the agreement itself that lead to new conflict issues. It may also be the case that the resolution of the original conflict brings other and previously suppressed, social, economical and political issues to the forefront. For example, in countries where a large segment of the population has united around the opposition against the regime, divisions within the very same group can emerge when the regime has been ousted from power. In fact, it has been suggested that renewed conflicts are much more likely to occur between former allies than former foes.⁴³ According to Atlas and Licklider, this is because negotiated settlements are generally preceded by intense intra-party tensions and compromises, which are likely to carry over into the post-settlement period. Leaders and factions who opposed the accord, or whose objectives were not realised by the agreement and

⁴¹ International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: the State of Security and Governance', Africa Report No. 67, 2003, 'Sierra Leone: The Election Opportunity', *Africa Report* no. 129, 2007.

⁴² *Ibid.*, *Africa Report* no. 143, 2008.

⁴³ Pierre M. Atlas and Roy Licklider, 'Conflict Among Former Allies after Civil War Settlement: Sudan, Zimbabwe, Chad, and Lebanon', *Journal of Peace Research*, 36:1 (1999), pp. 35–54.

the new political order, often find themselves in opposition to their former allies and create new anti-settlement coalitions.⁴⁴

For example, the Lancaster House settlement in 1980, which brought an end to white minority rule in Zimbabwe, was soon thereafter replaced by violence between the two principal armed opposition movements, ZAPU (the Zimbabwe African People's Union) and ZANU (the Zimbabwe African National Union). The conclusion of the Ta'if accord in 1989 brought peace to a war-ravaged Lebanon, however, it was also the cause of intense intra-Maronite fighting in the post-settlement period.⁴⁵ Timor Leste (formerly East Timor) is another and more recent case in point. The Timorese had rallied together against the occupation of Indonesia. After independence had been achieved in 2002, new conflicts emerged and continued to escalate. Large-scale riots erupted in 2006 when 600 soldiers were dismissed from the security forces. Claiming discrimination because they were from the west of the country, a faction of the dismissed soldiers formed a rebel group. In 2008 the rebel soldiers attempted to assassinate president Ramos-Horta, who survived but was seriously wounded.

Behaviour: partial, regional and insecure peace

Conflict behaviour in the context of post-settlement societies addresses aspects regarding the relative presence or absence of violence and insecurity. In many cases, a ceasefire is a precondition for initiation of negotiations. For instance, in Northern Ireland the British government would not enter into serious negotiations with the Sinn Fein before the IRA had ceased hostilities. In other cases, the regulation of violence is part and parcel of the peace accord. On rare occasions a comprehensive peace agreement is signed by a substantial number of parties before a ceasefire is agreed on, as was the case in Burundi in 2000.⁴⁶ The most troubling aspect of conflict behaviour in post-conflict situations is acts of violence by the former warring parties or by new political actors that oppose the peace deal or the new political order that emerged from it. Even in those situations where continued incidences of violence may not lead to renewed large-scale warfare between all or some of the warring parties, or threatens the breakdown of the peace accord, lingering violence and wide-spread insecurity for large parts of the population still constitutes a major obstacle for the newly found peace.⁴⁷ In other post-war societies, criminal violence will surge in the post-war period due to the legacy of warfare.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. The other two incidents referred to by Atlas and Licklider is the ousting of President Hissene Habré in Chad in 1990 by members of his own armed forces, following the conclusion of several peace agreements with armed opposition movements in the country, and the break out of the armed conflict in Sudan in 1983, which had linkages to the Addis Ababa Accords of 1972.

⁴⁶ See more on the function and effect of ceasefires and other violence regulating mechanisms in Kristine Höglund, *Peace Negotiations in the Shadow of Violence* (Leiden, Brill/Martinus Nijhoff, 2008).

⁴⁷ John Darby, *The Effect of Violence on Peace Processes* (Washington D.C., USIP Press, 2001); Höglund, *Peace Negotiations in the Shadow of Violence*; Edward Newman and Oliver Richmond (eds), *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers during Conflict Resolution* (New York, UN University Press, 2006).

