

Then and Now: Peace Research – Past and Future

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Introduction

Despite ancient origins, it was in the years after World War II that peace research, as a formal field of study with its own academic institutions and professional journals, was established. The failure of the various peace, socialist and liberal internationalist movements to prevent the outbreak of World War I had inspired renewed efforts thereafter, particularly in Europe and the USA, to develop a more thoroughly grounded ‘science’ of peace in order to learn how to prevent future wars.¹ But, as van den Dungen comments, the many proposals and initiatives at this time were isolated and individualistic, in which ‘exhortations far outnumbered realisations’.² The future field of peace research would be able to draw on empirical evidence gathered and analysed in the interwar years by scholars such as Pitrim Sorokin, Lewis Richardson and Quincy Wright,³ and on other pioneering work in as yet unintegrated fields.⁴ Nevertheless, the sustained development of peace and conflict research in the form of institutional growth and conceptual definition had to wait until the post-1945 world, when the added threat of nuclear weapons created a new urgency.

Before outlining the subsequent historical evolution of peace research,⁵ we suggest that the following seven features are characteristic of its development

¹ See P. van den Dungen, ‘Initiatives for the pursuit and institutionalisation of peace research in Europe during the inter-war period (1919–1939)’, in L. Broadhead (ed.), *Issues in Peace Research* (Bradford, University of Bradford Press, 1996), pp. 14–32.

² van den Dungen, ‘Initiatives for the pursuit and institutionalisation of peace research’, p. 27.

³ P. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (New York, American Books, 1937); L. Richardson, *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels* (Pittsburg, Boxwood, 1960) (published posthumously); Q. Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1942).

⁴ Such as Mary Parker Follett’s innovative ‘mutual gains’ approach in organisational behaviour and labour-management relations in H. Metcalf and L. Urwick (eds), *Dynamic Administration: the Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett* (New York, Harper, 1942); Kurt Lewin’s work on the social-psychology of group conflict summarized in *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York, Harper, 1948); Crane Brinton’s analysis of revolution in *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York, Norton, 1938); and various pioneers of international interdependence theory such as Norman Angell, Ramsay Muir, Francis Delaisi, Charles Merriam and David Mitrany, see J. de Wilde, *Saved from Oblivion: Interdependence Theory in the First Half of the 20th Century* (Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1991).

⁵ For reviews of the history of peace research see J. Galtung, ‘Peace, violence and peace research’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (1969), 167–91; D. Dunn, ‘Peace research’, in T. Taylor (ed.), *Approaches and Theory in International Relations* (London, Longman, 1978), pp. 257–79; J. Galtung, ‘Twenty-five years of peace research: ten challenges and some responses’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 22, 2 (1985), 141–85; M. Banks, ‘Four conceptions of peace’, in D. Sandole and

and mark it out as a defined field of study:

(a) A concern to address the root causes of direct violence and to explore ways of overcoming structural inequalities and of promoting equitable and cooperative relations between and within human collectivities. This led to debate between those who espoused a 'minimalist' agenda and those who advocated a 'maximalist' agenda, as commented upon below.

(b) The realization that an interdisciplinary response would be required. Given the multi-faceted nature of violent conflict, analysts would need to supplement an international relations approach with insights from the other political and social sciences, as well as from social psychology, anthropology and other disciplines. This would lead to conceptual enrichment, but would cause disputes about appropriate methodologies and theoretical frameworks.

(c) A search for peaceful ways to settle disputes and for non-violent transformations of potentially or actually violent situations. This would not mean endorsing the *status quo*, since unjust and oppressive systems were seen as some of the chief sources of violence and war. It did mean the comparative study of peaceful and non-peaceful processes of social and political change; and of ways to prevent the outbreak of violence, or, if it did break out, ways to mitigate it, bring it to an end, and prevent its recurrence thereafter. Within these parameters there was heated debate about the legitimacy and efficacy of the use of force in certain circumstances.

