

Introduction: conceptualizing and studying relational peace practices

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A quick glance at some recent newspaper headlines will show that peace in South Africa, for instance, is very different from peace in Cyprus, while the peace that emerged immediately after the war in Cambodia is very different from the peace one finds there now. Even just in these three contexts, there is a huge variety in what peace means for all actors involved and the resulting political developments beyond the simple absence of war. However, research thus far has not managed to fully understand what truly constitutes peace, nor to explain the different varieties of peace that evolve after war. So how can we grasp peace beyond the absence of war? This question has gained increasing attention in peace and conflict studies (see for example Richmond 2008; Richmond 2014; Wallensteen 2015; Diehl 2016; Campbell et al. 2017; Guarrieri et al. 2017; Joshi and Wallensteen 2018; McLeod and O'Reilly 2019; Goertz 2020; Olivius et al. 2022), but thus far few have developed precise and theory-driven methods to provide a comprehensive answer. This book contributes to this conversation about how to research peace beyond the absence of war, in terms of both what it is and how it can be studied.

The study of peace was for a long time hampered by insufficient theorizing about what peace actually entails beyond the absence of war. The common distinction is between negative peace (absence of violence) and positive peace (absence of structural or indirect violence and presence of social justice and reconciliation), but this fails to capture the empirical realities in many post-war societies, since peace conceptualizations are “either so narrow that they miss the point, or so expansive that they become utopian” (Klem 2018: 235; see also Stephenson 2017 for a problematization of positive peace). Indeed, in many cultures and languages, the everyday experiences of lived peace are not captured by either negative or positive peace (for more on everyday peace, see among others Richmond 2012; Mac Ginty 2014, 2021; Firchow and Mac Ginty 2017; Firchow 2018; Blomqvist et al. 2021). For instance, in Slavic languages such as Russian and Serbian,

the term *mir* refers to ceasefire, while peace beyond the absence of war is often described as *normal*, just the normal way of things (see e.g. Barash and Webel 2009: 3–12; Jarstad and Segall 2019: 245–247). The latter refers neither to the harmony associated with positive peace nor to merely the absence of warfare, but rather to a recognition that social conflicts do exist but are addressed by non-violent means. But in order to develop a peace concept that is useful for empirical work and comparisons across cases, we need a more specific definition beyond the absence of war. And this definition needs to be accompanied by clear empirical strategies for how to then study this phenomenon.

In this book we employ a relational approach to peace (on peace as relational, see among others Kriesberg 2007; Oelsner 2007; Mac Ginty 2008: 24; Themnér and Ohlson 2014; Maddison 2015; Goertz et al. 2016; Firchow and Mac Ginty 2017: 7; Purdeková 2017; Brigg 2018; Davenport et al. 2018). We use our new conceptual framework (first developed in Söderström et al. 2021) to define peace and apply it to a number of diverse case studies. When developing our framework further it is important to stress that we see conflicts as an inevitable part of social life and that transformation of conflict is necessary to bring about constructive change. This has also been a central point of departure for different strands of research aiming to conceptualize and theorize peace, such as feminist peace research,¹ and agonistic peace research.² Like many others, then, we recognize peace as a process of conflict transformation. However, unlike Klem, who conceptualizes peace as an aspiration (Klem 2018), or others who see peace as a structural condition in a specific location (see e.g. the Global Peace Index, Oxford Global Research Initiative (OGRI) 2022), we employ a relational approach to the study of peace as the key feature of our approach. By developing the relational peace framework and in particular how it can be used for empirical studies of peace, this book helps move the field of studying peace forward beyond the absence of war.

We argue that taking a relational approach to peace seriously requires us to conceptualize and define the specific components of such peace in order to conduct fine-grained empirical analysis. We specify identifiable traits that separate the phenomenon from other possible suspects such as democracy, development, and other phenomena often associated with a “good” society. The starting point for this edited volume is the idea that peace research has thus far often focused on conflict, or the mere absence of violent conflict, but has failed to describe the nuances and different varieties of peace that exist beyond the absence of war. But how do we capture and describe these nuances? The role of agency and specific actors, and their relations in turn, are often not seen as key in the literature which describes what peace is, or else they are seen as only a small part of what constitutes peace. Yet

we argue that they are essential to understanding peace, and this book places them front and center. In each case study in this edited volume the issue of identifying actors and dyads is important, and in some cases the analysis covers a web of dyadic relationships and how they affect each other. We also discuss and suggest several methods of studying relational peace empirically. The book primarily takes on relational peace from a descriptive analytical perspective, and the various chapters show how relational peace varies, not only across dyads, but also over time. The aim of this edited volume is to contribute to research on peace beyond the absence of war – what it is and how it can be studied – by developing the relational peace framework and in particular how it can be used for empirical studies of peace.

The book shows that a relational approach to peace has many merits. For instance, if we regard peace as a relationship between actors at different levels of society, peace and war become a web of multiple interactions where some actors are peaceful whereas others are hostile, and it becomes clear how peaceful and conflictual relations can coexist, rather than be two mutually exclusive categories. Clearly delimiting peace in relational terms also makes it possible to conduct case studies which are more comparable, thus advancing discussions on methods, as well as theorization around peace. Thus this book makes an important contribution toward making peace beyond the absence of war more researchable.