First, we consider situations of what we call *Partial Peace*. In some post-war societies, one or more of the former warring parties continue to use arms to pursue their political goals, either because they were excluded from the peace agreement, by choice or otherwise, or because they renege on their prior commitment to a settlement. However, the violence that follows does not necessarily lead to the recurrence of war between all former warring parties or the breakdown of that peace agreement. In some respect, thus, peace still holds. The situation in Cambodia following the conclusion of the Paris Peace Accord in 1991 is illustrative of such a peace. Under the terms of the accords, all the warring parties were granted reserved seats in a transitional body based on a power-sharing formula, although the UN was to impose ultimate authority over the country during the transitional period. In 1993, post-war elections were held, and one of the armed opposition groups, the royalist FUNCINPEC (Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif) in coalition with the former incumbent party, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), assumed power in an unconstitutional power-sharing arrangement. However, already prior to the holding of elections, the Khmer Rouge had withdrawn from the peace process and resumed its armed struggle. Following its withdrawal, the group was excluded from the political centre where peace remained between the other parties to the peace agreement. But for a number of years they still retained a sufficiently strong military capacity to keep the government and its troops engaged in continued armed clashes.⁴⁸

Incidents of such residual violence by one or several armed groups sometimes take on a distinctive regional character. Hence, although the post-war situation may closely resemble the situation described above, the most defining characteristic is the geographical variations in outbreaks and intensity of violent behaviour in different parts of the same post-war society. Such regional variations in patterns of violence are common during civil wars, where geographical factors such as for example country size, lack of infrastructure, and population concentration have been found to influence the onset and dynamics of warfare.⁴⁹ For example, the most intense fighting is often geographically concentrated to a limited area of the country.⁵⁰ The same is true for many post-war societies that witnesses renewed or sustained instances of violence in spite of the signing of a peace accord. We refer to such situations as cases of *Regional Peace*. Such regionalised conflict behaviour sometimes has a cross-border character, with conflicts in one country impacting on peace in neighbouring countries through the flow of refugees, combatants and arms across the borders.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, *From Rebellion to Politics: The Transformation of Rebel Groups to Political Parties in Civil War Peace Processes*, PhD dissertation, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, (2007).

⁴⁹ See Halvard Buhag and Scott Gates, 'The Geography of Civil War', *Journal of Peace Research*, 39:4 (2002), pp. 417–33; James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War', *American Political Science Review*, 97:1 (2003), pp. 75–90; Håvard Hegre and Clionad Raleigh, 'Population Size, Concentration, and Civil War. A Geographically Disaggregated Analysis', *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 4243, (2007).

⁵⁰ Hegre and Raleigh, 'Population Size, Concentration, and Civil War'.

⁵¹ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, 2nd edn.); Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), large-scale violence between the numerous, and regionally supported rebel groups and the government came to an end in late 2001. In March 2002, real negotiations between the parties commenced. By the end of the year, an all-inclusive peace agreement was signed in Pretoria, which provided for a transitional power-sharing arrangement between all the former warring parties. The accord addressed many of the conflict issues, but was unable to completely end or change conflict behaviour. While violence between the main parties was largely kept in check during the transitional period, violence between ethnic groups in the Equateur, the Katanga and the Kivu provinces, as well as interfactional fighting in the new army, was rife. In 2006, multi-party elections were held and a new constitution was adopted by a referendum. Yet the violence continued or even escalated in various parts of the vast country, most prominently in the East, which saw little progress in disarming the militia groups. Following the elections, political tensions also emerged in areas that voted strongly in favour of the opposition, notably in the west, in Bas-Congo and in the capital. The government's security forces resorted to brutal methods to keep the discontent in order, which only created further unrest and instability. In early 2007, violent clashes in the West left over 400 people killed.⁵²

Lastly, there are post-war societies where another type of conflict behaviour constitutes one of the most pressing challenges for the establishment of sustainable peace. We refer to such situations as cases of *Insecure Peace*. This category is meant to capture situations where insecurity for the population at large is common due to widespread violent crimes following the ending of the war.⁵³ Such crimes may stem directly from the legacy of the war itself: large amounts of arms still present and available in society, a large pool of unemployed former combatants or paramilitary forces and continued social polarisation and fear. Criminal violence, although not necessarily political in nature, still threatens the ability of the newly achieved peace to improve the security situation for large sections of the population and hence the peace itself. Cases in point are Guatemala, El Salvador, Afghanistan, and South Africa, which all experienced a dramatic rise in criminal violence after the conflict had been solved and political violence subsided.