(d) The espousal of a multi-level analysis at individual, group, state and inter-state levels in an attempt to overcome the institutionalized dichotomy between studies of 'internal' and 'external' dimensions, seen to be inadequate for the analysis of prevailing patterns of conflict.⁶

(e) The adoption of a global and multi-cultural approach, which would locate sources of violence globally and regionally as well as locally, and draw on conceptions of peace and non-violent social transformation from all cultures.

(f) An understanding that peace research is both an analytic and a normative enterprise. There was to be a major attempt to ground the subject in quantitative research and comparative empirical study, but, in anti-positivistic vein, most of

I. Sandole-Staroste (eds), *Conflict Management and Problem-Solving: Interpersonal to International Applications* (London, Pinter, 1987), pp. 259–74; P. Wallensteen (ed.), *Peace Research: Achievements and Challenges* (Boulder CO, Westview, 1988); A. Groom, 'Paradigms in conflict: the strategist, the conflict researcher and the peace researcher', in J. Burton and F. Dukes (eds), *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution* (London, Macmillan, 1990), pp. 71–100; A. Mack, 'Objectives and methods of peace research', in T. Woodhouse (ed.), *Peacemaking in a Troubled World* (Oxford, Berg, 1991), pp. 73–106; C. Stephenson, *Peace Studies: the Evolution of Peace Research and Peace Education* (Hawaii, Institute of Peace, University of Hawaii, Occasional Paper No. 1, 1990); E. Boulding (ed.), *New Agendas for Peace Research: Conflict and Security Re-examined* (Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, 1992). J. Balazs and H. Wiberg (eds), *Peace Research for the 1990s* (Budapest, Akademiai Kiado, 1993). R. Elias and T. Turpin (eds), *Rethinking Peace* (Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, 1994). See also H. Miall, O. Ramsbotham and T. Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, Polity, 1999), ch. 2.

⁶ For example, in work originating in the late 1970s, Edward Azar, following John Burton, rejected the prevailing 'rather rigid dichotomy of internal and external dimensions' in the study of contemporary conflict, with sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists preoccupied with the former ('civil wars, insurgencies, revolts, coups, protests, riots, revolutions'), and international relations scholars with the latter ('interstate wars, crises, invasions, border conflicts, blockades'), *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases* (Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1990), p. 6.

the scholars attracted to the field were drawn by ethical concerns and commitments. Deterministic ideas were rejected, whether in realist or Marxist guises, with large-scale violence and war seen, not as inevitable features of the international system, but as the consequences of human actions and choices.

(g) Linked to this was the close relationship between theory and practice in peace research. Most of the founders made a clear distinction between peace research and peace activism (a distinction not always appreciated by critics). Yet nearly all peace researchers insist that theoretical insight must be empirically tested, and many have been more concerned with the policy implications of their research than with its reception among fellow academics.

In short, peace research overlapped with and drew from existing fields of study such as jurisprudence, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, politics and international relations, but was distinct from them in its central concern with issues of peace and conflict, its multi-disciplinarity, its holistic approach combined with quantitative and empirical methodologies, and its normative commitment to the analysis of conditions for non-violent social and political change. Many peace researchers, rejecting realist and Hobbesian conceptions of peace, drew rather on idealist, liberal-internationalist and structuralist traditions, and attempted to develop these into a transformationist research agenda.⁷ In the words of one of the early pioneers of peace research at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Frenchman Raphael Dubois, 'would it not be wise to endow the science of peace with rich and strong schools, just as one has done for its elder sister, the science of war?'⁸ This was the inspiration for what was to follow, perhaps best summed up under the motto: *si vis pacem, para pacem*.

Peace Research – the Past

Stimulated by the same revulsion against war and mass atrocity that inspired the founding of the United Nations, and further intensified as the nuclear arms race accelerated against the background of deepening Cold War, the late 1940s and 1950s saw the initiation of formal peace research. In Europe, the Institut Français de Polemologie was founded in 1945, and Bert Roling, a judge at the war crimes tribunals in Japan, introduced polemology (conflict research) to the Netherlands during the late 1940s, while Theodore Lenz's Peace Research Laboratory was founded in St. Louis, also in 1945. The concern over nuclear weapons led to what was to be an enduring and significant feature of future peace research – the steady inflow into an essentially social science area of mathematicians and natural scientists, illustrated by the Pugwash movement and the later initiation of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.

