

Undergraduate Transitional Justice Review

Volume 1 | Issue 3

Article 6

2010

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Recommended Citation

Young, Graeme (2010) "Reconceptualizing Positive Peace and Transformative Peace Processes," *Undergraduate Transitional Justice Review*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 3 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/undergradtjr/vol1/iss3/6>

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RECONCEPTUALIZING POSITIVE PEACE AND TRANSFORMATIVE PEACE PROCESSES

Graeme Young

Peace is both an ill-defined concept and an elusive reality, this paper seeks to re-conceptualize the former as a means of improving the prospects of the latter. In doing so, this study asserts that the concept of a positive peace—meaning a post-conflict situation which is defined by something more than the mere absence of violence—is a realistic objective for modern peacebuilding operations. Nevertheless, the realization of this goal is precluded by an unproblematized belief in the universal benefits of liberal peace processes. This paper will present a critique of, and outline possible alternatives to, this dominant ideational model in order to propose how future peacebuilding operations can avoid the common failures that have undermined recent attempts at establishing a positive peace in post-conflict societies.

In the aftermath of a lengthy civil war, numerous questions arise regarding the extent to which fundamental processes such as social reconstruction, combatant reintegration and psychological recovery and reorientation are possible in the attempt to establish a lasting and stable order amongst divisive animosities and mass trauma. These debates are largely centred around the significant disconnect between the inextricably linked notions of negative and positive peace, with the former residing at the despondent limit of the spectrum denoting possibilities of success for such tasks and the latter occupying a similar position at the more optimistic end. Upon an appropriate examination of this issue, however, it becomes evident that while the concept of a positive peace is a feasible objective, its achievability in modern peace operations is compromised by the dominant ideological framework in which these processes are conducted. Thus, in order to realize the goal of a positive peace, the unquestioned assumptions that define contemporary peace processes must be problematized.

This paper will therefore begin by comparing and contrasting the theoretical problem-solving frameworks of conflict resolution, management and transformation in the context of outlining the discursively assumed bifurcate relationship between the objectives of positive and

negative peace. It will subsequently argue that the former aspect of this dichotomy, with important modifications, is both preferable to the latter and an attainable goal which can be realized through the re-conceptualization of the multifarious geneses of conflict and cooperation. Following the assertion that the establishment of a positive peace is possible in post-conflict scenarios, this paper will then explore obstacles to this goal, specifically focusing on the ramifications that the unproblematized institutionalization of liberal peace principles has on both practical and epistemological levels, demonstrating the latter through the application of critical theory. The final section will consequently be dedicated to proposing alternatives to the theory and practice that dominate contemporary peace operations, using the critiques articulated in the previous section.

I: Conceptualizing Peace and Conflict

In order to establish both the possibility of positive peace following an extended period of conflict and the ways in which such an aspiration cannot be realized in the context of modern peace processes, it is first necessary to highlight some of the important ambiguities that are inherent to the concept of peace. When evaluating the success of peace operations in the aftermath of armed conflict, for example, Thomas Weiss and Meryl Kessler claim that one must confine oneself to the criteria of whether or not such missions are able to (1) limit armed conflict and (2) find a compromise solution between the competing interests of relevant powers.¹ Following the end of the Cold War, authors such as Paul Diehl, Robert Johansen and Steven Ratner proposed similar, albeit slightly divergent, arguments presenting the notion that the success of a peacekeeping mission can only be measured against the fulfillment of its mandate

¹ Thomas G. Weiss and Mary A. Kessler, "Resurrecting Peacekeeping: The Superpowers and Conflict Management," *Third World Quarterly* 12, 3/4 (1990-1991): 124.

and its contributions to state security.² Despite these superficial differences, however, each of these authors nevertheless defines success within the framework of negative peace, as the absence of war is regarded as the ideal state to which a society in conflict should aspire, and is what any external intervention must be aimed at achieving. Such a position can be derived from traditional realist principles, as it is based on the assumption that conflict is an objective phenomenon that originates in the anarchic competition for resources between states; thus, as conflict is an intrinsic quality of both human beings and the modern state system, it can only be managed, rather than permanently resolved, through zero-sum settlements that compromise fundamental interests.³