Why is it that criminal violence becomes an integral feature of many post-war societies? One suggested reason relates to what has been termed the 'legitimisation of violence' hypothesis. During an armed conflict, the use of violence becomes an accepted mode of behaviour and the legitimacy of violence continues in the post-war society.⁵⁴ A related point has to do with the institutionalisation of criminal activity in countries experiencing violent conflict. When the war is over and new people move into power, 'a government official or soldier engaged in criminal activities to raise funds for purchasing sanctioned arms can continue in

⁵² International Crisis Group, 'Congo: Consolidating the Peace', Africa Report No. 128, (2007).

⁵³ Roger MacGinty, 'Post-Accord Crime' in John Darby (ed.), *Violence and Reconstruction* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 101–19; Chrissie Steenkamp, 'The Legacy of War: Conceptualising a "Culture of Violence" to Explain Violence after Post Accords', *The Round Table*, 94:379 (2005), pp. 253–67.

⁵⁴ This hypothesis was suggested by Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner in 'Violent Acts and Violent Times: A Comparative Approach to Postwar Homicide Rates', *American Sociological Review*, 41: 6 (1976), pp. 937–63. Their study showed that countries which had participated in international conflicts experienced higher rates of homicide.

these activities unofficially after a change of power'.⁵⁵ Finally, the emergence of gang-related criminal activity in post-war societies can be interpreted as a result of gangs, paramilitaries and other armed groups filling a space which state authorities have failed to legitimately claim or fulfil.⁵⁶ Transitions from war to peace are all about restoring and reordering power-relations and institutions in society and due to the pervasiveness of criminal activity and the acceptability of violence as a legitimate mode of behaviour, crime often finds its own place in post-war societies.

Attitudes: polarised, unjust and fearful peace

The last corner or component of the Peace Triangle is concerned with the relative presence or absence of conflict attitudes in societies that have undergone armed conflict. Some post-war societies experience improved social relations between the former warring parties and reduced conflict attitudes in society at large after a settlement has been reached. Such a development may be due to a formal process of reconciliation, but improved relationships may also follow from the reduction of violence and the management or resolution of the conflict issues. Post-war Mozambique is a good case in point, where conflict attitudes were significantly reduced after the signing of the peace agreement in spite of the absence of any formal reconciliation process at the national level. At other times, however, the society remains highly polarised along former conflict lines in the wake of a peace agreement. In fact, more extreme political views and attitudes may appear during the post-war period and social polarisation increase in an already divided society. In addition, many post-war societies are characterised by a prevailing culture of impunity and fear, which may prove a serious obstacle for the establishment of a sustainable peace.

First, we consider cases of *Polarised Peace*. The category captures societies where prevailing conflict attitudes have remained polarised since the signing of the peace settlement, and where more extreme political views may even have appeared in the post-war period. The development that followed in the wake of the 1998 peace agreement in Northern Ireland is a useful example. The main divide in the Northern Ireland conflict was between the Nationalist/Republican camp that favoured a united Ireland, and the Unionist/Loyalist camp that wanted to keep the union with the UK. The expectations were high among the population that the peace agreement would finally bring an end to the prolonged conflict which had polarised society for decades. However, while much of the organised political violence subsided, paramilitary activities continued and violence was rife in the communities. Within a few years, the high hopes accompanying the signing of the agreement had clearly faded among the public. Inter-community relations had improved only little. Public opinion polls showed that by 2003, 70 per cent of the Protestant side was critical of the accord, claiming that the Catholics were

⁵⁵ Carolyn Nordstrom, *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁵⁶ John M. Hagedorn, 'The Global Impact of Gangs', *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 21: 2 (2005), pp 153–69.

benefiting more from it. This figure should be compared to that of a similar poll conducted in 1998, when only 50 per cent of the Protestants felt that the Catholics were benefiting more from the peace deal.⁵⁷

Even more worrying, on the political scene, the more extremist parties gained strength at the expense of the more moderate political voices. The provincial assembly stipulated in the peace agreement began its work in year 2000. However, it was dysfunctional for long time-periods due to the political parties' failure to cooperate. Such cooperation across the communal divide was necessary, since the institutions set in place were based on power sharing. In addition, the traditionally more moderate parties – the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) on the Nationalist side, and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) on the Unionist side – were losing ground. In the assembly elections in 2003, five years after the peace agreement, the more extremist parties on both sides had gained in significance. Sinn Fein (SF), the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), a Unionist party with strong Protestant profile and alleged links to loyalist paramilitary groups, now emerged as the two largest political parties. In the elections of 2007, this trend continued. In spite of this, the assembly resumed its work in March 2007, with its success hinging on the ability of these political protagonists to cooperate with each other.