In the public eye, as in the view of many academics, the late 1950s and early 1960s represented a period of extreme Cold War danger, as the nuclear arms race accelerated and any attempts at arms control, let alone disarmament, were largely side-lined. Public opposition to nuclear weapons reached a climax at the start of the 1960s, and this was also a period which saw some of the early work

⁷ See H. Miall, 'What do Peace Studies Contribute Distinctively to the Study of Peace?' paper presented at the Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Nottingham, UK, 24 March 1999.

⁸ Quoted in van den Dungen, 'Initiatives for the pursuit and institutionalisation of peace research', p. 14.

on non-nuclear defence alternatives. Against this background, the modern era of peace research might be said to date from the establishment of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* at the University of Michigan in 1957 and Galtung's founding of the forerunner of the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) in 1959, but earlier initiatives are relevant, especially in the USA. In April 1951, Kelman and Gladstone published a letter in the *American Psychologist* arguing for serious and systematic consideration of pacifist approaches to foreign policy. This was at the time of the Korean War and led to the publication of the *Bulletin of the Research Exchange on the Prevention of War* in 1952.

Two years later, a group including Kelman worked together at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioural Sciences at Stanford. Along with Kelman were Kenneth and Elise Boulding, Rapoport and Lasswell, a colleague of Quincy Wright. Also there was Richardson's son, Stephen, who had his father's unpublished works on microfilm. The Stanford group gave a considerable stimulus to research on peace and conflict and the *Bulletin* was shortly afterwards developed into the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, based at Michigan's newly established Centre for Conflict Resolution. In its first issue, the editors provided two motivations for the new journal:

The first is that by far the most important practical problem facing the human race today is that of international relations – more specifically, the prevention of global war. The second is that if intellectual progress is to be made in this area, the study of international relations must be made an interdisciplinary enterprise, drawing its discourse from all the social sciences, and even further.⁹

In Europe, PRIO remained part of the Norwegian Institute of Social Research (becoming independent in 1966) and started the publication of the second influential peace research journal, the *Journal of Peace Research* in 1964, three years after Roling founded the Polemological Institute at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

If the centres at Michigan, Groningen and Oslo (of which only Oslo now survives) were the main foci of peace and conflict research in North America and Europe in the late 1950s and early 1960s, national and international organizations were also developing elsewhere. They included the Japanese Peace Research group in 1964, the Canadian Peace Research and Education Association in 1966 and the US Conference on Peace Research and History in 1963, which later established one of the other key journals – *Peace and Change*. In 1966 the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) was established to commemorate Sweden's 150 years of peace, going on to acquire a formidable reputation for its work on issues of armaments, arms control and disarmament and maintaining this focus for more than 30 years, unlike many other peace research centres. In addition to its concerns over nuclear issues, its long-term commitment to work on the control of the arms trade, and of chemical and biological weapons has proved to have remarkable salience in the post-Cold War world. In 1969 the Tampere Peace Research Institute was formed in Finland. Finally, and following a Quaker-sponsored meeting at Clarens in Switzerland in 1963, the International Peace Research Association was established, based initially at Groningen and holding meetings every two years.

⁹ *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1, 1 (1957), p. 3.