The conceptual framework which forms the basis of the book builds on three main components of relational peace: behavioral interaction, subjective attitudes toward the other, and idea of the relationship. In this introduction, we further develop this framework and in particular elaborate on the minimal requirements for relational peace, and also discuss elements that we do *not* consider to be expressions of relational peace, but rather expressions of antagonism and enmity. Indeed, it is not as simple as war being the opposite of relational peace; rather we would define the opposite of relational peace as antagonistic relations, given the stress on dyads. We suggest that relational peace can be identified at different levels of analysis, from relationships between states to relationships between individuals or groups in divided societies. Arguably, the framework's ability to move from the micro-level to the macro-level is one of its strengths. Beyond this definition of relational peace, we also suggest that real-world cases are likely to cluster around two types: peace between fellows and peace between friends.

This edited volume presents a number of case studies of relational peace that illustrate how the framework can be applied at different levels of analysis (from interstate to intrastate and from elite to micro-level), in a variety of geographical contexts and using different temporal perspectives. The conflict contexts focused on in the volume all share the features of

being protracted violent conflicts, predominantly civil wars, and in many of these contexts there have been peace attempts from the 1990s onward. However, we encourage others to use the framework in multiple contexts, and also beyond those found in this volume. In this book, each chapter contributes new and detailed empirical knowledge and understanding of peace in various geographical settings, written mostly by researchers with many years' in-depth experience of working with each case. Each case study is focused on describing the character and extent of relational peace pertaining to the specific actors involved. Thus, each chapter explains why these actors are relevant in order to understand peace, and, as we will see, there is a breadth of actors who ultimately contribute to shaping peace in these societies. This ranges from state actors to political elites, political parties, communal groups, civil society, and local residents and citizens. In some chapters the dyad consists of actors of the same type (e.g. relations between political elites, between political parties, or between communal groups). Other chapters focus on a diverse set of actors and their relationships, such as military–civilian relationships, or explore relational peace from the perspective of a range of local actors vis-à-vis the state. While some chapters engage in macro-level analysis, others explore micro-level interpersonal interactions at the elite or societal level. Some of the case studies focus more on describing relational peace over time, thus approaching it from a long-term perspective and showing how relational peace plays out as a process, whereas other case studies are more focused on problematizing certain relational peace outcomes. The chapters also demonstrate how the relational peace framework enables contributions to other debates in adjacent research fields. The shared relational peace framework enables us to see synergies between the case studies and to draw conclusions based on comparative insights. Taken together, these case studies demonstrate the breadth of varieties in relational peace.

While the various case studies address peace at different levels of analysis, they also engage in discussions of how peace at one level relates to peace at another level of society. Together, the case studies demonstrate the need for a peace framework that can move from the hyperlocal to the macro-level, as well as how this can be done empirically (opting for different methodologies and types of sources). Through separating these levels, it also becomes possible to delineate how peace at one level influences or clashes with expressions of peace at another. We as researchers may understand certain dyads as more central or detrimental to peaceful relations in certain societal contexts and/or based on the researcher's theoretical perspective and research question; in addition, different actors have different relationships that they consider key to peace. For these reasons, there are often several types of relations central to peace coexisting in time and space which we need to study: for instance, minorities and defeated groups often describe the peace

differently from majority groups or winners of wars, and in particular their relationship with the other. During the 1990s, conflicts largely ended in peace agreements rather than military victories (Kreutz 2010), and this is indeed also the case for most of the settings in this volume. Even when a war ends with a negotiated compromise peace agreement, as our case studies show, in many cases peace is dictated by a few. When peace is negotiated by elites who consequently can also ensure themselves a share of the peace dividend, other actors may find peace less attractive or may not even agree that peace has been reached. Highlighting such conflicting perspectives and experiences of peace, depending on which actors are involved, is an important component of the book and demonstrates the great importance of local communities for peace to develop.

While the framework makes no assumptions about the temporal extension of the relationship, applying the framework to data across time is an important feature of this book. Not only is this important for understanding the stability of peace, but interactions over time are also part of how relationships are transformed from that of foes to one between friends. Relationships are formed through interactions, exchanges and practices, and the actors' experiences of these interactions. This makes patterns of engagement over time important for assessing relational traits and how relationships evolve. When we note the *practices* of relational peace, we do so to emphasize "an everyday practice that is implemented by actual people" (Pingeot 2018: 365), and because studying relational peace means paying attention to what becomes habitual in a relationship. Capturing such practices thus requires us to pay attention to dyadic interactions over time. Hence, describing relational peace in each case inevitably involves taking temporal questions seriously. The book as a whole thus also reflects when and why shifts in relations occur. Therefore, in the concluding chapter, we also discuss how the next step is to explain why different types of relational peace occur and what might also explain shifts in relationships.

The case studies also allow us to address how peace can be fruitfully studied. The case studies include a number of different methods for studying peace beyond the absence of violence, ranging from various innovative interview techniques, archival research, and text-analysis to observational methods. The authors discuss and problematize their own method choices in detail, and this methodological diversity therefore also shows the way forward in how to make peace more researchable, giving the reader inspiration for future work. Given the need to study relational peace over time, one challenge our authors face is how they should find data that are comparable over time. Recently, we have seen an increased interest in discussing methodological questions concerning how we should study peace (Mac Ginty 2022; Mac Ginty et al. 2020; Söderström and Olivius 2022), even if this question has

not been addressed adequately. This book contributes to this debate, as all case studies are explicit about their choices of method and make a concerted effort to bring out both methodological challenges and solutions.