In some post-war societies, a prevailing culture of impunity and lack of reconciliation poses a significant threat to the peace.⁵⁸ We refer to these as cases of *Unjust Peace*. The matter of justice in post-war societies raises difficult dilemmas about victims and perpetrators: justice in what regards and justice for whom? In some post-war societies, official mechanisms to address issues concerning truth, reconciliation and justice have been established, such as a truth commission or a war crimes court. These processes may take place on a national or even regional level or in the local communities. In other cases, amnesty is granted for the sake of peace and there are no sanctions against the perpetrators of human right abuses and war crimes committed during the course of the conflict.⁵⁹ However, we know very little about which approach is the most conducive for peace. We do know however, that these mechanisms for transitional justice may not always reflect the prevailing sediments of how justice and fairness are perceived in society. We also know that many decisions about amnesty are taken by the negotiating elite behind closed doors, with little concern for the sentiments among the population at large in regards to these issues.

Our primary concern is therefore how these transitional justice processes, or the lack thereof, influence conflict attitudes. The post-war situation in Guatemala, following the chain of peace agreements that were signed in the 1990s, is illustrative

⁵⁷ Similar trends are discernable when looking at how people in Northern Ireland perceive of community relations. Those believing that community relations have improved have decreased since 1998. See *Northern Ireland Life and Time Survey*. Available online at: {<http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/>}. (Last accessed 15 August 2008).

⁵⁸ See for example, Mohammed Abu-Nimer (ed.), *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence: Theory and Practice* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001); Neil J. Kritz (ed.), *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes* (Washington D.C., USIP Press: 1995); Robert I. Rotberg, and Dennis Thompson (eds), *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁵⁹ Pauline H. Baker, 'Conflict Resolution versus Democratic Governance: Divergent Paths to Peace?', in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (eds), *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* (Washington D.C.: USIP Press, 2001), pp. 759–62.

in this respect. The main contenders to the conflict were the government, backed by a strong military, and the guerrilla alliance known as the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, URNG). The final agreement was signed in December 1996. Jointly, these agreements stipulated far-reaching social, political and economic reform besides the short-term goal of demilitarising society. Five years down the road, the violent conflict was over, but many of the problems the peace accord had sought to address were still, to a varying degree, present. A particularly worrisome feature of post-accord Guatemala is the unremittingly high levels of violent crime, linked not only to the socio-economic situation, but also to a weak judicial system, the legacy of violence and a deeply ingrained culture of impunity. A Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) was set up to map out the human rights abuses and war crimes committed during the conflict. However, another accord established an amnesty that was assumed to apply both to the army and to the guerrillas.⁶⁰

Lastly, there are post-war societies where peace is conditioned on the presence of a strongman and his rule through fear and control. Hence, the conclusion of a peace agreement may be followed by the absence of large-scale violence, but only due to political control and repression from the side of the regime in power. In such instances, perceptions of fear inhibit the ability of individuals and communities to overcome conflict attitudes. We call this *Fearful Peace*. The developments that followed in the wake of the signing of the 1996 Abuja peace agreement in Liberia are ample evidence of such a peace. In the post-war elections, former warlord Charles Taylor and his former army-turned-party won the national vote with a landslide, much due to the use of intimidations and threats, widespread fear and war fatigue among the population, and residual insecurity and violence in much of the country at the time of the elections. Although the elections were supposed to mark the end of seven years of brutal civil war in Liberia, they also marked the beginning of a new period of government abuse, political intimidations against the opposition, and widespread fear among the population. There was a peace of sorts, but it was a warlord's peace.⁶¹

