

Relational peace practices moving forward

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This book started with the recognition that research thus far has not managed to fully understand what constitutes peace nor to explain the different varieties of peace that evolve after war. With the aim of contributing to research on peace beyond the absence of war, this edited volume has addressed this lacuna by specifying and developing the concept of relational peace and applying it to several cases at various levels of analysis. Thus, relational peace has been analyzed in several sites, including Cyprus, Cambodia, South Africa, Abkhazia, Transnistria/Russia, Colombia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Myanmar. The various conflict settings included in the chapters of the book are predominantly protracted civil wars, many of which have been the subjects of major peace attempts or even peace settlements in the past decades. The various chapters use different kinds of material, and identify dyads at different levels of analysis. Each chapter makes its own unique contribution to specific literatures related to its field, including civil–military relations, peacetime and post-war nation-building, arts-based peacebuilding initiatives, negotiation and mediation literature, frozen peacebuilding, post-war elite studies, ideational analysis, post-Soviet studies and everyday peace. Applying the relational peace framework is thus useful in advancing each individual field. Moreover, taken together, the chapters also point the way forward, both theoretically with respect to the framework itself and also with regard to methodological approaches to studying relational peace, as well as indicating what new questions should be asked within this field of peace research, and what the implications for policy are.

Our conceptualization of relational peace, and how it can be used for empirical analysis, is an important contribution of this edited volume. One aspect that clearly distinguishes our conceptualization from others is that it is not bound to a specific territory and instead is actor-centered. This has several advantages. Firstly, it means that the relationship within a dyad is in focus regardless of whether it exists within a state or across borders. Secondly, it allows for peace and war to coexist within specific territories,

as relational peace can exist among some actors while violent conflict is occurring between other actors at the same time. We think that this allows for a more adequate description of relationships in a given territory. However, it also comes with some disadvantages, and some scholars might reject our readiness to identify peace in the midst of violence, as it could be interpreted as downplaying the severity of war. However, we believe that it is important to recognize peaceful relationships in the midst of war, as this can open up new possibilities for building peaceful relationships among other actors and in other parts of a territory (see also Mac Ginty 2021 for a discussion of how such acts can scale out).

The relational peace framework can be used for post-war cases, but it is certainly not limited to them. Indeed, the scope of the theory should not be seen as restricted to civil war or even post-war cases. Another advantage of the framework, which has been clearly demonstrated by the various chapters, is that it can be applied at different levels of analysis. Relational peace can exist at the individual level, between ethnic groups and between states, and in many other relationships as well. Importantly, the framework allows us to trace how relationships unfold over time and to analyze and compare relational shifts over time within and across actors and dyads.

Methodologically, the range of methods and materials used in the chapters of this book may inspire different types of empirical studies of relational peace in various other fields, not limited to the choices made in these chapters. As we have seen, the ontological starting points vary a great deal across the chapters. In each chapter there are sections on material and a discussion of how the elements of relational peace can be investigated empirically. The authors show how they have studied the relational peace framework using a wide range of different sources, and what particular challenges they have faced while doing so. It is clear that the framework can be approached in a multitude of ways, and that these choices ultimately depend on what actors (and what dyads) are studied. In essence, we advocate a pragmatic approach to using the framework on the basis of its practical usefulness. Below, we discuss relational peace practices and the comparative and theoretical conclusions that the chapters lead us to, as well as the methodological consequences and tradeoffs, before turning to the implications for policy and future research.

Relational peace practices

We first turn to comparative conclusions in relation to the framework's components and elements across the respective empirical chapters. We discuss more thoroughly the advantages and challenges of studying peace as relational,

and the implications of this approach for theory and practice. In essence we highlight how the relational approach contributes to a more nuanced understanding of peace beyond the absence of war by recognizing peace as a web of multiple interactions across time, space, and levels. We also problematize questions related to studying process-oriented practices of relational peace. This discussion includes questions about actor boundaries and how we approach the study of webs of relations, given that the framework is built around dyads, and other methodological implications and practical issues that researchers face when applying the framework.

Comparative conclusions across the case studies

What are the overall joint observations and comparative conclusions from the various case studies? Firstly, *deliberation* – or the lack thereof – is emphasized in many chapters as important for relational peace. This points to the need for a platform and enough room for non-violent expressions of dissent and contestation. In the Sri Lankan case study, Premaratna shows how the ability to have open disagreements and arguments enabled theater group members coming from different communities to work together, and ultimately transformed their relationships. In Myanmar, Olivius and Hedström identify key examples of deliberation which point to a change in the patterns of interactions between state agents and local actors. However, in the Myanmar case, despite instances of deliberation, the overall pattern of relational interactions is marked by continuities of war and state domination. In this respect, we see again how domination can limit the room for dialogue, but also that deliberation does not automatically lead to a change of attitudes. While there are many instances where the different elements reinforce and affect one another, this is not always the case. In the micro-sociological setting of peace talks in the Philippines, Bramsen shows that positive interactions and deliberation among the negotiating teams do not extend to peaceful deliberations between the main leaders in the conflict; this stresses the importance of also considering how actors and dyads are situated in a larger web of relations.