The case studies cover a range of actors and demonstrate the breadth of relational peace outcomes in these actor dyads. In each chapter the authors take a critical stance toward the problem of studying relational peace: How and to what extent can the relational peace framework help address their specific research questions? What methodological choices should they follow as they adapt the framework to their study? The actor-oriented relational approach for studying peace also raises new questions and paves the way for new research avenues, as the contributions show their cases in a new light, as well as highlighting new empirical and theoretical lessons, and ultimately pointing to the consequences of varying practices of relational peace. Most importantly, the book demonstrates the centrality of viewing peace in relational terms, and provides avenues for how to tackle this field of research.

In sum, this book brings together work at the forefront of peace research and generates new and important knowledge about how peace can be understood. Our empirical studies show how peace plays out differently in different parts of a country and among different types of actors. Our advancement of theory on peace is not only important for academia, but is also important for improving UN peace operations and grassroots-level peace work (see Goertz 2020). Thus, insights from the book as a whole can be useful beyond academic communities.

Defining relational peace and its practices

Our conceptual framework was first developed in the article “Friends, fellows and foes: a new framework for studying relational peace” (Söderström et al. 2021) and provides a basis for the book. In this section we develop the framework further in order to provide analytical tools for empirical investigations and cross-case comparisons. We both extend the observable implications of the framework by outlining what is not relational peace, and also further expand on the empirical manifestations of relational peace practices. As noted above, the mere absence of war alone is not sufficient for any meaningful definition of relational peace. One reason for this is that a situation of no war may just indicate that the actors in that context do not have any relationship at all (Kriesberg 2007: 43; Oelsner 2007: 263). Instead, both conflict and peace are better understood as relationships, where violent conflict can be transformed into non-violent conflict and peace (Curle 1971). Peace as a relation, thus, first requires us to define what a relationship is. Building

on previous research primarily within sociology, we postulated that a “relationship is only manifest when the actors involved have *some influence on each other*; if the two actors are totally independent and unaffected by the other, they have no relationship” (Söderström et al. 2021: 488). A relationship further consists of behavioral interaction, subjective experiences of each other expressed for instance in attitudes, belief and opinions, and the actors’ understanding of the relationship as a whole (Huston and Robins 1982; Peplau and Cochran 1990: 322; Saunders 2005: 60). These are the three components that together constitute a relationship – behavioral interaction, attitudes to the other, and ideas of the relationship – and they also influence and strengthen each other through iterative processes of engaging with the other and responding to the other components.

*Behavioral interaction: deliberation, non-domination,
and cooperation*

So what type of actions are then expressions of peaceful behavioral interactions? We suggest that three types of behavior amount to peaceful behavioral interaction: *deliberation*, *non-domination*, and *cooperation* (Söderström et al. 2021: 489). *Deliberation* entails a form of non-violent political engagement in which actors exchange views and also give reasons for their positions (see for example Dryzek 2005; Barnett 2006; Holdo 2015). Deliberation can, for instance, mean local articulations of peace that challenge dominant peace discourses in divided societies (Björkdahl 2012: 288; Autesserre 2021: 128–146). While such deliberation often takes place at the community level, it can also characterize behavior at other levels including interactions between states, as well as between individuals.

Deliberation does not imply a demand for consensus, but rather an acknowledgment of disagreement through dialogue, and the presence of a venue for transforming relationships (Björkdahl 2012; Maddison 2015). Deliberation can thus allow actors to redefine conflict issues and introduce new political discourses, which in turn can contribute to ways of managing or accepting conflicts. An empirical investigation of this element of behavioral interaction can include the analysis of what issues are being deliberated, whether there is an expansion of the scope of issues discussed, and how the discourse potentially is altered through dialogue (Miall 2007: 7). Violence and threats are in direct opposition to deliberation, but this does not preclude there being deliberation in one arena, such as parliamentary debates, and at the same time political violence in the streets related to the same issue. In this example, it is important to identify whether it is the same dyad of actors who are engaging in these contradictory forms of behavior or whether in fact there are several relevant dyads which constitute a web of relations.

Clearly, therefore, specifying which type of behavior the actors engage in with relation to deliberation, violence, and threats is an important aspect of analyzing relational peace.

The second element of the component behavioral interaction is termed *non-domination* (Young 2005; see also Barnett 2006: 94; Forst 2013). It is a republican ideal, and means freedom from being dominated by another, in particular being free from arbitrary power (Pettit 1996; see also Pettit 1997, 2015). In other words, non-domination means that the room for action of the weaker actor in a dyad is not determined by the other. The reversal of this element, namely domination, can include various forms of coercion, ranging from violence or threats to manipulations, which ultimately shape the other's room for action and formation of beliefs and interests (Pettit 1996: 578–579). Domination thus exists if the dominated actor exhibits a pattern of limiting or censoring their behavior due to the potential influence of the more powerful actor. Pettit describes the potential actors as ranging from individuals to groups of people (1996: 578); thus domination and non-domination can occur at all dyadic scales.

Institutional or legal solutions may be needed to ensure non-domination. These can take the form of a federal constitution which guarantees that both actors in a situation are entitled to equal status (Young 2005), or consociationalism, which ensures the protection of vital minority interests (Lijphart 1968, 1993; see also Jarstad 2001: 28 for an overview of empirical examples). Other power-sharing arrangements (territorial and military) may provide such protection from domination (for a discussion of this, see also Jarstad and Nilsson 2008; Sriram 2017: 60–61). Thus, the element of non-domination can be detected empirically by analyzing the implementation of, and practices surrounding, institutional arrangements designed to prevent domination. Prohibition of hate speech is one such arrangement suggested by Paris as a vital legal arrangement to ease the transition from war to democracy. This method was used for instance in Kosovo, where codes of conduct for print and broadcast media were enforced by international peacebuilders, in combination with a licensing system in order to prevent material inciting violence or hatred (Paris 2004: 198). As we shall see in the empirical chapters, domination is exerted in many ways, and indeed the existence of domination is easier than its absence (non-domination) to ascertain empirically. This is why identifying legal or institutional mechanisms designed to ensure non-domination, and how they shape behavioral interactions within the dyad, is one way to study its existence.