Peace in our time: the path to sustainable peace

The Peace Triangle, which depicts variation in peace across three key components – issues, attitudes, and behaviour – enables us to illustrate the great diversity of peace beyond the absence of large-scale warfare in contemporary post-settlement societies. It functions as an important diagnostic tool for identifying the type of peace that characterises a particular post-war state. In some cases, remaining and unresolved conflict issues constitute the gravest obstacles to the newly established peace. In other cases, residual violence and polarised attitudes

⁶⁰ After the signing of the final accord, the congress voted in favour of a law that included general amnesty provisions. However, due to strong objections from the human rights community (both domestically and internationally), the final version was amended so as not to include amnesty for some exceptional crimes such as genocide, torture, and forced displacement.

⁶¹ Desirée Nilsson and Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, 'Breaking the Cycle of Violence? Promises and Pitfalls of the Liberian Peace Process', *Civil Wars*, 7:4 (2005), pp. 396–414.

typify the post-war order. As noted previously, some societies display characteristics that place them in several of the different types of peace identified at the same time. A particular post-war country can be contested, restored and polarised at the same time or perhaps partial, regional and fearful. In addition, each post-war society also changes over time, and hence, so does the type(s) of peace that characterises it. There are significant changes between different post-war societies in this respect. Some countries still struggle with problems related to unresolved issues, continued outbreaks of violence and polarised attitudes several years after the conclusion of the peace agreement, and hence place themselves in several of the suggested categories of peace. Others appear to move more decisively away from the legacy of war as soon as the settlement has been signed. Kosovo and Northern Ireland, for example, are characterised by extreme polarisation and segregation between the ethnic communities, while Guatemala and Sierra Leone typify cases where the social and economic reform stipulated by the agreement have not been addressed, rendering many of the conflict issues left to be solved. At the same time, Guatemala and Northern Ireland are both post-war countries that are experiencing high levels of organised crime, often with violent manifestations, as a direct consequence of the legacy of the armed conflict. In other cases, the main threat to peace has been posed by residual violence between all or some of the warring parties. Cambodia and the Democratic Republic of Congo are cases in point.

The Peace Triangle thus enables us to analyse and classify the diversity of peace beyond war. But it also helps us to highlight a set of other critical questions, such as why we witness such diversity in post-war societies, and what the implications are for the prospects of establishing a sustainable peace beyond the absence of war. The insights from an analysis based on the Peace Triangle can therefore also contribute to the process of deciding on appropriate strategies for addressing the various obstacles to a sustainable peace in different post-war situations. For this purpose, it is worthwhile considering how the different elements of the Peace Triangle affect each other. As noted previously, the conflict dynamics perspective places a strong emphasis on how the various components of the conflict triangle interact and reinforce each other in self-reinforcing cycles of dynamic effects. As the conflict escalates, the parties use more and heavier violent tactics, conflict issues proliferate and change character, more actors are drawn into the conflict, and their hostile attitudes become more ingrained.⁶² This perspective on conflicts has implications for conflict resolution. It points to the need for conflict transformation, whereby the conflict dynamics are converted from a destructive to a constructive cycle of exchange and interaction.⁶³ Or, in other words, the development of a benign rather than malign conflict spiral.⁶⁴ Actions in that direction may be taken by the parties themselves or by an intervening third party. These insights from the analysis of armed conflicts carry important implications for our conceptualisation of post-settlement peace. Unresolved issues, residual violence, and hostile group attitudes pose threats to a sustainable peace precisely because each component has the potential to escalate the conflict again and restart a destructive cycle of dynamic effect. The components are thus not likely to remain

⁶² Pruitt and Kim, *Social Conflict*, pp. 69–71. See also Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict*, pp. 56–60.

⁶³ Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, pp. 33–4.

⁶⁴ Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict*, p. 63.

as isolated phenomena. For this reason, a proper diagnosis of the specific character of peace is critical for understanding the prospects of establishing a sustainable peace in that particular local context.