Next, we turn to the issue of *cooperation*. As Klocek suggests in his case study of Cyprus, deliberation is about expressing dissent, while cooperation brings communities together. A number of the case studies demonstrate instances of cooperation between actors who have been involved in a conflict for a long period of time, even if there is great variation as to how extensive and deep this cooperation is. At least in some cases, cooperation seems to have contributed to transforming relationships, as we see in the analysis of the arts-based peacebuilding initiative in Sri Lanka, where Premaratna demonstrates how performing cooperation in their professional roles

contributed to the actors' transformed relationships both on and off stage, including at the personal level. Over time the members developed shared goals based on personal interests rather than merely work-related interests for the sake of producing a play. However, in some dyads, cooperation may not be desired by all the actors involved: for instance, as Nilsson points out in the Colombian case study, after decades of dependency some of the civilian actors expressed a wish to reduce their degree of cooperation with the military. This underscores that the elements of the framework are not necessarily equally important for all types of actors and dyads. Also, what ideal should be aimed for and whether that ideal is attainable may well vary to some degree between dyads, and may depend on the level of analysis at which they are situated. Our expectations for deliberation in parliament, for instance, should not be the same as for actors who do not routinely meet or are not obliged to meet, such as military personnel and local farmers.

However, taken together, the case studies underscore how the depth and frequency of deliberation and cooperation need to be spelled out in the assessment of relational peace. Deliberation and cooperation are often sporadic, and may occur in parallel with acts of domination (and sometimes even hostile behavior) rather than being the paramount mode of interactions, as we see for example in Söderström's chapter on Cambodia, as well as in Olivius and Hedström's chapter on Myanmar. Thus, many cases show a mixture of cooperative and dominant behavior existing in parallel, sometimes in what appear to be contradictory ways. To us, this indicates dyadic relations undergoing change, or indeed struggling to live up to full relational peace. Importantly, the framework allows us to capture these nuances and challenges.

The question of *domination versus non-domination* is an important element of behavioral interaction in several of the case studies. By pinpointing non-domination as a central element of relational peace, it has been possible to discover that legal and non-violent forms of domination are still taking place in some of the dyads studied, and that these forms of domination are quite consequential. For instance, in their chapter on Myanmar, Olivius and Hedström show how other means of domination, such as land confiscation, form part of the dyad actors' interaction, while Nilsson points to suppression of social protest as well as fumigation in Colombia. Eklund, Wimelius, and Elfving show how from a Russian perspective non-domination is interpreted as non-intervention. Bramsen's chapter on the Philippine peace talks also provides insights into the issue of non-domination and symmetry and suggests that an asymmetric relationship on the battleground is not necessarily reflected in the peace talks. Söderström observes how elements of domination have been particularly detrimental to the overall relationship between the elites in Cambodia. At the same time, this kind of domination is often interspersed

with more positive forms of behavioral interaction. It is clear that domination comes in many forms, and the empirical study of relational peace thus requires us to be aware of and open to capturing these varied practices. Indeed, this is one of the main contributions of the book, namely that we move beyond the relational peace as an ideal, and scrutinize what this looks like in real dyadic relations; the chapters thus provide us with insights into how *relational peace practices* manifest themselves.

Several chapters point to the importance of also studying symbolic forms of domination, as these also shape the potential for dialogue. Klocek demonstrates how in Cyprus different forms of symbolic domination persist between the two communities and are enacted and reinforced through, for example, the raising of the flag at particular locations, nationalistic messages, and the erection of landmark statues. The symbolic domination both within and across communities has reinforced conflict lines and produced additional contestation, something we also see in Olivius and Hedström's chapter, for instance in relation to the naming of a bridge after a general and the erection of a statue of the same general.

It should be noted that while the three elements of behavioral interactions proposed in the framework seem important for analyzing and understanding relational peace practices across all cases, the chapters also point to other forms of behavioral interactions that are not captured by the framework, but that can still help us understand the relationship. Thus, by focusing our attention on behavior, we can also note the instances of domination or other behavioral practices which fall outside relational peace. Similarly, the framework, by highlighting the importance of considering attitudes and ideas in dyads, can help us discover a range of attitudes (such as distrust) and ideas of the relationship (such as enemy depictions) which do not fall into the category of relational peace, but which still shed light on the relationship.

In terms of the attitudes toward the other, the chapters point to the importance of mutual *recognition*. In several of the case studies, this has been put forward as key to understanding the very nature of peace. In the case study on South Africa, Jarstad writes that two of the opposition parties, the EFF and FF Plus, have at times expressed that they do not recognize the other as a legitimate party, and the question of who is recognized as a full citizen is still debated by South African political parties. In this case, the issue of who is to be recognized as a fellow citizen is central to how community relations are envisioned in South Africa, ultimately shaping the degree of relational peace. In the Myanmar case study, Olivius and Hedström suggest that equality and recognition are key to local conceptions of what peace means and that non-recognition is at the core of local grievances. Likewise, in their ideational analysis of Russian ideas of peace, Eklund, Wimelius, and Elfving identify how, from a Russian perspective, non-recognition of

Transnistria and Abkhazia is key to understanding the absence of peace in the Bolshoi Kavkaz region and the idea of the “broken family.”