If one is to propose an alternative model to conflict management and its focus on the principles of a negative peace, therefore, one must reject the realist notion that the interests of conflicting groups are innate qualities that are fundamentally irreconcilable. This contention is perhaps best articulated by John Burton, who claims that although conflict has objective origins, these are based on needs rather than interests; when human needs, which he outlines as both biological and pertaining to growth and development, are deprived within the confines of social norms, actors will seek the realization of these needs outside of accepted standards for action. However, he argues, the complexities of conflict situations often result in the misidentification of needs with values, which are based on culture and identity, and interests, which are derived from the competition for material goods or role occupancy and are thus transitory and, unlike needs

² Daniel Druckman, et al., "Evaluating Peacekeeping Missions," *Mershon International Studies Review* 41, 1 (1997): 151-165; Paul F. Diehl, *International Peacekeeping* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 33-40; Robert C. Johansen, "UN Peacekeeping: The Changing Utility of Military Force," *Third World Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1990): 53-70.

³ A.B. Fetherston, "From Conflict Resolution to Transformative Peacebuilding: Reflections from Croatia," Centre for Conflict Resolution, April 2000, <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/confres/assets/CCR4.pdf>, 1.

and values, negotiable. In order to address the root causes of conflict, he claims, it is therefore essential to separate needs, values and interests through deconstructive analysis and understand that as human needs are universal, their realization will therefore benefit both parties and thus transform the outcome of the dispute from a zero-sum settlement to a mutually beneficial resolution.⁴ According to Merton Deutsch, conflict and cooperation are both mutually exclusive yet similarly self-reinforcing concepts, as the former actuates and is actuated by coercion, attempts to change power relationships, lack of communication and a misperception of common interests, whereas the latter similarly instigates and is instigated by mutual assistance, trust, open communication and the realization of shared desires. Once initiated, therefore, cooperation can transcend the causes and effects of competition; it is only necessary to conceptualize both correctly in order to begin the fundamental shift between the two frameworks.⁵

While sharing numerous similarities with Burton's work in the field of conflict resolution, a collection of authors reject his notion that disputes have an ontological basis in human needs, and instead propose that these root causes are socially constructed and thus subjective in nature. They argue that the reason why these origins are misconceptualized as objective is because in situations of conflict, divergent needs commonly become engrained within—and thus identified with—other definitive manifestations of group identity, as factors such as ethnic heritage, socio-economic background, and religion come to incorporate and therefore perpetuate the sentiments of hostility and general social friction that precipitate and sustain collective discord. Because conflict leads to the collapse of social meaning, Daniel Bar-

⁴ John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (London: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1990), 39-41; John Burton, "Generic Theory: The Basis of Conflict Resolution." *Negotiation Journal* 2, no. 4 (1986): 333-344; Fetherston, "From Conflict Resolution to Transformative Peacebuilding: Reflections from Croatia," 3-6.

⁵ Morton Deutsch, "Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice," *Political Psychology* 4, no. 3 (1983): 436-440.

Tal argues, individuals and groups attempt to construct a new social meaning that coheres with the reality of conflict. In this new social meaning, all positive qualities are associated with one's own cause and identity and negative qualities are similarly associated with one's opponents.⁶ Since these identities and grievances are constructed through the activation of a "conflict schema," however, he claims that it is possible to (1) undermine the epistemic, rather than ontological, causes of conflict in order to promote resolution, and (2) subsequently render the conflict schema inaccessible in the future by separating it from both constructed individual and group identities.⁷ John Paul Lederach, the most prominent conflict transformation theorist, suggests that such a transformative process requires a "moral imagination" in order to transcend the cycle of violence and structure new norms around existing local circumstances and systems while simultaneously eliminating all aspects of these same systems which previously fostered tensions.⁸