Certain types of peace are more at the risk of become destructive than others. Here the Peace Triangle can function as an important tool for identifying the quality of peace in various post-war societies, and where peace is most fragile and under threat. Following the logic of the Conflict Triangle, which suggests that issues play a key role in initiating conflict dynamics, we argue that unresolved, unaddressed and contested issues in the post-war period pose the greatest potential threat to sustainable peace. Hence, while both the primary parties themselves and involved third parties eager to show quick results, may consider a phased peace process, like the Oslo Peace Process in Israel/Palestine, as an attractive option in an intractable and prolonged conflict it may also carry the seeds of its own destruction. Such an approach is very demanding, and builds on a number of uncertain assumptions about the long-term commitment and resolve of both the parties and the involved mediators. In addition, it is very unlikely that it is possible to end, or even reduce violent behaviour and negative attitudes as long as the key incompatibilities remain unresolved. Indeed, continued violent attacks and hostile perceptions and emotions among the population are likely to generate more and new conflict issues that need to be addressed in a final settlement.

Certainly, violent actions and continued insecurity in a post-war society can also undermine the prospects for peace, especially if such actions prevent the implementation of vital aspects of the peace accord and if they are allowed to continue unchecked and without sanctions. However, peace is always likely to be seen as a threat by some individuals, groups or parties that lose out from the new political order. These may attempt to spoil the peace through act of violence if they have the resolve and resources to do so.⁶⁵ But what really matters in such situations are how such violent attacks are perceived and responded to by the local population, the other parties to the conflict, the institutions of the state and, if relevant, the concerned third-party actors. Such responses can play a decisive different in determining to what extent lingering violent behaviour will effect attitudes and issues, and hence the long-term prospects for sustainable peace. For example, while Liberia has witnessed a number of attempts by disgruntled soldiers and marginalised leaders to spoil the peace that followed after the 2003 peace accord, swift responses by both the political leadership and the UN peacekeeping force has prevented such behaviour from translating into serious incompatibilities or wide-spread negative attitudes.

Lastly, while polarised attitudes are likely to get the least attention from concerned third-party actors and are commonly overlooked as key indicators of the status of peace, they can also play a critical role in facilitating the work of dissatisfied actors and groups in mobilising the population around new or old conflict issues and hence facilitate a return to war or at least provide a serious obstacle to sustainable peace. It is therefore important to analyse the causes and consequences of such hostile attitudes, negative perceptions and antagonistic rhetoric, and determine whether such attitudes carries the potential for setting off

⁶⁵ Stephen John Stedman, 'Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes', *International Security*, 22:2 (1997), pp. 5–53.

a renewed negative conflict spiral or not. The focus on conflict attitudes becomes particularly important when considering the somewhat longer time-perspective beyond the absence of war, as it is clear that negative attitudes generally takes a much longer time to change than laying down the guns or resolving the conflict issues. Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Northern Ireland are only three examples of post-war societies where persistent conflict attitudes continue to prevent the establishment of a more sustainable peace long after the ending of warfare.

Unlike most writings within the conflict dynamics perspective, however, we place a stronger focus on the role played by the actors themselves in these processes. In a cursory analysis of our empirical examples, it becomes clear that most steps taken either in the direction of a sustainable peace or towards destructive conflict are preceded by calculated decisions and actions on part of the central political actors in question. The dynamics at work in peace processes are not predetermined to become benign or malign in character. Nor are they likely to spiral out of hand unless the key actors involved take deliberate steps in that direction.⁶⁶ By acknowledging and emphasising the actor perspective in these processes of social change, we also underline the critical difference that actors – the parties to the conflict or concerned third parties and donors – can play in changing the dynamics at work by addressing the identified obstacles to sustainable peace. Different types of peace require different prescriptions. A restored peace requires a post-war political approach by the government that effectively addresses some of the underlying causes of the war. A partial peace requires a decisive strategy from the parties at the center to either include the outside violence makers in a dialogue and/or effectively undermine their attempts to spoil the peace through violence.

The Peace Triangle is also useful as an analytical device for better understanding some of the difficulties encountered when states, sometimes pressured by third parties and donors, attempt to (re)introduce or reinforce democratic reforms in war-torn societies. As noted previously, in policy-making circles as well as in contemporary peace research much debate has been devoted to ideas on how democracy can strengthen peace, particularly in societies coming out of long and devastating civil wars. Ideally, democracy as a political system addresses all three aspects of the Peace Triangle: issues, behaviour and attitudes. First, in theory, democracy provides a transparent structure for the succession and distributing of political power in a society. As such, it is in essence a system for managing central conflict issues. Because the unequal distribution of power and influence often is at the core of the causes of civil wars, the construction of a system for handling such issues in the post-settlement period is a critical component of the conflict resolution process.⁶⁷ Second, democracy is based on the principle of non-violence and the

⁶⁶ There are a number of authors in the field of conflict resolution who instead emphasis the actor perspective over structural explanations. See example William I. Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); William I. Zartman (ed.), *Evasive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1995); Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe 1974–80* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991), ‘Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes’, and Wallensteen, ‘Understanding Conflict Resolution’.