While recognition and non-recognition are emphasized in many chapters, *trust* is stressed less in the case studies. Trust seems to prevail particularly at the individual level and in personal relations, as demonstrated in Premaratna’s analysis of micro-level relationships in the Sri Lankan context. The theoretical literature often emphasizes that establishing trust is a long-term process, which might also help explain why trust is observed particularly in this context of long-term and sustained interactions within a small group. In several cases recognition rather than trust seems to be the dominant attitude, and non-recognition, rather than distrust, tends to be put forward as being at the core of conflict. This supports the proposition that trust is a more difficult attitude to achieve. It also suggests that in some cases trust might not necessarily be strived for. It should be noted, though, that in some of the chapters, including Söderström’s and Klocek’s, the authors emphasize that the actors’ subjective attitudes are rarer, or harder to capture, in the data than their behavioral interactions. Again, this is likely to vary, depending on the dyad under scrutiny and the time frame being investigated. If interviews can be conducted, trust and recognition can be more easily explored, whereas behavioral interactions are more likely to be documented in written sources. Thus, when we are interested in historical processes and dyads, we are always limited to the kinds of sources and material that have been recorded for other reasons, and we are likely to suffer from the bias that behavior and negative attitudes and ideas are more likely to be recorded than attitudes such as trust and recognition.

The idea of the relationship seems to be important for the overall understanding of relational peace in each case, even if it is also often hard to find data on. While behavior and attitudes tend to fluctuate over time and sometimes work in what might appear to be contradictory ways, the idea of the relationship is seemingly pivotal for the overall characterization and assessment of relational peace. Also, the case studies demonstrate nuances in terms of the fellowship and friendship categories proposed in the framework. For example, in the Myanmar case Olivius and Hedström stress that inequality is key to the idea of the relationship, while in the Sri Lankan case Premaratna shows how over time, relationships came to resemble family relationships. Söderström’s analysis of Cambodia also points to important nuances in the idea of fellowship, which is described as a partnership of necessity and as based on high levels of dependency. This contrasts with the form of coexistence described by Klocek with regard to pre-independence relationships in Cyprus, which were based on acceptance of the other group’s right to exist and institutional cooperation but at a chosen distance. In Jarstad’s chapter, the issue is not only how the actors studied formulate the

relationship which is scrutinized, but also what dyads are identified as making up that relationship to begin with. Here it is clear that different political parties formulate the community along different lines, and that they identify different actors making up relevant dyads in that community. Ultimately, trying to understand how the relationship is formulated by the actors involved in the dyad is key to understanding the relationship overall, and these nuances in how the relationship is imagined can reveal not only key aspects that might need to change for a deeper peace to develop, but also to what degree the relationship diverges from relational peace.

Nilsson's chapter on Colombia also demonstrates the importance of recognizing that the ideal is not the same for all dyad relationships. Overall, the empirical chapters demonstrate the importance of the actor's own understanding of the kind of relationship that is in place, and what they want it to be in the future, for the development of the dyad's relationship as a whole. In many of the cases these formulations of the future relationship have been a way to describe where they see problems in contrast with their ideal. Such characterizations are important, especially when there are contrasting formulations between the actors in the dyad, as these may pose impenetrable barriers to transforming a relationship.

Studying process-oriented practices and webs of relationships

Practices of relational peace cannot be captured solely through focusing on one moment in time; rather we need to study the dyadic relationship as a process. Continued interaction between the actors in the dyad, where certain exchanges start to become habitual or exhibit some degree of regularity, are key to identifying what the practice of the dyadic relationship is. The next step is to consider whether the practice exhibited in the dyad amounts to relational peace. Hence, we have to take temporal questions seriously in order to describe relational peace in each case. One of the advantages of focusing on relational peace *practices* is that it allows us to provide a more nuanced characterization, for example as Söderström highlights in the chapter on peace in Cambodia, where back-and-forth changes in relational traits and instability (rather than pronounced shifts) are described as a pattern of the peace. Behavioral changes seem to occur faster and more frequently, while attitudes and ideas of relationships change more slowly. As noted above, several of the case studies reveal a mixture of cooperative and dominant behavior, and in addition, many instances of more positive behavioral interactions are described as somewhat limited in time. Because relations change after war, this is not unexpected. But this is also why it is vital to study relations over time, not only in order to capture such fluctuations in general, but also to establish whether the overall balance between constructive

and destructive behavioral interaction changes over time. This helps avert the risk of overly positive assessments based on sporadic glimpses of change in the interactions, but it also allows us to be cognizant of the presence of instances of peace.