The third element of behavioral interaction is *cooperation*. This entails the actors working and acting together on shared issues, requiring the active “development and fulfilment of complementary goals” (Miall 2007: 66). At a basic level of cooperation, actors with separate goals make moves that

benefit the other (either because they expect the same gesture in return or because they value the benefit for the other). At the second level, actors adopt common goals or align their goals to one another, and at the third level the actors may identify common interests, thereby also starting to redefine themselves (Miall 2007: 69). Observable expressions of cooperation include both verbal cooperation (e.g. they approve, promise, agree, request, or propose) and cooperative action (e.g. they yield, grant, or reward) (Goldstein 1992: 371). Again, this can occur at all levels, between individuals, between other actors, and so on, all the way up to states. Active obstruction and hindrance of the other achieving their goals would therefore be examples of behavior that is the opposite of cooperative behavior.

Subjective attitudes: mutual recognition and trust

We will now turn to the subjective attitudes in the dyad in a peaceful relationship, such as emotions, beliefs, and attitudes about the other. Two elements are key here: *mutual recognition* and *trust*. We subscribe to Lindemann's definition of *recognition*, and posit that recognition is "constructed through rapport between an actor's asserted image and the image returned by others" (Lindemann 2011: 70). Recognition fundamentally implies at least an acceptance of the other's existence. The other's self-image is acknowledged through symbolic or material concessions to demonstrate peaceful intentions and attitudes held toward the other. Recognition is associated with values such as dignity, honor, status, and prestige, and the lack of recognition often plays a key role in helping us understand why violent conflicts become protracted; as the conflict lingers on, even more people become devoted to the cause since they have already invested a lot and suffered heavy losses.

Recognition can take many forms, and a distinction is sometimes made between thin and thick recognition. Thin recognition refers to a legal- and rights-based form of recognition and the idea of "being acknowledged as an independent subject within a community of law." Thick recognition concerns "self-esteem" and is related to appreciation and respect "for the features that make a subject unique" (Strömbom 2010: 59–61). Thus, thin recognition is more general while thick recognition refers to the particularities associated with an actor's identity.

The opposite of recognition is non-recognition, and this can take the form of not acknowledging publicly that a group exists; for example, according to official policy, for a long time Kurds did not exist in Turkey, and members of this group were instead referred to as mountain Turks (Harff and Gurr 2018: 46). Similarly, when belonging and citizenship are explicitly denied to specific groups while other groups in society are recognized, this can sustain antagonistic relations. Recognition is also important at the state

level in the international system, where, for instance, Serbia refuses to recognize Kosovo as an independent state but instead stipulates in its constitution that Kosovo is a part of Serbia. In a similar vein, the country name Macedonia was disputed by Greece, which stipulated that the name should be used exclusively for a part of Greece. This issue was eventually settled in 2019 when the ex-Yugoslav republic instead took the name Republic of North Macedonia, and in return Greece accepted that its northern neighbor could join NATO. Empirically observing recognition thus looks quite different according to the level of analysis, as recognition between states, groups or communities, or even individuals manifests itself in different ways.

The second element of the subjective attitudes toward each other is *trust*. According to Rousseau et al., “[t]rust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another” (Rousseau et al. 1998: 395). This definition is suitable for our purposes and can be applied at various actor scales. Empirically observing trust, like recognition, requires more insight into how each actor feels, thinks, and positions themselves vis-à-vis the other. While the opposite of trust is perhaps best framed as distrust, empirically observing fear or expressions of deep suspicion or prejudice is one way to know that trust is not in place (for example, Höglund and Orjuela 2011 show how domination undermines trust in Sri Lanka). In a study of civil war peace settlement efforts, Walter argues that peace requires an arrangement which provides for the actors to engage in costly signals that “communicate their honorable intentions in order to build an atmosphere of trust” (Walter 2002: 22). For instance, the government can begin to demobilize without requiring the rebels to do so first, and the rebels can allow the government to block important retreat routes to other countries (Walter 2002: 24). Studying these types of arrangements and measures and how they shape the actors’ attitudes toward each other can thus be a way to empirically study trust. Walter suggests that when mutual trust is not there, the actors can place their trust in a credible third party who guarantees the upholding of a peace agreement. If the combatants trust the third party (e.g. a UN force) to enforce or verify compliance with the peace agreement, then the chances of behavioral change increase in ways that can lead to more trust also between the conflicting parties. Overall, studying trust means paying attention to the degree to which the two actors allow themselves to be vulnerable to the actions of the other without safeguards.