The goal of conflict transformation is therefore to establish a positive peace, a concept perhaps best outlined by Johan Galtung and his theories of structural violence. Direct violence, according to Galtung, is not an inherent aspect of human nature, but is rather activated by both cultural and structural violence, and similarly perpetuates these trends as the causes and effects of conflict become mutually reinforcing phenomena. Thus, the application of physical force cannot be removed from the context of its relationship with indirect means of coercion and cooption that result from the institutionalization of unjust systems and ideologies, meaning that a

⁶ Daniel Bar-Tal, "From Intractable Conflict Through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis," *Political Psychology* 21, no. 2 (2000): 351-365. For a similar argument, see K.M. Fierke, *Diplomatic Interventions* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 127-134.

⁷ Daniel Bar-Tal, Arie W. Kruglanski, and Yechiel Klar, "Conflict Termination: An Epistemological Analysis of International Cases" *Political Psychology* 10, no. 2 (1989): 235-251.

⁸ John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 171-177.

society cannot be truly at peace until all forms of social, political and economic inequality and exclusion have been removed from the structures that exercise power within it. Peace, therefore, does not merely mean the absence of war as proponents of conflict management contend; rather, it can be equated with a form of justice in which groups and individuals are free to do, be or become what they desire unless this infringes upon the ability of any others to do the same.⁹

This notion that conflict transformation is an achievable, and indeed desirable, objective that facilitates the establishment of a positive peace in post-conflict societies has been increasingly adopted by the international community since the end of the Cold War, as it has become the explicit goal of United Nations peacebuilding operations to “reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.”¹⁰ Such a conclusion, however, is problematic: peacebuilding, according to the same report, is judged to be a success upon the completion of a set list of specific tasks that are intended to facilitate the realization of positive peace. This notion of success creates an interesting dichotomy in which, as Michael Barnett et al. note, although peacebuilding has experienced little success at institutionalizing peace, it has nevertheless institutionalized the *concept* of peace to the extent that the specific principles of development that these tasks—and indeed the entire notion of positive peace—are derived from have become taken for granted and unquestioned. The type of peacebuilding that is being institutionalized, they argue, is based on the notion that liberalization processes related to democratic and market-oriented reforms can establish both political stability and security while stimulating

⁹ Johan Galtung, “Violence, War, and Their Impact On Visible and Invisible Effects of Violence.” Forum for Intercultural Philosophy, 2004, <http://them.polylog.org/5/fgj-en.htm>.

¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, “Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations,” August 21, 2000, http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/.

development, thus restructuring society around principles that are conducive to the cessation of structural violence and thus the promotion of positive peace.¹¹ What these principles demonstrate, Mark Duffield argues, is the institutionalization of the ultimate transformative process, as development is no longer focused merely on promoting growth, but attempts to redefine social relationships and power structures within a society by altering both individual and collective perceptions and behaviours.¹² In order to argue that this ideational component of peace operations hinders rather than facilitates the realization of positive peace, one must first examine the practical and epistemological ramifications of liberalization processes, the study of which will therefore be the focus of the second section of this paper.

II: Problematizing Liberal Peace

When examining the effects that these liberal peace processes have on the post-conflict societies that they affect, two primary issues immediately arise. The first of these is the argument, advanced by Roland Paris, that although the goal of transforming post-conflict states into stable and prosperous market democracies may be desirable, the methods employed to affect this transition are problematic because they fail to take into account the destabilizing effects these reforms can have if they are implemented in societies that lack certain prerequisite institutional and political structures. Liberal states, according to this criticism, may be more stable than illiberal ones and thus less prone to conflict, but during the process of liberalization they are in

¹¹ Michael Barnett et al., "Peacebuilding: What Is In a Name?" *Global Governance* 13, no. 1 (2007): 35-58. For a similar argument, see Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 40-51.