These variations over time also point to the need for explaining such shifts. While the chapters in this book are focused on describing relational peace practices, we do think the next step is to consider how such shifts can be explained. We suggest that a useful approach to this, besides investigating how the various components and elements in themselves influence one another, is to search for radical shifts, or moments in time when the relationship has clearly taken a new path, and explore explanations for such critical junctures. We also suggest that it is important to remember that what explains relational peace at one level may not necessarily translate to explaining relational peace at another; for instance, micro-sociological explanations are likely to be fruitful in some instances but less so for macro-political developments. We now turn to additional insights related to how we can think about explaining relational peace in light of the case studies in the book.

The history of the dyad, as well as its future, are relevant in several of the case studies. The memory of past behavioral interaction, for instance, can clearly influence current attitudes toward the other, particularly the ability to trust the other party. In the case of Colombia, human rights abuses weigh heavily on the filter through which the civilian actors' relationship with the military as a whole is evaluated. The case studies all make clear how the three components feed into each other, again stressing the importance of considering all three in future studies too. If we are to understand the development of the behavioral interaction in a specific dyad, we also need to study the other elements of subjective attitudes and ideas around the relationship within the dyad. Some chapters also stress the importance of studying imaginings of the future relationship; if the actors' visions are incompatible, this is likely to pose a challenge further down the road.

The symmetry of the actors may also affect the relational peace. One aspect of such symmetry relates to the conceptual framework, and to whether or not the various elements are equally present in relation to both actors in the dyad. An unbalanced relationship, where the elements are present for the actors to different degrees, faces serious challenges. Either one actor will have to demonstrate patience and perseverance, and wait for the other actor to slowly update and revise their behavior and attitudes – and finding the motivation for this can be a real challenge – or the relationship is likely to be unstable. In the latter case, one actor may initially have been open to revising the overall relationship, but if attempts at cooperation and trust are continually met with domination and lack of recognition, the relationship is likely to deteriorate.

An important observation in several of the case studies is the inherent privilege and inability of the dominant, stronger party of the dyad to see the perspective of the weaker party. Recognizing the needs and wants of the other, or the way in which the interaction is understood by the weaker party, is simply not a priority for the stronger of the two. Thus, in several of the dyads scrutinized in this book, there is a clear blindness and unwillingness on the part of the more powerful actor. Relational peace symmetry can thus be conditioned by tangible factors such as size, popular support, and military power, but also by less visible elements related to attitudes and beliefs, such as prestige and status.

One difficulty in the study of relational peace is the question of actor boundaries, in addition to selecting which actors to focus on (see also Emirbayer 1997: 303–304). When do we see an actor that reaches “entity-ness,” and which is stable enough over time for us to meaningfully analyze it as a solid “actor”? Several of the authors describe dyads where the actors’ boundaries are less easily defined than in other dyads. Their analyses, nevertheless, demonstrate the importance of studying the perspectives of larger entities such as rural communities, the military, ethnic groups, and political parties. The chapter authors handle these challenges differently, but they all endeavor to strategically interview these communities and actors or collect data from within them, recognizing that there are limits to the data at hand. Paying attention to dyads and actor boundaries also helps us highlight another aspect, namely how the relations within one dyad may be impacted by those within another dyad. Both Bramsen and Klocek discuss whether and how intra-actor dynamics affect inter-actor peace. Bramsen discusses a web of relationships consisting of peace talk negotiators, the media, civil society, and the main political leaders in the Philippines. She shows that despite the progression of peace talks among the negotiating teams, the relationship between the main political leaders did not shift enough for a peace deal to be signed. Klocek’s chapter shows that the intracommunal relations in the Greek Cypriot community caused obstacles for improving intercommunal relations. Klocek’s analysis is a call for researchers to pay more attention to how relations between actors other than the original conflict actors may influence how the peace develops in other cases too. Indeed, it can also be a good exercise in its own right to analytically identify the dyads and the actor boundaries, as this in itself can help us nuance our understanding of the peace and what divides are present in each society, not least because such divides shift over time.

In the chapter on Russian ideas of peace, we see how the authors had to deal not with one dyad, but instead with how Russia position itself vis-à-vis multiple other actors. This is done from the perspective of only one actor, but it does begin to speak to the larger web of relationships and

how they influence one another. Klocek, by contrast, chose to study relational peace within one community and across two communities, including elite and societal levels; because of various limitations, he did not study relational peace within the Turkish community. The choices of which actors to study also have implications for which sources are available, and in the case of Klocek's chapter, the resulting data are not entirely symmetrical. Olivius and Hedström also struggled to get data on all actors in the dyads they wanted to study, in part because of ongoing violence in some of the locations where they were collecting data. The more pressing, and less resolvable, issue in their chapter is perhaps that of who should be deemed an appropriate representative to speak on behalf of the state in interviews. While they do not assume the state to be a homogeneous actor, they do try to conceptualize it as one of the actors in the dyad, as this is the reference point for many of the civilian respondents. Similarly, Nilsson attempts to study the military and how this actor is understood by civilian counterparts.