The actors’ understanding of the relationship: fellows or friends

The final component of relational peace is the actor’s idea or beliefs about the relationship. Relational peace requires that the constituent actors’

understanding of each other is classified in friendly terms as legitimate others, peers, fellows, allies, partners, or even friends with shared visions, rather than in hostile terms such as foes or enemies (Masters 1967; Wendt 1999; Diehl 2016: 2; Nordin and Smith 2018; van Hoef and Oelsner 2018). Thus, for a relationship to be deemed peaceful, the actors have to express that they have shared something and that there is a sense of reciprocity in their relationship. *Fellowship* means that each actor regards their counterpart as a legitimate other; their relationship is characterized by legitimate coexistence (see also Themnér and Ohlson 2014 for a discussion of vertical and horizontal relations). Fellows do not need to have a close relationship, but just need to accept each other as legitimate and find it possible to engage with each other directly, for instance through collaboration or competition in business or politics. The second concept, *friendship*, in contrast, not only refers to private relationships, but can also define relations between states, organizations, or communities. Friendship does not, however, imply that relationships are harmonious or void of conflict. They can also involve negativity and self-interest and in that way be contradictory. But friendship does suggest a more intimate relationship, which entails that the actors know each other well and cherish one another (Sugden 2002: 68–81; Nordin and Smith 2018; van Hoef and Oelsner 2018: 115–117; see also Miall 2011). While the actors themselves may use emic labels other than friendship and fellowship, paying attention to how the actors name and describe the relationship as a whole is important. In contrast, should they describe the relationship as one of enmity or hostility, it would not qualify in terms of this element of relational peace. We argue that it is important to study both lived practices of a relationship and the stories the actors tell about the dyad in order to fully capture the phenomenon under study (see also Pingeot 2018). Such stories shape expectations (and thus trust) as well as filter how the behavior of the other should be understood, and thus such stories or ideas of the relationship are a key component of the dyadic relationship as a whole. In Table 0.1, we summarize the relational peace framework in terms of which elements belong to what component, and also what kind of observations do not amount to relational peace.

Studying relational peace practices

The ideal type definition of relational peace “entails behavioral interaction that can be characterized as deliberation, non-domination, and cooperation between the actors in the dyad; the actors involved recognize and trust each other and believe that the relationship is either one between legitimate fellows or between friends” (Söderström et al. 2021: 496). The definition of relational peace is an ideal type definition, and consequently we can

Table 0.1 The relational peace framework and examples of contrary elements

Components	Elements	Examples of contrary elements
<i>Behavioral interaction</i>	Non-domination Deliberation Cooperation	Domination Silence Violent dissent Obstruction Destructive behavior
<i>Subjective attitudes</i>	Recognition Trust	Non-recognition Distrust Hate Fear
<i>Ideas of the relationship</i>	Fellows Friends	Adversaries Enemies Hostiles

expect few or no empirical cases to contain each and every element of each component fully. The elements that constitute the definition of relational peace are not easily separated, but rather affect and mold one another. For instance, the idea of the relationship influences behavior, and a repeated behavior of deliberation, non-domination, and cooperation builds mutual trust. With respect to each component of the relational peace framework, there is a range of different elements that are relevant when we empirically study relational peace practices. For instance, when empirically exploring subjective attitudes, do we see expressions of distrust and hate, as well as indications of trust and recognition, and does the balance change over time? What other kinds of behavioral interaction do we see in the dyad; is there violence, is there destructive behavior? Are the actors obstructing each other's goals? What depictions of the relationship as a whole do the actors express, and of what kind are they if they cannot be categorized as friendship or fellowship ideas? This discussion is not meant to be exhaustive, but it should give some indications of how one can approach the task of mapping within each component, and it also demonstrates the importance of paying attention to the range of possible content within each component, beyond those elements which can be classified as relational peace. If we are to locate relational peace practices, this entails searching for practices that are habitual or that have some degree of regularity over time (for an example of this perspective, see Autesserre 2014: 29–31; see also Adler and Pouliot

2011; Pouliot 2008; Costa 2006; Lau 2004 for a discussion of the concept of practice). What is the dominant pattern of interaction between the actors in the dyad that we can observe empirically? As a whole, our framework highlights not only how actors talk about their relationship, the discourse around it if you will, but also the behavioral interaction between the dyads, the practice if you will (see also Pingeot 2018). Preferably, this means that we need to scrutinize both texts about and produced by the actors, and observe the actors in order to study all the components in the framework.

While at least some degree of each of the elements must be present in order for a case to be classified as relational peace, the framework can also be used to identify which elements are missing. Importantly, we suggest that the most fruitful analysis can be conducted when the framework is being used as an analytical tool for assessing how relationships evolve and comparing shifts over time or across dyads or cases. This is studying relational peace practices. Thus, our conceptual framework is suitable for assessing to what degree different elements of relational peace practices are present in a relationship in order to grasp the complexity of the processes at different moments in time, but also to understand how the different elements influence and shape each other.

Each of the elements of relational peace can be present to different degrees within a relationship at a specific moment in time. Also, within each component, the elements can be thought of as existing along a wider scale of behavioral interactions, subjective attitudes, and ideas of the relationship – including antagonistic ones. It can be important to consider these too in order to understand how the relationship functions, how it changes, and possible contradictions. Along the scale of behavioral interactions there may be different behavioral acts, such as distancing, segregation, and exiting from political arenas as in the boycotting of elections, sanctions, and civil disobedience. To some degree this kind of behavior signals a retreat from the relationship, and a failure of one actor to recognize the other as one with which it is legitimate to interact. The opposite of cooperation is ultimately the active obstruction of the abilities of the other to operate and live their life by acts of direct violence or domination.