¹² Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging and Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 1-107.

fact more prone to violence than states that did not undergo a similar transition.¹³ This may be the result of factors such as an underdeveloped or illiberal civil society, ethnic entrepreneurs, violent competition arising from elections, corrupt leaders who use democracy to gain legitimacy, and economic tensions caused by market reforms.¹⁴ The consequences of this negligence, Paris argues, can be severe, as democratization and marketization processes have led to an escalation of violence in Rwanda and Angola,¹⁵ the reinforcement and institutionalization of ethnic divisions in Croatia and Bosnia,¹⁶ and the recreation of the structural violence that originally led to conflict in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.¹⁷ Thus, he claims, peacebuilders should refrain from introducing liberal reforms to a society until the appropriate institutional foundations for such an undertaking have been established.¹⁸ For Paris, conflict transformation and the promotion of a positive peace is still the desired objective, but the means commonly employed to realize these goals must be modified if such processes are to have successful outcomes.

The second important issue that the implementation of liberalization processes raises pertains to the problematic equation of development with security, a concept which the United Nations General Assembly articulates in its 2004 High-Level Panel Report:

Development and security are inextricably linked. A more secure world is only possible if poor countries are given a real chance to develop. Extreme poverty and infectious diseases threaten many people directly, but they also provide a fertile breeding-ground

¹³ After conducting an empirical study of conflict in states undergoing liberalization processes, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder conclude that such societies can be up to twice as likely to engage in conflict as a state with any other structure of governance. See Edward D. Mansfield and Jack L. Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20, no. 1, (1995): 5-38.

¹⁴ Paris, *At War's End*, 40-55.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63-78.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 97-111.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 112-134.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 151-235.

for other threats, including civil conflict. Even people in rich countries will be more secure if their Governments help poor countries to defeat poverty and disease by meeting the Millennium Development Goals.¹⁹

What such policies demonstrate, according to Susan Willett, are the binary processes of the securitization of development and the *developmentalization* of security, as development has been co-opted into the discourse of security and international actors only intervene to stop violence and bring an end to cycles of conflict if such actions benefit their own interests. The primary effect of this new policy framework, Willett claims, is that it not only fails to provide more security for local and/or international actors, but actually has a negative effect as development policies become structured around ends that are not designed to serve the interests of members of a post-conflict society. Furthermore, liberal reforms often reinforce structural violence by increasing horizontal inequalities, reducing the capacities of local institutions, increasing foreign debt and making economic prosperity increasingly dependent on the volatile world market, thereby re-creating and intensifying many of the circumstances that originally led to the outbreak of conflict and, according to Galtung's theories, reinitiating the mutually-reinforcing cycle of violence.²⁰

Despite their emphasis on transformative objectives, therefore, liberal peace processes commonly inhibit the establishment of a positive peace because they fail to address the problematic realities of democratic and market-based transitions and the association of local development with global security. In order to understand the origins of these failures, however, one must also analyze the epistemic and ideological assumptions upon which modern peace

¹⁹ United Nations General Assembly, "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility," Report of the Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, December 2, 2004, <http://www.un.org/secure-world/report3.pdf>, ix.

²⁰ Susan Willett, "New Barbarians at the Gate: Losing the Liberal Peace in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 32, no. 106 (2005): 569-594.

operations are founded and subsequently examine why these remain sacrosanct amongst the majority of modern theorists and policymakers who formulate and direct post-conflict reconstruction. In order to attempt such a critique, it is first necessary to question the framework in which assumed facts pertaining to the causes and realities of conflict are presented as well as who or what defines the narrow parameters in which discourse is forced to operate. In 1968, Herman Schmid proposed that acceptable discourse in the field of peace research is primarily defined by those institutions which are able to exercise power in the international arena and thus pursue their own interests; he also suggests that theorists and practitioners of peace adhere to this constructed paradigm without problematizing its origins. The result of this phenomenon, Schmid contends, is that the only debates that are able to occur within the study of peace are directed at strengthening and legitimizing, rather than challenging, unjust structures and systems of power.²¹ The notion of power that Schmid describes, it therefore seems, can be related to Michel Foucault's theories that power cannot be separated from language and the knowledge claims that are advanced within the parameters of discourse; power, according to this concept, therefore involves co-optation rather than coercion and is exercised through various forms of social interaction and seemingly independent institutions, including academic ones. In this sense, the relationship between power and language constructs an important dichotomy between what is deemed acceptable and what is not, legitimizing and exalting the former while discrediting the latter. The only way in which one can have access to power, therefore, is by operating within its established discourse; in the field of peace research, as Schmid proposes, this entails conforming to the parameters established by international institutions. Thus, according to Foucault, the