The focusing of disciplines not traditional to international relations such as psychology, economics and mathematics on problems of conflict, especially those relating to the Cold War, provided a springboard for vigorous critiques of the prevailing realism in international relations, which were as vigorously rebutted. As Mack has argued, the peace researchers considered traditionalists within IR to be methodologically unsound and prone to unproven assumptions, whereas the latter regarded peace researchers with irritation, seeing them as one part of the behaviouralist revolution which claimed 'scientific' understandings of international behaviour which traditionalists considered to be simplistic if not naive.¹⁰

These differences can be illustrated by contrasting the attitudes of realist IR scholars and peace researchers to East/West confrontation. With the failure of the pre-war League of Nations, and the evident rivalry between western liberal democracies and the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet bloc, realists saw an urgent need to focus on studying the means to maintain the former. A number of peace researchers, on the other hand, along with 'idealists' within IR, saw a need to transcend the western ethnocentric view of the Cold War divide, recognizing what they considered to be legitimate Soviet security concerns and seeing two ideologies locked into a single dynamic of military confrontation and escalation.¹¹

Turning to the middle and late 1960s, on the international scene the Cuba Missile Crisis in 1962 perhaps represented the peak of the Cold War danger, and it was followed by a period of quasi-detente which included the negotiation of some significant treaties. The 'Kennedy experiment' of reciprocated confidence-building measures resulted in the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963, and the early Strategic Arms Limitation Talks got under way. Within five years, significant agreements, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, had been negotiated, and there was a widespread view that the worst of the Cold War dangers were in retreat.

Parallel with this came the first major controversy within peace research as the original 'minimalist' agenda of preventing war, and in particular nuclear war, as advocated by what might be called the North American pragmatists, was challenged by the broader 'maximalist' agenda insisted upon by European structuralists. Galtung was particularly significant among the latter as he argued that the condition of peace required not just the absence of overt violence but also of structural violence – the effects of economic and social exploitation.¹² The disagreement was at times hard-hitting. For example, Herman Schmid argued that much of peace research was not critically engaged in defining peaceful societies as entities in which justice genuinely prevailed.¹³ In this view, which resonated with the earlier positive/negative peace debate, an absence of war could obscure deep injustices which made a mockery of notions of peace. On the other hand, minimalists found the constant expansion of the peace

¹⁰ A. Mack, 'Objectives and methods of peace research', pp. 73–6.

¹¹ More precisely, the 'orthodox' western view that attributed the Cold War to Soviet aggression was countered by at least four alternatives: a 'revisionist' view that attributed it to the global ambitions of capitalist imperialism; a 'neo-realist' view that interpreted it as the great power rivalry to be expected in a bi-polar world; a 'neo-liberal' view that saw it as a dangerous dynamic generated by mutual worst case security preoccupations; and a 'radical' view that saw it as an 'imaginary' war generated by elites on both sides in order to maintain domestic control within their own blocs. For the latter, see M. Kaldor, *The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict* (London, Blackwell, 1991).

¹² J. Galtung, 'Violence, peace and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 3 (1969), 167–92.

¹³ H. Schmid, 'Politics and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 3 (1968), 217–32.

research agenda 'as acquiring the qualities of an intellectual black hole wherein something vital, a praxeological edge or purpose, is lost'.¹⁴ This was a criticism made, among others, by Kenneth Boulding.¹⁵

This dispute was never formally resolved, but most peace researchers came to accept that, in addition to the original aim of learning how best to prevent nuclear war, two other major themes were also now of legitimate concern for those working in the field: North-South global disparities, and what was perceived to be a looming environmental crisis for humankind.

From 1955 through to 1965 it was increasingly argued that the political independence being achieved through decolonization was not being accompanied by economic liberation. For southern states, the global economy was seen as essentially a colonial creation assigning them a subservient role as producers of primary commodities, made worse by numerous trade barriers imposed by the industrialised North.¹⁶ These ideas greatly influenced the early work and aspirations of the Group of 77 and the UN Conference on Trade and Development, and they fitted in markedly with the thinking of peace researchers developing the concept of structural violence. Whereas there was substantial commonality with development studies, this phase of peace research had little in common with developments in international relations, where concern with the study of North-South relations was rare in the extreme.