Post-war societies are often characterized by distrust – the antithesis of trust – and during a peace process it is of the utmost importance to transform the relationships by building mutual trust. Through mediation and processes of intercommunal dialogue, misunderstandings can be resolved and prejudices can be countered to facilitate the development of trust, or at least reduce distrust. However, the mere absence of threats is often insufficient for trust to develop, whereas over time, mutual trust can start to take root through continual and iterative peaceful interactions. While distrust is the

opposite of trust, hate is an even more extreme version of distrust of the other. We recognize that recognition and trust do not always appear in the same order: sometimes recognition requires a certain degree of trust, and in other instances recognition of an actor's status, for instance, can lead to increased reciprocal trust.

When exploring recognition, we may also discover that recognition is not extended to all aspects of the other, and this is sometimes called agonistic recognition, which is based on “non-finalism, pluralist multilogue and disaggregated recognition” (Rumelili and Strömbom 2022: 1361). This form of recognition does not require an apology for past actions or future equality arrangements. Instead, agonistic recognition is an open-ended and ongoing dialogue and a reconstruction of relationships between multiple actors (Rumelili and Strömbom 2022: 1365–1367). Paying attention to what kind of recognition is extended to the other is therefore useful when we are trying to study and understand what type of relational peace practices we are empirically observing.

Overall, the different constitutive elements of relational peace can also, to some degree, be related to the idea of agonistic peace. While agonistic peace is not necessarily structured in the same way as our framework, there is some overlap that we suggest at least allows agonistic peace to be related to the relational peace framework. In both relational and agonistic peace there is no requirement to reach a consensus or a shared peace narrative. Instead, multiple and contesting narratives can provide for both agonistic peace (Rumelili and Çelik 2017) and relational peace. However, agonistic peace offers more room for domination and resistance to domination than what we would expect to see in a peace between fellows, and similarly recognition is often less of a given in an agonistic relationship, but rather is something that is fought for (Shinko 2008). Furthermore, agonistic peace builds on agonistic democratic theories (Aggestam et al. 2015: 1738), whereas relational peace is not linked to specific democratic norms.

Some elements of relational peace fit more than one real-world type, while other elements fall more neatly into just one type. For instance, trust and cooperation fit better with the idea of friends. In Table 0.2, we demonstrate how various elements of the relational peace framework can be categorized as belonging to specific real-world types of relational peace practices, and also how other configurations of observations with respect to the components of the framework may result in other kinds of dyadic relations. *Antagonistic relations* clearly fall outside of the scope of what can be considered relational peace, but we would argue that *peace between agonists* also does not fully qualify as relational peace. Whether in some instances we are satisfied with achieving peace between agonists, rather than peace between fellows, is another question.

Table 0.2 Different types of relations

Components of the framework	<i>Antagonistic relations</i>	<i>Peace between agonists</i>	Relational peace	
			<i>Peace between fellows</i>	<i>Peace between friends</i>
<i>Behavioral interaction</i>	Violence and other forms of domination No deliberation Obstruction	Domination Some deliberation No or some cooperation	Some non-domination Deliberation Some cooperation	Non-domination Deliberation Cooperation
<i>Subjective attitudes</i>	Distrust Non-recognition Hate	Distrust No or thin recognition	Some trust Recognition	Trust Recognition
<i>Ideas of relationship</i>	Enemies	Adversaries	Fellows	Friends

Conflict can both be violent and non-violent, and only non-violent conflict is commensurate with relational peace as an ideal type. However, as with all elements in real-world cases of peace practices, there may be some violence in a society generally characterized by relational peace. In addition, we posit that violent conflict may occur alongside relational peace in other dyads. In this sense, it means that relational peace and war can coexist, since it is possible that interaction and cooperation in some dyads continue even in a context of violent conflict. Thus, nation states may be involved in military attacks on each other's territories, while at the same time conducting trade with one another or while being members of the same multilateral organizations. It is also possible that some dyadic interactions are violent while other dyads are peaceful within the same territorial entity. Thus, the relational approach moves the focus from each separate entity to the relationship between dyads. This does not mean that we regard territory as unimportant for understanding war and peace – territorial claims and disagreements regarding belonging and citizenship within a territory, and conflicts over attachment to land, are indeed common facets of war and peace. But the relational peace perspective means shifting the lens away from territories and toward what actually happens between actors, thus gaining the ability to see that different dyads within the same territory have different degrees of peace.

The actor-centric character of the relational approach allows for analysis of relationship at multiple levels: at micro- and macro-levels of the intrastate and interstate as well as transnational levels.³ Relational peace practices can also take place at several analytical levels, and also across levels, for instance in the case of relationships within and across different communities (as discussed in Klocek's and Jarstad's chapters) or a relationship between the national military and a civil society (as in Nilsson's chapter). As a relationship may be more or less volatile, relationship properties may shift over time (as demonstrated in Söderström's chapter), and so may the actors. Since actors often are fluid and not homogeneous entities (an issue which is especially discussed in the chapter by Olivius and Hedström), it is important to clearly delineate which actors are included in the analysis as well as the time period studied. In some contexts, it makes sense to analyze several dyads or even a web of relationships, but the necessity to define each dyad clearly remains. Any relational approach will have to confront this problem of boundary specification around actors, and also resolve the question of whether or not something is cohesive enough to warrant the label of "actor" (Emirbayer 1997: 303–304). Nonetheless, by engaging in this process of defining actors and actor boundaries, the framework also allows scholars to recognize actor complexities and nuances (as addressed in the chapters by Klocek and by Olivius and Hedström as well as the chapter by Eklund,

Wimelius, and Elfving). Similarly, the same actor may relate to others in different ways, depending on the arena in which the relationship is acted out (for instance private versus public), as is discussed in the chapters by Söderström and Premaratna.