Premaratna, on the other hand, focuses only on the internal Sinhala–Tamil relations among the members of the theater group she explored, rather than also including other actors such as the audiences and surrounding communities. Given her focus on participant observation and close engagement over a very long time period, it is reasonable that she limits her study to these internal relations in order to justice to the nuances and the richness of her data. Söderström struggled with limiting the newspaper material in a manageable way, and decided to focus on how each of the peace signatories positioned themselves vis-à-vis the prime minister, Hun Sen, rather than investigating all peace signatories' relations with all other peace signatories, thus focusing on the main conflict division as a way to delimit which actor dyads are the most fruitful and practical to study. All of these studies feature difficult tradeoffs, and anyone who wants to study a dyad using the relational peace framework will be affected by similar factors, namely the problems not only of defining actor boundaries and their inherent fuzziness, but also of determining which dyads we should focus on to begin with. The chapter authors make different arguments for why they have chosen to focus on specific actors and dyads, either in terms of political or conflict centrality or because of a theoretical interest and a wish to contribute to a specific field of research. We see this as the best and most useful way forward, as the relational framework in itself does not give guidance in terms of which dyads should be studied; it only determines how such dyads should be studied once selected.

An associated challenge that the chapters deal with is the issue of how to aggregate their findings across time, levels, and scale. As always, comparative research designs make these questions somewhat easier; it will be easier to determine what systematic tendencies are more or less present in one

dyad if we compare it with another. This is perhaps most elegantly shown in Klocek's chapter. However, when we study only one dyad, the question of aggregation looms large. We argue that it is important to consider patterns of engagement over time, as relationships are formed through repeated interactions, exchanges, and practices, and the actors' experiences of these interactions. When studying such patterns, we then have to ask ourselves what the dominant pattern of this interaction is; are there continuous shifts in how the behavioral interaction plays out, is one actor continually doing one thing and the other actor attempting to do something else, or do we see coherent and systematic shifts in this pattern over time? Do these shifts coincide with shifts in other dyads? None of these questions are easy, but they are key if we are to think about how the changes in one dyad contribute to the larger web of relations. They are also useful when we want to understand how actors of more limited scope (even individuals) within a larger community contribute to the larger actor and associated dyad, such as relations between ethnic groups, and when we study specific interethnic relations in a theater group; how a party leader relates to their political party as a whole; or how a representative, for instance in peace negotiations, speaks to the larger conflict actor. Zooming in on specific dyadic relationships also necessitates carefulness as to what conclusions can be drawn from comparisons across dyads and conflict settings. For example, assessing relational peace in one specific actor dyad in the context of a war victory does not automatically allow us to draw comparative conclusions related to the particular type of war-ending (such as victory vs. negotiated settlement, UN involvement or not, etc.), unless we have created a comparative design that speaks to this. We would encourage comparisons of the same dyad across contexts to address such questions.

The various authors describe different methodological considerations and choices in detail, which is useful for others who want to use the framework for empirical analysis. For instance, the availability of data is very context-dependent, as our chapters show; in many cases it is difficult to find data on all components in the framework at one particular point in time. Studying true attitudes is, of course, always a challenge. It is difficult to define the limits of each actor in a dyad, which in turn has consequences for what should be seen as the appropriate sources to give access to each actor's internal reasoning and imaginings. Söderström solves this conundrum by placing more emphasis on what is communicated to an external audience via mass media, as she argues that such elite expressions are what shape larger societal ideas of peace. But it is also important to consider what audience the data were created for, as Jarstad's chapter highlights; party manifestos give insight into how these parties attempt to communicate not only with their voters but also with their own campaign workers, and as

such the data do not give insight into how these parties act in parliament or how their voters behave toward the other communities. Klocek's chapter, on the other hand, is clearly more focused on triangulating across different kinds of material (historical accounts, public opinion data, news reports, conversations with residents, secondary sources, archival research, etc.), and aptly demonstrates that the relational peace framework does require data of very different types for the different components. Again, we see a bias toward the behavioral component being better recorded further back in time, as is shown in Söderström's chapter.

Eklund, Wimelius, and Elfving's chapter takes a very different approach and applies the framework in the context of an ideational analysis of various text documents. The authors take a range of contemporary sources in the original language, including academic, governmental, expounding sources, and popular reference texts, and use the framework as a starting point to analyze and interpret Russian ideas of peace and peacekeeping. This approach allows them to triangulate how these ideas are formulated from an elite perspective and how they underpin state policy, ultimately helping us to understand how Russia acts on the world stage. Rather than pinpointing a particular dyad where each component is analyzed and described, the chapter identifies themes where peace is discussed and where the components figure prominently. Similarly, Jarstad's chapter, while on the one hand identifying political parties as the main actors to be analyzed in the chapter, also scrutinizes how these actors themselves identify which dyads are seen as key in the web of relations that make up South Africa today. Jarstad's use of party manifestos, including images therein, is an important reminder that it is not only text but also the visual that can be used to study relational peace. Premaratna's close-up study of a small microcosm of interactions in the case of the theater group *Jana Karaliya*, as well as Bramsen's study of micro-sociological dynamics within the Philippine peace talks, also shows how the framework can be applied to study the interactions in quite small groups of individuals, using participant observation and ethnographic work. Thus the framework can be scaled both up and down. The availability of data is very context-dependent, as our chapters show; in many cases it is difficult to find data on all components in the framework at one particular point in time, but the chapters show innovative solutions to this problem.