Peace researchers were also among the earlier social scientists to recognize the significance of environmental issues which had come to the fore in the 1960s, primarily as a result of ecological and toxicological investigations into the impact of industrial societies on the natural environment. Early concerns over pesticides developed into much wider critiques of the impact of unbridled economic growth through pollution, land dereliction and resource depletion. Much of this concern was criticized as introspection by environmentalists lacking concern for the much wider issues of global underdevelopment, but the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in May 1972 met this objection both by embracing the concerns of third world states, and by focusing on the potential limits to global economic growth. This suggested that such growth alone could not meet the needs of the majority of humankind in the third world. Environmental security thus had to be linked to development aspirations, and prospects for international development were necessarily linked to the asymmetric environmental impact of industrialised states.

In the light of these developments, a new consensus had emerged among most peace researchers in the early 1970s, so that by 1973 the editors of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* sought to broaden the Journal's remit beyond its previous concentration on interstate conflict and the nuclear issue:

The threat of nuclear holocaust remains with us and may well continue to do so for centuries, but other problems are competing with deterrence and disarmament studies for our attention. The journal must also attend to international conflict over justice, equality, and human dignity; problems of

¹⁴ P. Lawler, *A Question of Values: Johan Galtung's Peace Research* (Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, 1995), p. 237. Lawler, not himself a minimalist, offers an epistemological critique.

¹⁵ K. Boulding, 'Twelve friendly quarrels with Johan Galtung', *Journal of Peace Research*, 14,1 (1977), 75-86; K. Boulding, 'Future directions in conflict and peace studies', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 22,2 (1978), 342-54.

¹⁶ Nassau Adams, *Worlds Apart* (London, Zed, 1993).

conflict resolution for ecological balance and control are within our proper scope and especially suited for interdisciplinary attention.¹⁷

Another area of controversy within peace research which persists to this day, concerns the notions of violence, conflict and force. This controversy reached its peak at the end of the 1960s and was coincident both with social unrest in Western Europe and with the deep intellectual splits throughout the USA occasioned by the Vietnam War. In a sense, Vietnam crystallized the problem – traditional peace researchers sought a negotiated end to the conflict, but some radicals sought a defeat for the USA and its South Vietnamese client state by the Viet Cong as the only means of achieving justice. Extrapolating from Vietnam, and conscious of the bitter experiences of exploitation in Southern Africa and Latin America, younger and more radical peace researchers argued that the winning of wars might, in some circumstances, be a necessary prerequisite for lasting peace. This echoed some aspects of contemporary ‘liberation theology’. They argued, furthermore, that more traditional ideas of seeking negotiated settlements through conciliation and mediation could even be counter-productive by perpetuating structural inequalities in the guise of ‘peace’. Such a conflict of views cut deep within peace research, not least because so many of the early peace research initiatives had come from a religious-pacifist tradition, often originating in the ‘peace churches’ such as the Quakers. In broad terms, most peace researchers, while seeing violence in its various guises as the antithesis of peace, agreed that this did not apply to the concept of conflict. The stated purpose of conflict resolution, for example, was not to prevent conflict – an impossible and also often an undesirable aim – but to transform actually or potentially violent conflict into peaceful (non-violent) processes of political and social change.¹⁸ Indeed, this might increase levels of overt conflict in the short term as marginalized and repressed groups challenged the status quo in the transition to what would eventually become more sustainable and just relations. Where there was, and remains, most dispute was on the question of the use of coercion and force. Here some peace researchers were prepared to acknowledge the legitimacy of military action under certain restrictive conditions, whereas others were not.¹⁹

By the early 1970s peace research, drawing from a wide range of disciplines and methodologies and with a reasonably sound albeit still restricted institutional base, had defined its subject area in relation to the three great interconnected projects of avoiding nuclear war, removing glaring inequalities and injustices in the global system, and achieving ecological balance and control. As the institutional base for peace research and conflict resolution continued to expand over the next two decades,²⁰ so did the main areas of academic interest. We can briefly mention three of them.

¹⁷ *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 27,1 (1983), p. 5.