The types of actors that are most relevant for understanding peace in post-war societies are often those that have previously been involved in political violence against each other. However, an analysis of relationships between non-violent actors is often key to understanding everyday expressions of peace. Thus, there is an enormous number of potential cases suitable for empirical investigation, and this book showcases only a small sample of possible empirical studies. Many of the chapters take a very close look at specific events and dyads, while others provide a more overarching analysis of a peace process. Each chapter has taken on an approach that fits its overall purpose, and helps it contribute to its respective field. In particular, they all try to add nuance to peace in each context, by paying attention to both context and the specifics of the framework. As such, they have been innovative with their use of data and tried to combine various sources in order to add a deepened understanding of each dyad. Each chapter discusses how the authors have dealt with such tradeoffs, and what it means for their ability to capture relational peace practices in each case. Each element in the framework, however, has been formulated in such a way as to enable analysis of relational peace processes involving very different types of actors, at different analytical levels. Our hope is that the book as a whole will help and inspire new ways to empirically study peace, by providing specific methodological solutions as well as pinpointing specific methodological challenges as relational peace practices are studied.

Overview of the book

The chapters in this book apply the relational peace framework to a variety of cases dealing with different research questions. The chapters range from more macro-level relationships to interaction between individuals at the micro-level, and from elite actors to citizens involved in everyday interactions, and the order of the chapters largely follows this structure. In addition, the chapters use very different kinds of material for their studies, demonstrating how the framework can and should be adapted to the needs of each specific study. The case study chapters also vary in terms of their ontological and epistemological points of departure. As this suggests, we advocate a pragmatic approach to using the framework based on what is most useful given the aim of the particular research and theoretical perspective.

In Chapter 1, Eklund, Wimelius, and Elfving use the relational peace framework to analyze Russian ideas of peace, particularly focusing on Russia's actions vis-à-vis Georgia (Abkhazia) and Moldova (Transnistria). During the last decade, scholars have been preoccupied with studying Russia's military capabilities and its ideas of war, yet the question of how Russia understands peace and peacekeeping operations has been neglected. Are there particular Russian perceptions and ideas with regard to peace? If we are to truly understand Russian foreign policy, we need to understand not just how conflict is understood, but also how peace is discursively constructed among the Russian elite. Applying the relational peace framework, this chapter shows how such ideas are expressed and conceptualized. Using a range of texts (academic, governmental publications, and open media debates) the chapter shows how the framework can be adjusted to an ideational analysis. It finds that Russian ideas of peace are relational, yet not exclusively so. Different relational traits are also more prominent in the Russian conception when it interacts with the international system, macro-regional geopolitical complexes, and the conflicts in Abkhazia and Transnistria.

In Chapter 2, Söderström similarly departs from written sources and conducts a content analysis of newspaper articles that mention the signatories of the Cambodian peace agreement, in order to study how elite relations across a previously antagonistic divide have developed. Given the continuity of elites after war and their central role in shaping both macro-politics and public opinion, understanding how such elite relations have developed over time provides a more specific depiction than in previous work of the internal dynamics of the Cambodian peace, a case often described as a hybrid peace case. Söderström provides depth to the hybrid depiction by providing a detailed analysis of the shifts and changes in several elite relations which have gradually deteriorated. She shows that behavioral shifts are both more common and faster than changes in the subjective attitudes and the ideas of the relationship. Overall, the main relationship is characterized by domination, distrust, and ideas of dependency. The chapter also demonstrates how one can depart from the framework and identify additional specific behaviors and attitudes which fall within or outside relational peace.

In Chapter 3, Jarstad analyzes how contemporary political parties in South Africa envision intergroup relations decades after the end of apartheid. The idea of the Rainbow Nation was central to South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, as it recognized diversity and reflected a sense of colorblindness. This chapter contributes to the literature on peace and post-war nation-building by investigating how contemporary political parties in South Africa – as key actors in the public debate – discuss and envision future intergroup relations. Using the relational peace framework, the analysis of 2019 election manifestos show a variety of competing visions of intergroup

relations that speak to particular conceptions of nation-building. Jarstad argues that the disagreements among political parties on who belongs to the South African nation and how to create a common identity risk undermining the legitimacy of the state and threaten peace. The chapter points to the importance of studying horizontal intergroup relations, and in particular how actors themselves describe and envision such relations, for understanding the connection between peace and nation-building.

In Chapter 4, Klocek studies relational peace in Cyprus, on the basis of historical records, public opinion surveys, policy reports, and English-language news sources. He suggests that ethno-nationalism and foreign powers as the two main conventional explanations as to why the Cyprus conflict remains unresolved rest on a negative peace framework which favors status quo and also depicts the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities as unitary and static actors. By contrast, the application of the relational peace framework allows Klocek to question these ideas and analyze the shifts and changes both between the leaders in the Greek Cypriot community and between Greek and Turkish Cypriot officials. In this way, Klocek shows that there has been deliberation between Greek and Turkish leaders through formal peace processes, but that there has been considerably less room to exchange competing views within the Greek Cypriot community. This underscores how difficult it is to advance intercommunal relations while within-group competition remains high. Overall, Klocek shows how the relational peace framework can add to previous explanations of the status quo in Cyprus, in part by problematizing and breaking up actors that have been seen as unitary in previous work, but also by highlighting behavioral interactions beyond the framework that also inform the relationship.