⁶⁷ Wallensteen lists seven mechanisms of conflict resolution which are all present and encouraged in a democratic system: 1) changes in priorities, 2) dividing the values, 3) horse trading, 4) joint rule, 5) leaving control, 6) conflict resolution mechanisms, 7) postponing issues. See Wallensteen, ‘Understanding Conflict Resolution’, pp. 50–4.

peaceful resolution of conflicts of interests. While the system encourages differences of opinion, political contestation and elite competition, this ought to take place within a peaceful framework. Third, the norms that are supposed to underpin the democratic system have the potential to alleviate conflict attitudes as the democratic political culture in its most ideal form is based on tolerance, respect for the others' opinions, human rights and the protection of minority groups.

While democracy in theory thus holds great promises for strengthening the fragile peace in countries coming out of civil wars, much of the policy of democratisation in post-settlement societies has rested on faulty assumptions on how the liberal democratic framework will function in countries that have experienced violent conflict and how it should be implemented. In the academic literature, two debates currently dominate the field in terms of a critical view on the relationships between democracy, conflict and peace. First, problems related to the liberal peace paradigm itself have been highlighted by a number of scholars. Roger MacGinty, for instance, argues that the 'no war, no peace' condition, common to many post-war societies, can be attributed to the fact that in practically all internationally supported peace making efforts, the 'liberal democratic peace' is prioritised. The problem is that while this version of peace reflects the prevailing political agendas of international actors, it excludes more traditional and locally acceptable versions of peace and reconciliation.⁶⁸ Another strand of research has pointed to problems associated with introducing democracy more generally in societies affected by conflict. Studies have shown that the transition from authoritarian states to democracy is often conflict ridden.⁶⁹ The difficulties of such transition periods are aggravated by the fact that post-war societies have experienced large-scale violence, rendering the conditions conducive for democracy largely absent.⁷⁰

Relating the developments in democracy promotion to the Peace Triangle, it becomes clear that local and international peace custodians to a large extent have pressed for elections and other democratic institutions meant to regulate conflicts in the post-war period in a peaceful manner, while less emphasis has been placed on how to encourage the transformation of attitudes and behaviour beyond the immediate ending of violence. An underlying assumption of the liberal peace paradigm has instead been that as soon as the democratic institutional framework has come into place, the behaviour of the political actors and the political culture itself will eventually change per automatic. However, the structures of conflict may preside over democratic institutions no matter how well crafted these are. A violent political culture is not easy to do away with over night. Standardised tools for addressing conflict attitudes, such as truth and reconciliation commissions or war crime courts, may do little to address negative attitudes in that particular society, or in some instances may even have counterproductive effects.⁷¹ The political actors of the new democracy may still be capable and willing to use violence or

⁶⁸ MacGinty, *No War, No Peace*.

⁶⁹ See, for instance, Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence* (New York & London: W.W Norton & Company, 2000).

⁷⁰ Anna Jarstad and Timothy Sisk (eds), *From War to Peace: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*.

⁷¹ Karen Bronéus, 'Rethinking Reconciliation: Concepts, Methods, and an Empirical Study of Truth Telling and Psychological Health in Rwanda', PhD dissertation, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, (2008).

threats of violence to distort elections and election outcomes when they do not work in their favour. Instead of transforming violent behaviour to peaceful interaction, the civic and political rights accompanying democracy may be ‘misused as a vehicle for militant political mobilization’.⁷² The Peace Triangle may therefore also be useful in illustrating the contrast between democracy as a theoretical tool for managing conflicts in a society and the practical difficulties associated with local or international attempts to use democratic reforms as a vehicle for establishing sustainable peace in post-war countries.