²¹ Herman Schmid, "Peace Research and Politics," *Journal of Peace Research* 5, no. 3 (1968): 217-232; Roger Mac Ginty, *No War, No Peace: The Rejuvenation of Stalled Peace Processes and Peace Accords* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), 30-32.

exercise of power within a society becomes internalized at an individual level as one limits one's own thoughts and actions to the confines of constructed norms.²²

According to A.B. Fetherston, the primary dichotomy manifested in the field of peace research is the relationship between the concept of modernity, equated with the problematic notion of the liberal peace thesis, and unstable underdevelopment. These terms obviously have highly charged and ambiguous connotations, but demonstrate, Fetherston argues, the way in which the power of discourse has precluded the problematizing of conflict resolution by equating its realization with objective knowledge and the finality of historical progress. The fact that these have become accepted and unquestioned aspects of modern peace operations has several serious ramifications, which she outlines as (1) the fact that violence is only understood as a function of local complexities rather than as a manifestation of the institutionalized injustice and repression that defines the modern international system; (2) the labelling of violence as irrational and its subsequent separation from modernity, a process which allows developed states to ignore the various ways in which they define and participate in the discourse of violence that formulates and justifies conflict; and (3) the rendering of conflict resolution as a discursive practice that portrays a subjective opinion of development as an objective truth that can be described in terms of linear progress, a process that ignores the positionality and frame of reference of whoever is proposing theories of modernity and for what purpose.²³

²² Paul Rabinow, "Introduction," in *The Foucault Reader*, by Paul Rabinow ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984): 3-29; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, Penguin Books LTD, 1991), 195-228; and Derek Hook, *Foucault, Psychology and the Analytics of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 215-274.

²³ A.B. Fetherston, "Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: A Reconsideration of Theoretical Frameworks," in *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution*, ed. Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 190-218; and Fetherston, "From Conflict Resolution to Transformative Peacebuilding: Reflections from Croatia," 9-16.

Power relationships within a society, Fetherston continues, can also be described through the application of Antonio Gramsci's theories of hegemony and counter-hegemony, as she argues that those who exercise power, and thus inhibit any relevant debate on the theoretical framework in which conflict resolution is forced to operate, are able to do so because of the way in which power relations are fundamentally linked to the ideological, moral and cultural ties that define social interactions. According to Gramsci, the institutions that dominate society are able to do so by co-opting the interests of those over whom they exercise power; hegemony, Gramsci claims, is a dynamic phenomenon that can only be exercised on the precondition of the consent of marginalized groups, and this consent must be established through the universalization of individual values, the objectification of the subjective, and the disassociation of claims of knowledge and truth with the frames of reference from which they are derived.²⁴ Thus, a suitable explanation for the way in which liberalism has become normalized as the primary ideational force in modern peace discourse and operations can largely be derived from Gramsci's theories, as the spread and supposed benefits of market democracy are presented as natural and objective solutions to conflict and poverty within the Foucaultian modernity/underdevelopment dichotomy outlined above, thus portraying them as scientific truths rather than position-dependent opinions and concealing the reality that, as Roland Paris contends, peacebuilding is rather "an enormous experiment in social engineering—an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organization into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict."²⁵

²⁴ See Fetherston, "Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: A Reconsideration of Theoretical Frameworks," 208-214; and Antonio Gramsci, *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, ed. David Forgas (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 189-221.

²⁵ Roland Paris, "Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (1997): 56.