Policy implications

In this section we discuss the insights and implications of the relational approach to studying peace, especially in terms of policy implications. The framework itself should be useful for building and assessing peace in general,

at a specific point in time or over a longer time period. Here our book is helpful as it crosses empirical boundaries and works with various types of data. The need to assess peace is often important for peacebuilders in order for them to establish what is needed to move the process forward. Policy-makers can make use of our theoretical framework and also of the methods used by the different authors both to provide a baseline for future work and also evaluate whether a measure is successful in building peace. In this way we encourage peacebuilders to look beyond any existing peace agreement and its implementation and use our framework as an external and more neutral scheme for assessing how a peace process unfolds. One reason for this is that peace agreements vary a great deal in content, detail, and length, but more importantly not all peace agreements contain measures that are necessarily good for peace. On the contrary, peace agreements are results of compromises necessary for bringing warring parties to the table and ending an armed conflict, and they can include measures that actually work against long-lasting and consolidated peace. The relational peace framework, on the other hand, gives us a different standard for evaluation, offering an alternative to the peace agreements and numbers of deaths. Thus it can even be used to analyze peace after a military victory where no peace agreement has been reached.

In this volume we have put an emphasis on the actors involved in central relationships, and the dyads that they form. One interesting question that is raised in several chapters, albeit indirectly, is: With whom do we have relations, and which relationships do we invest in? Creating the willingness to invest and the safety to engage with the other are central issues in building peace. The case studies show different ways in which formerly warring parties engage with each other and how peaceful relations can be created and transformed over a longer time period, and also whether and how improved relations within one dyad impact other dyads.

As regards the different elements of our framework, our case studies show that *deliberation* can exist in many forms. In order to promote peaceful relations, we suggest that institutional solutions should allow for deliberations. For instance, it is of utmost importance to open up different arenas for public deliberations, which should be monitored so that hate speech is prevented. Political deliberations are also very important, not least because elite behavior and attitudes may trickle down to the general public. Political elites can serve as role models in creating relational peace in deliberations that are made public. Institutions that enable deliberation do not need to be formal or official ones. The case studies show examples of innovative bottom-up initiatives that have worked as a platform for deliberation and created room for contestation, as within Jana Karaliya in Sri Lanka. A relational approach to peace calls for efforts to increase the room for dialogue

between actors in a dyad; however, by recognizing that peace involves a web of relationships, the chapters of this book also underscore the importance of supporting a plurality of viewpoints. Several chapters stress the diversity *within* actors and the importance of relationships within and across different segments of various actors. Thus, the process of enabling dialogue and deliberation needs to recognize the diversity of actors and the need for many different deliberation platforms, including within actors.

Our case studies also show that institutions are important for *non-domination*. To avert relationships characterized by domination and inequalities, in many conflict settings there is a need for state reforms and structural changes to protect the interests of minorities and of marginalized groups, as Nilsson, and Olivius and Hedström stress. For institutions to contribute to non-domination certain prerequisites are necessary. One is the legitimacy of the institution, which in itself can rest on the legitimacy of the specific state, regime, or country. If there is no consensus about territorial borders, about which groups' members should have the right to become citizens, or about how the government should be elected, institutions will not be enough to prevent arbitrary use of power, as this can boil down to a catch-22 situation. Nevertheless, it is important to regulate behavior which risks producing domination, as this otherwise prevents relational peace from developing and being consolidated. Symbolic domination is also relevant here, and this may be an area where concessions may be easier to achieve via mediation, and which in the long run may open the door for a larger transformation of the relationship. Again, it is important to consider how non-domination can be achieved at various levels of society; it is not simply a macro-level question.

Our case studies also contribute to the longstanding debate on whether and how *cooperation* can promote better relations. There is, for instance, a large literature on how trade influences peaceful relations, and vice versa (see e.g. Deutsch 1957; Singer 2008; Barbieri 2002). A different strand of research focuses on the type of cooperation which is most fruitful for improving relationships. While some scholars suggest measures to encourage cooperation across conflict lines on practical matters of concern for the affected communities (for instance housing, sewage systems, and clean water), others suggest specifically designed workshops on conflict transformation where groups work together in a cooperative manner in an effort to increase the understanding and empathy of the other side, and also try to rebuild future and more positive relationships rather than ruminating over past atrocities and a feeling of victimhood (see e.g. Kelman 1997; Connolly 2000; Kadushin and Livert 2002; Malhotra and Liyanage 2005; Maoz 2011). Our case studies show that cooperation varies in importance across dyads, and is not always desirable. However, some of the chapters

show that under certain conditions, such as those in the case study of the theater group Jana Karaliya in Sri Lanka, where the members live and work closely together and develop a sense of caring and friendship over a long period of time, cooperation can indeed improve the relationships and deepen relational peace. Our framework points to the importance of placing instances of cooperation in a larger relational setting, where other elements of behavioral interaction influence it, and to how attitudes toward the other and ideas of the relationship in turn also shape how cooperation plays out. Continuous iterations of positive behavioral interactions are key for cooperation to blossom.