Conclusion

Peace is an elusive concept that has rendered much academic debate over the years. Yet the empirical reality of peace beyond the absence of war in most post-settlement societies remains largely uncharted academic territory. We need to close the gap between the concepts we use to analyse peace and the reality of peace if we are serious about more fully understanding those factors that make a peace accord transform into real quality of life for the populations concerned. The post-war societies discussed in this article display a range of different forms of peace beyond the absence of war. In such a context, a dichotomous outcome is inadequate or even unproductive, since each type of peace may demonstrate different causal paths.⁷³ We suggest that by breaking up the concept of peace and moving beyond the traditional dichotomy of war versus peace, we can take a step in the direction of developing a more fine-grained picture of peace in societies that have come out of civil wars. For this purpose, the article has introduced a novel way of conceptualising peace in post-war societies. Building on classical works in the field of peace research, the Peace Triangle enables us to capture some of the various paths a society may take in the wake of a peace agreement by analysing post-settlement societies on the basis of three key dimensions: issues, behaviour, and attitudes.

This article has also identified the conceivable effects and consequences of the different characters of peace in post-settlement societies. We have argued that a proper diagnosis of the particular type of peace in a post-war society is critical for an understanding of the prospects for establishing a more sustainable peace. The dynamic perspective provided by the Peace Triangle highlights the interaction effects between its constituent components, while retaining a perspective that puts the actors themselves and their decision making processes at the very center. By doing so, the Peace Triangle can also be a powerful instrument in determining

⁷² Kristine Höglund, ‘Violence in War-to-Democracy Transitions’, in Anna Jarstad and Timothy D. Sisk (eds), *War-to-Democracy Transitions: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 85.

⁷³ In the recent literature on case study methodology, the question of disaggregating the dependent variable has gained prominence. According to George and Bennett, the way in which variance in variables is described is critical to the usefulness of research in furthering the development of new theories or the refinement of existing theories. This, they argue, is because ‘the discovery of potential causal relationships may depend on how the variance in these variables is postulated. Within the subgroup of “failures” or “successes” of a particular phenomenon, there may be several different paths to the same outcome, exemplifying the methodological phenomenon of “equifinality”’. See George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.

whether lingering violence, unresolved issues and the prevalence of negative conflict attitudes carry the risk for a negative conflict spiral or whether such obstacles can be surmounted. In this context, we have suggested that unresolved, unaddressed or contested issues pose the gravest threat to the establishment of peace.

Identifying the character of peace in a post-war society is also critical for deciding which policy strategies are the most appropriate when prioritising between multiple peacebuilding tasks, methods and goals in a post-war context. Peace agreements aimed at ending devastating civil wars are often signed with high hopes and great optimism from both local communities and concerned international actors. Yet oftentimes these agreements fail to deliver what they intend and fall short of reaching a sustainable peace. This is in spite of the fact that the great majority of negotiated settlements concluded in the last decades have witnessed the involvement of a wide array of actors, ranging from powerful states and international organisations to local mediators and peace movements. Contemporary peace efforts have also often included a range of tasks beyond the ending of violence, such as the introduction or reinforcement of democratic governance, mechanisms for justice and reconciliation, and poverty reduction.

This article has suggested that democracy in theory holds a vast potential for peaceful conflict transformation through its ability to manage or resolve conflict issues, encourage the peaceful resolution of disputes and a political culture based on tolerance and respect. However, the current emphasis on the liberal peace paradigm in current peace processes around the globe is only marginally concerned with creating and supporting policies that encourages these particular aspects of the democratic political system. Instead, the emphasis has been on the establishment and running of certain democratic institutions above all. As such, the twin processes of peacebuilding and democratisation may in fact prove not to reinforce each other in contemporary post-war societies, and may even prove an obstacle to the establishment of sustainable peace.

This article has sought to integrate some of the current debates in critical studies regarding peace with the more positivist approach taken in the war termination literature. The conceptual understanding of peace developed in the Peace Triangle suggests that more sophisticated methodological designs are required to understand not only variations between societies emerging from war, but also the regional diversity displayed in war-ravaged countries. A multitude of methodological approaches can be useful in such endeavours. At the same time, it is imperative that scholars involved in peace and conflict research remain reflective about the concepts underpinning empirical peace studies – to make sure that the classifications we use do not obscure important realities about peace.