III: Alternatives to the Liberal Peace

If one accepts this Foucaultian/Gramscian conceptualization of power and the way in which it is manifest in contemporary peace research and practice, then if the goal of a positive peace is to be actualized in post-conflict situations, one must make an important distinction between conflict transformation *within* the hegemonic ideational framework of liberalism and transformation *of* this framework itself. Whereas the former method is currently employed to transform societies from situations of conflict to stability and economic growth, the latter would instead involve a critique of this process and problematize both its detrimental effects as well as its ideational foundations. As argued above, this should involve fundamentally reconstructing, rather than superficially reforming, this framework and the institutions in which it has become engrained, because any other solution would address only the effects, rather than the root causes, of the problems presented in this paper.

Gramsci's theories offer a possible explanation for how such an undertaking could be pursued, as he argues that since hegemonic interests that legitimize the dominant framework of peacebuilding are manufactured and hence do not have an ontological basis, they thus can and should be altered through the formation of a counter-hegemonic structure by dominated groups. Such a counter-hegemonic structure may serve to institutionalize normative practices and beliefs that actually reflect social, economic and political realities.²⁶ This can be achieved, it seems, through the application of Thomas Kuhn's theories pertaining to paradigm shifts. Any scientific claim, Kuhn proposes, can only be considered true within the confines of its own discourse rather than in relation to any claims of objective positionality. When a statement lies outside of

²⁶ See Gramsci, 189-221; and Fetherston, 208-214.

this discourse, it is not necessarily wrong, but, in a Foucaultian sense, can sometimes necessitate the construction of a new discourse in order to be considered right. Such a discursive shift involves a fundamental restructuring of the ways in which scientific truth is viewed; however, no paradigm is necessarily more accurate than any other that it may replace. Thus, paradigm shifts do not entail a linear progress towards truth, and as a result, relational, technological and other changes in social interaction and organization can have a profound effect on the way in which advancement is conceptualized.²⁷ In order to challenge the Gramscian notion of hegemony, if one extrapolates Kuhn's theories, a group must establish the terms of its own discourse in which its claims can be regarded as legitimate. Thus, in the Foucaultian equation of power and discourse, restoring its own discursive power by undermining the objective knowledge claims that constructed dichotomies are predicated upon.

As a prerequisite for such a paradigm shift, one can also expand upon the theories of Robert Cox, who claims that one must accept that notions of right and wrong, as conceptualized in a Foucaultian dichotomy, are conditioned upon both spatial and temporal circumstances, meaning that what can be right for a certain group of people at a specific time and place cannot be universalized. Quoting E.H. Carr, Cox argues that,

[t]heories of social morality are always the product of a dominant group which identifies itself with the community as a whole, and which possesses facilities denied to subordinate groups or individuals for imposing its view of life on the community. Theories of international morality are, for the same reason, and in virtue of the same process, the product of dominant nations or groups of nations. For the past hundred years, and more especially since 1918, the English-speaking peoples have formed the dominant group in the world; and current theories of international morality have been designed to perpetuate their supremacy and expressed in the idiom peculiar to them.²⁸

²⁷ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (London: Chicago University Press, 1970), 92-110.

²⁸ Quoted in Robert W. Cox, *The Political Economy of a Plural World: Critical Reflections on Power, Morals and Civilization* (London: Routledge, 2002), 61. For Cox's rejection of objectivity, see 57-62.

The claims to objective truth and knowledge upon which contemporary practices of conflict transformation are predicated, therefore, must be re-contextualized within the individual frameworks in which they were originally derived, for such a practice will allow for a better understanding of for whom and what specific purposes theories are presented.