Next, we turn to actors' subjective attitudes toward each other within their dyad. Several of the case studies in this book show that it is difficult to identify signs of *trust* in the relationships studied. Recognition and equality are important for trust to develop according to civilian actors in Myanmar, while predictability and legitimate institutions are seen as more important for political parties in the case of South Africa. Often, misunderstandings and prejudice need to be overcome through dialogue and repeated interactions over long periods of time in order to sustain and maintain a peaceful relationship. In Sri Lanka, the multiethnic theater group studied by Premaratna created such a space for continuous everyday interactions in which the participants got to know each other, which over time prompted them to overcome biases and develop an understanding of the other. Previous research has shown several ways in which trust can be built in a relationship (see for example Powers 2010 on interreligious deliberation; Zahar and McCandless 2020 on inclusion in the relationship). Some theoretical propositions suggest that trust is built by tit-for-tat strategies (see e.g. Fisher and Ury 2012), where over a long a period of time actors respond by the same measure as their opponent, and such trust-inducing activities can in some cases be created, supported, or overseen by peacebuilders. For instance, the case study on Cambodia shows that there is often a desire for more trust in relationships after civil war, and this is where the role of facilitators and mediators can be important. It is vital to stress that trust is contingent on the behaviors of *both* actors in the dyad and requires that substantial changes come about at the core of a conflictual relationship, particularly in order to remove the sense that one party is at the mercy of the other, ultimately preventing domination of one by the other. In this regard, a third party can act as a facilitator or ensure that a peaceful behavior is maintained, which in turn can promote the development of trust within the dyad.

Recognition is also an important element of relational peace. Recognition can take the form of official recognition of a person as the president of a country rather than just being referred to as "Sir" or "Madam," or it can be at the country level, in relation to whether a territory is officially

recognized as an independent state. As Bramsen suggests in her case study, the labeling of the counterpart in the dyad as a terrorist organization has been devastating for the peace process in the Philippines, and removing such a label would be one way to recognize it as a legitimate negotiation partner. Recognition can take legal, practical, and symbolic forms, as we also see in the case studies on South Africa and Myanmar. The process of gaining recognition can also take place in grassroots settings. Premaratna's chapter shows the importance for members of different ethnic groups of being exposed to the other group via work and profession; the workplace can become a neutral space where the different actors can rediscover each other and find new ways of relating. It thus highlights the importance of and opportunity associated with arenas such as the workplace, public space, and school as locations where sustained interaction can take place that may influence the way various dyads are formed and transformed. For peacebuilding practitioners, it is therefore of utmost importance to create arenas at different levels of society where the transformation of relationships can take place, and to pay attention to symbolic forms of recognition, which, as shown in several chapters, can be key in transforming the interactions in a relationship.

The idea of the relationship is also a key determinant of a peaceful relationship. Our case studies provide different examples of how a peaceful relationship can be labeled. The different emic descriptions used include e.g. notions of family, being in one's own house, feeling like a visitor, or being professional fellows. The question of whether or not the emic label used was one that each actor was comfortable with, or wanted to change, was central to understanding the dynamic in the relationship. In the Introduction we have used the terms "friendship" and "fellowship" for the two analytical categories that we see as plausible for empirical studies and which are likely to encapsulate the two main types. Several of the actors analyzed in the case studies did also use terms such as "friends" and "fellows." For instance, in the peace talks in the Philippines, the actors often referred to the other party in the negotiations as friends. This is also the case in the Sri Lankan chapter, where members of the theater group from different ethnicities described their relationship as having developed into friendship, and even into a family relationship. The chapter on South Africa shows that several political parties preferred to refer to citizens as fellows, but other terms were also used, such as "neighbors." In the Cambodia case study, the relationship in the main dyad was described in terms of an unhappy marriage, or as an airplane where each actor is one of the wings; this suggests a clear dependency on one another, as a broken wing would have a devastating effect on both actors.

This book thus highlights the work of engaging in discussions, society-wide, and actively trying to formulate visions of what kind of relationships different groups want to have with each other in the future as an important part of peacebuilding work. The study of the role of the military in Colombia is a case in point. In this chapter we see how the actors envisage a future relationship. Facilitating workshops on such forward-looking visions is thus an important task for peacebuilding practitioners. Arts-based initiatives are also promising in this regard, such as the theater group *Jana Karaliya*, which challenges conflict divides and strives to create an alternative narrative of relationships across ethnicities in Sri Lanka.