¹⁸ Whereas some social scientists, such as those of the Chicago school, regarded conflict as dysfunctional, most peace researchers followed Lewis Coser, in the tradition of George Simmel, in regarding it as functional and intrinsic to human social relationships in general, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York, Free, 1956).

¹⁹ For some of the surprising interrelations here, see R. Miller, *Interpretations of Conflict: Ethics, Pacifism and the Just War Tradition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991).

²⁰ See the institutional time-charts in L. Kriesberg, ‘The development of the conflict resolution field’, in W. Zartman and J. Rasmussen (eds), *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques* (Washington, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), pp. 51–77; and Miall *et al.*, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, ch. 2.

First, there was continuing concern with the nuclear threat, but also with chemical and biological weapons and with the dangers inherent in deterrent postures allied to mutual worst-case defence strategies. Progress in arms control, including the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, were seen to vindicate Osgood's 'graduated reciprocation in tension-reduction' (GRIT) approach,²¹ and to exemplify Axelrod's analysis of the 'evolution of co-operation'.²² Much of this was subsequently thrown into jeopardy by the rapid deterioration in Cold War tensions towards the end of the 1970s and sudden intensification in the nuclear arms race. Although all the existing trends in peace research continued, many centres found it necessary to re-focus resources on the nuclear issue and East-West relations. In effect, they provided an intellectual resource for the burgeoning anti-nuclear movements and rapidly incurred bitter controversy as they were seen by realists and neo-realists, especially within the strategic studies community, as engaging in heavily biased research. This controversy expanded to embrace wider political issues and, in many countries, peace studies and peace research came under persistent attack from centrist and right-wing politicians who labelled it appeasement studies.²³ The vigour of the attacks was at its greatest in the early to mid-1980s and had two unexpected effects: to encourage many able and committed students and researchers to take up peace and disarmament issues, and to improve the quality of the work undertaken as it came under more intense scrutiny. This also made research funding from conventional sources hard to come by, raising difficult ethical questions about the relationship between disinterested scholarship and committed political causes. The Alternative Defence Commission in the UK, for example, an independent body albeit with a university base which analysed non-nuclear defence alternatives over a wide spectrum from techno-fixes to civilian resistance from 1981 to 1987, was dependent almost entirely on Quaker trusts for support, yet within a few years its work was regarded as one of the main sources of critical perspectives on nuclear defence issues.²⁴

There were, though, some examples of peace research activities receiving support from sympathetic governments. Here, though, there was another problem, as changes in political persuasion could put such initiatives at risk, a difficulty experienced in Germany and Australia in recent years.

A second growth area was in the empirical study of negotiation and mediation processes. The Harvard Program on Negotiation took on the win-win problem-solving and mutual gain vocabulary of conflict resolution, popularized through Fisher and Ury's 1981 *Getting to Yes*.²⁵ It involved a consortium of academic centres, and, in authentic peace research and conflict resolution vein, drew from a range of disciplines including politics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and international relations, as well as labour relations, community relations and public planning. A number of other systematic studies were also

²¹ C. Osgood, *An alternative War or Surrender* (Urbana IL, Urbana University Press, 1962).

²² R. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York, Basic, 1984).

²³ Caroline Cox and Roger Scruton, *Peace Studies: a Critical Survey* (London, European Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 1984).

²⁴ The Alternative Defence Commission, *Defence without the Bomb* (London, Taylor and Francis, 1983).

²⁵ R. Fisher and W. Ury, *Getting to Yes* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1981).

produced.²⁶ The same is true in the field of mediation, where Pruitt's complaint about the deficit in critical mediation studies was soon made up.²⁷ This included attempts to assess the relative efficacy of so-called Track I and Track II mediation approaches.²⁸ To this should be added continuing efforts to develop the theory and practice of 'problem-solving workshops' in resolving apparently intractable conflicts, notably through the work of Kelman.²⁹ Reference should also be made to the plethora of initiatives in domestic conflict resolution in family conciliation, labour and community mediation, and Alternative Dispute resolution.