Based on the arguments proposed above, one must not only critique the way in which the Foucaultian dichotomy between modernity and underdevelopment helps frame and becomes manifest in debates regarding contemporary peace operations, but also attempt to problematize the conceptual binary relationship between positive and negative peace as established in the first section of this paper. Although it is the contention of this study that a positive peace is both a realistic and desirable goal, it must also be argued that such a goal must be regarded as a subjective rather than an objective pursuit. Indeed, Galtung emphasized the importance of the elimination of structural violence in order to end the cycle of conflict and allow groups and individuals to realize autonomous needs and conceptions of the good, free from external constraints. It is also important to note that, according to Cox's arguments outlined above, these individual conceptions of the good cannot be universalized; rather, they must cohere with variable contextually-derived realities. Therefore, it is not only the liberal peace framework that is problematic but any solutions with objectivizing pretences. As a result, the concept of positive peace proposed by Galtung must be modified to acknowledge this fundamental epistemic issue; it is not only inaccurate to claim that liberalism is the *wrong* framework in which to structure a positive peace, but also to assume *any single* framework would be acceptable. As each society has its own conceptions of justice, freedom and the relationship between individual and communal rights, structural violence must be redefined as any institutionalized practices that prevent a society from realizing these conceptions *from its own frame of reference*. Conflict

transformation frameworks based on preconceived notions of peace and development, regardless of the principles around which they are structured, will be unable to establish this type of positive peace.

The discursive dichotomy between positive and negative peace must therefore be rejected as a result of its inherent embodiment of absolute truths and concepts of modernity; the notion of positive peace, however, can nevertheless be rejuvenated if (1) transformative processes cease to operate within existing frameworks and instead seek to transform these frameworks themselves; and (2) this transformative process re-contextualizes the notion of positive peace within cultural, social, political and historical idiosyncrasies. The question that arises from such conclusions is how best to facilitate the necessary transition from theory to practice in order to ensure their actualization. The first method that can be proposed in pursuit of these objectives is relying on traditional indigenous peace processes to respond to post-conflict crises and formulate effective solutions within local contextual frameworks. This solution, it seems, has a number of benefits that cohere with the arguments advanced in this paper, as it not only entails a certain degree of local legitimacy, but also seems to construct a positive peace based on individual contextual factors rather than universalized liberalization processes. Upon further analysis, however, it becomes evident that it is perhaps more appropriate to regard the implementation of indigenous peace processes as a romanticised and prudent co-option of local interests into the framework of liberal peace for reasons of legitimacy, effectively entailing the same ramifications that this paper sought to problematize above.²⁹ If this method fails to realize the aforementioned objectives, then one could also consider an alternative approach, proposed by Michael Pugh and Neil Cooper, which rejects the objective of conflict transformation, instead focusing on

²⁹ For similar arguments, see Roger Mac Ginty, “Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 2 (2008): 139-163.

embracing the existing political economy of post-conflict societies while putting a greater emphasis on social issues. According to Pugh and Cooper, such a solution is appropriate because alternative approaches do not address the importance of illicit economies in reconstruction as well as the need for strong state institutions to protect and provide goods and services for populations in vulnerable and unstable circumstances.³⁰ The danger of this, however, is that if wartime institutions or economic and political systems are unjust, which they often are, then their legitimization following periods of conflict could reinstate many of the forces that caused or perpetuated conflict in the first place, thus failing to remove a society from its cycle of violence and leaving the goal of positive peace unrealized.

Since none of the options presented in this paper truly attempt to transform the framework in which modern peace operations are theorized and undertaken, it seems that the arguments presented concerning the importance of critique and the need for a fundamental shift in dominant discourse are even more pertinent. This conclusion is not intended to be pessimistic; rather, it offers a considerable degree of hope for the realization of a truly beneficial positive peace in the near future. As long as the value of critique is not discounted, problematic structures can always be challenged and their negative effects thus diminished. The fact that no contemporary solutions meet the rigorous requirements outlined in this paper does not mean that none can ever be presented; rather, it simply means that any appropriate solutions must be advanced outside of the confines of dominant systems of power. These systems, therefore, must be problematized through critique in order to facilitate their transformation, since it is only when such a process occurs that a truly just and lasting positive peace can be formulated.

³⁰ Michael Pugh and Neil Cooper, *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 195-218.

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