For policy-makers and practitioners, our new framework for relational peace can also help bridge the false dichotomy of the international versus the local in peacebuilding by emphasizing that peace practices take place in a web of relationships between actors at multiple and different analytical levels. Neither should one assume that interactions and positions within one community or actor are homogeneous, as Klocek's study shows. How these levels and different elements of interactions influence each other is important for us to fully understand peace. Our focus on dyads can help determine which are the most relevant actors to focus on when assisting in a peace process, and how such assistance affects actors differently in the dyad with regard to the elements specified in the framework.

Future research

Finally, we turn to suggestions for future avenues of research. The various case studies show a great deal of variation in the ways the dyads they analyze have evolved over time. A next step could be more focused on explaining turning points, considering the question: What are the reasons for shifts toward more peaceful relations? Our case studies place a strong emphasis on the actors, and if individuals assume new roles or die this may lead to a change in the actors' behavior, attitudes, and ideas. The internal legitimacy of specific actors may also change over time with respect to communities they have led in the past. In this book, we particularly emphasize the role of an iterative process whereby actors' interactions over time may transform relations into a more peaceful relationship. Future work should thus pay attention to the degree to which there are changes over time, and to whether such changes are more rapid in behavioral interactions or in attitudes and ideas. On the basis of the case studies in this book, we posit that behavioral interactions may change more rapidly, but ultimately this should be studied further in other settings. This would also help to indicate

how much repeated positive behavioral interaction is required for one actor to update their attitudes toward the other. However, the chapters also show the importance of structures and institutions for enabling relational peace and preventing antagonism. An important future research task is therefore to explore what causes relational peace and what causes a shift toward more peaceful relations. Such an exploration should be careful to separate micro-level and macro-level explanations as we move across different analytical levels. Thus, when and why do shifts in relationships occur? While these questions can be partly addressed with longitudinal and in-depth case studies, there is also an opportunity to collect data on a larger number of cases to conduct large N longitudinal quantitative studies related to these questions. Such explanatory studies may also show that certain shifts are largely the product of shifts in specific relational peace elements, and thus what could be termed intra-framework explanations, whereas other kinds of shifts are more often explained by external factors. The case studies in this book certainly hint at both kinds of processes.

Questions related to the interactions within and across actors, arenas, and levels could also be approached using network analysis, and we would encourage such an expansion of the use of the relational peace framework. Paying attention to networks and differences across actors would also reveal, for instance, how much difference ideas of the relationship, as portrayed by elite actors, make to the reimagining of and shift in behavioral interaction within local communities. How do actors in different parts of the network make sense of conflicting signals from state officials at lower levels as opposed to elite politicians? Ultimately, how do relations within one community or group impact relations across other dyads? How far do specific ideas of a relationship extend within a certain actor group, and how deeply embedded are ideas of the relationship in the actors involved?

While this book focuses on cases with relatively recent experiences of a civil war, it would be interesting to apply the relational peace framework to cases such as Canada and New Zealand, which have not been at war since the Second World War, but where there is tension between the indigenous population (the Inuits, First Nations, and Métis in Canada, and the Maori in New Zealand) and the state, for instance on issues related to mines, rivers, and hunting rights, and where there have been historical experiences of atrocities. Furthermore, it would be interesting to apply the relational peace framework to race relations in the US, or to the relations between different socioeconomic groups, for instance between poor populations, such as unemployed, blue-collar workers, or those living in mobile home areas and white-collar workers in urban areas. Even in old conflict cases, future studies should perhaps focus on new dyads, for instance when new generations have to come to terms with old conflict divides. We further

encourage focusing on different arenas, for instance the private, professional, religious, legal, and public arenas, and how they influence each other, and studying whether the same actor engages differently across such arenas. We also suggest that not all future work needs to employ the framework in full; a scholar could choose to focus on specific elements in order to enable in-depth and longitudinal studies of these elements, depending on the field to which they wish to contribute.

Other cases where the relational peace framework could be applied in the future are at the transnational and supranational levels. For instance, how can we characterize relationships between diaspora groups and groups that have remained in their original home country? The relationship between elites with different war and post-war experiences could also be analyzed using the relational peace framework, and also that between returnees (former refugees or internally displaced people) and the communities in which they have settled. It can also be fruitful to analyze the relationship between states in the European Union (EU) with the help of the relational peace approach. It is clear that the various war histories of the member states and the power relations between them affect their relationships, internal EU politics, and also the foreign policy of the EU. For instance, how has the relational peace among the members of the EU affected the development of the new migration policies, or trade relations with other regions?

This brings us to an additional sphere and fruitful avenue for future research, namely the consequences of the various types of relational peace practices: Does relational peace, for example, contribute to democracy, development, and stability? There is a need to analyze whether various types of relational peace have different effects, and if so, what these are. Does a certain type of relational peace practice have a greater potential than others to spread or trickle down to other dyads? Also, does relational peace evolve differently after different war endings? Do the elements of the framework interact in different ways under varying conditions of external involvement, or at different levels of analysis? These are some of the future applications of the relational peace framework that we foresee, but we do not want to put any limits to its application. Rather, the relational peace framework should be useful to anyone interested in understanding and analyzing peace practices, at different analytical levels, with different types of actors, and in different contexts.

Note

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

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