In Chapter 5, Olivius and Hedström demonstrate the importance of understanding diverging experiences of peace and conflict in the context of Myanmar, and how the relational peace framework can aid in this endeavor. Between 2011 and 2021, political reforms and renewed peace efforts significantly reduced violence in many of Myanmar's conflict-affected regions. Despite this, people living in these areas do not agree that they now enjoy peace. Using focus group discussions, interviews, and participant observation with local civilians, civil society activists, and members of non-state armed groups in two regions, Kayah State and Mon State, the chapter demonstrates how the logic of key conflict relationships between the Myanmar state and ethnic-minority groups and communities has not been transformed by the peace process but merely manifests itself in new ways, with armed violence being replaced by other forms of domination, underpinned by inequality, non-recognition, and distrust. The chapter demonstrates the importance of a relational perspective for pinpointing challenges to a sustainable and legitimate everyday peace. Instead of stressing material and security concerns,

their chapter shows that equality, recognition, and trust are key to understanding everyday peace in a more nuanced fashion.

In Chapter 6, Nilsson takes on the relationship between the military and local communities in Colombia. Rebuilding the social fabric in societies broken by prolonged social conflict is an important part of peacebuilding. This process is particularly challenging where levels of violence are still high and state security actors continue to occupy a powerful position even after a peace accord is signed. Nilsson investigates how representatives of the military and of different civilian state and non-state actors in post-accord Colombia perceive their relationship with each other today, as well as how they envision the role of the military in future Colombia and what they identify as challenges to relational peace across these actors. Based on interview data, the chapter shows significant differences in how the actors evaluate interactions between themselves, how they think of each other, and how they evaluate their future relationship. These differences result in a low level of mutual respect, trust, and cooperation and provide important obstacles to achieving a higher level of relational peace in the near future.

In Chapter 7, Bramsen analyzes the micro-dynamics of the peace talks between the Philippine government and the communist party (the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, NDFP), and discusses this in relation to the larger web of relations shaping the peace talks. Based on participatory observations of the third round of peace talks conducted in January 2017 as well as interviews with participants in the talks, the chapter shows that the interaction between the negotiating parties was cordial and even resembled friendship-like relations. Still, the talks fell apart after the third round. In the chapter, Bramsen discusses this development in the light of three other sets of relationships which affected the talks: intra-party relations; relations between the leaders of the respective parties; and the relations to and within civil society. In this way, Bramsen highlights the need to analyze the broader web of relations within which peace talks take place in order to understand how relational peace develops.

In Chapter 8, Premaratna explores the peacebuilding practice of the multiethnic, bilingual Sri Lankan theater group Jana Karaliya. Specifically, this chapter looks at how the group's interpersonal engagement has moved through the phases of foes, fellows, and friends/family over the course of their work, and the changing phases of the Sri Lankan conflict. The chapter draws from participant observation, focus group interviews with full-time members of the group, and individual interviews with selected members. The chapter conducts a longitudinal analysis and detailed investigation of how relationships in this participatory arts-based peacebuilding initiative transformed over time through sustained everyday interactions in and outside of work. The chapter demonstrates that the shared vision of "performing

peace” enabled Jana Karaliya to develop a lived peace that rests on coexistence amid multiple, changing, and at times disparate behaviors, attitudes, and ideas about each other. Importantly, Premaratna shows how transformation of relationships and changes in relational peace over time can be traced through a close analysis of long-term interpersonal interactions.

Finally, in the concluding chapter we discuss the insights and implications of the relational approach, both for future avenues of research and for policy implications. We also highlight similarities and findings across the various chapters and how they speak to one another. The chapters show that relational aspects are key for understanding how peace is manifested and experienced by different actors, and also for detecting areas that prevent peace from emerging. By using the framework, the chapters contribute with alternative and nuanced understandings of peace in particular settings, and taken together they demonstrate the multifaceted nature of peaceful relations, what we term relational peace practices. While the book is primarily analytically descriptive, in the conclusion we also take on discussions around explaining shifts in and across dyads over time. Ultimately, we see this edited volume as a starting point for taking the relational and process perspective on peace seriously, but we point to continued ways of furthering these debates and how it should be studied.

Notes

The editors shared the work for this chapter equally, and their names are thus listed alphabetically (according to the Swedish alphabet).

- 1 Feminist peace research has provided important insights in this regard, exploring the everydayness and lived experiences of peace and possibilities of transforming conflicts through transformation of relationships (see e.g. Confortini 2010; McLeod and O’Reilly 2019; Wibben et al. 2019; Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic 2021; Cárdenas 2022; Olivius et al. 2022).
- 2 The conflict transformation perspective is also central to scholarship on agonistic peace. In this paradigm, conflicts are accepted as healthy signs of all societies, while post-war power constellations may be contested by non-violent means, and there is space for conflict to transform from antagonism and enmity to agonism and adversity (see e.g. Shinko 2008; Aggestam et al. 2015; Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic 2016; Rumelili and Çelik 2017; Klem 2018; Strömbom 2020; Çelik 2021; Rumelili and Strömbom 2022; Strömbom et al. 2022).
- 3 Here, other peace concepts operate differently, where everyday peace is mainly seen as hyperlocalized, even if it can scale out (Mac Ginty 2021: 14, 25–50), whereas Millar has developed a framework for trans-scalar peace for analyzing peace across analytical levels, but its threshold for being classified as peace is higher than that of the relational framework (Millar 2021). However, in contrast to

relational peace, which regards peaceful coexistence as a legitimate and achievable goal, the trans-scalar peace system builds on the aspiration of positive peace, that is, a normative vision and ideal type that is not expected to be fully achieved.

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