Much of this may be said to have been brought together through a third area of research: the pioneering analytic work produced from the late 1970s on what were variously termed 'deep-rooted conflicts',³⁰ 'intractable conflicts',³¹ or 'protracted social conflicts'.³² Although barely noticed in the mainstream international relations and strategic studies literature of the time, this can be seen to have anticipated much of the post-Cold War shift of focus to what Rice has called 'wars of the third kind'.³³ Traditional distinctions between domestic and international politics were rejected as 'artificial' in these cases, and the lack of attention paid to 'ethnic and other forms of communal conflict' by international relations and strategic studies scholars was criticized. Instead, the roots of prevailing patterns of conflicts were traced to the 'disarticulation' between state and society in the post-colonial world, to grievances resulting from deprivation of collective needs, to failures of governance, and to patterns of 'international linkage'. Whether or not this would result in violent conflict in particular cases was seen to depend upon the more contingent actions and events of 'process dynamics' made up of 'communal actions and strategies', 'state actions and strategies' and 'built-in mechanisms of conflict' feeding benign or malign spirals of cooperation or mutual hostility.³⁴ Remedies were consequently sought in contextual change at international level (for example, via more equitable and accountable global and regional arrangements), structural change at state level (for example, via appropriate constitutional adaptations and the promotion of good governance), relational change at conflict party level

²⁶ In the late 1970s and early 1980s this included, among others, work by Rubin and Brown, Druckman, Zartman and Raiffa.

²⁷ In the late 1980s and early 1990s this included, among others, work by Zartman, Touval and Zartman, Mitchell and Webb, Kressell and Pruitt, Bercovitch and Rubin, and Princen.

²⁸ See M. Berman and J. Johnson (eds), *Unofficial Diplomats* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1977); J. MacDonald and D. Bendahmane (eds), *Conflict Resolution: Two Track Diplomacy* (Washington, Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, 1987); and *Journal of Peace Research*, 28,1 (1991), Special Issue.

²⁹ H. Kelman, 'The problem-solving workshop in conflict resolution', in R. Merritt (ed.), *Communication in International Politics* (Urbana IL, University of Illinois Press, 1972); C. Mitchell and M. Banks, *Handbook of Conflict Resolution: The Analytical Problem-Solving Approach* (London, Pinter, 1996).

³⁰ J. Burton, *Resolving Deep-rooted Conflict: a Handbook* (Lanham, University Press of America, 1987).

³¹ L. Kriesberg, T. Northrup and S. Thorson (eds), *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1989).

³² E. Azar, *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases* (Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1990).

³³ E. Rice, *Wars of the Third Kind: Conflict in Underdeveloped Countries* (Berkeley CA, University of California Press, 1988).

³⁴ Azar, *Protracted Social Conflict*, ch. 1. For an assessment of Azar's work, see Miall *et al.*, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, ch. 3.

(for example, via community relations and reconciliation work) and cultural change at all levels (for example, via the transformation of discourses and institutions that sustain and reproduce violence).

By the end of the 1980s the peace research community had become a diverse but active international group of some two to three thousand scholars and practitioners worldwide, divided by differences of emphasis and approach, but united in the aim of studying how best to overcome threats of large-scale violence and to promote structural change and equitable relations between the myriad collectivities that make up the global community at a time when mounting problems seemed likely otherwise to threaten mutual disaster.

Peace Research – the Future

How relevant is the peace research agenda today? To answer this question we need to assess briefly what the main future security challenges are likely to be, and then look again at the current state of the peace research field to see if it is equipped to make a significant contribution.

Global security during the 45 years of the Cold War was dominated by the East-West confrontation, but was also a period of major conflicts in many parts of the world with over 100 wars leading to more than 20 million deaths and well over 50 million serious injuries. The ending of the Cold War, while leading to the settlement of some long-standing conflicts, has increased instability elsewhere – the enduring disorder in former-Yugoslavia being the most serious European conflict in some decades.

In the immediate future of the next five years, serious conflicts are likely to persist in Central and South-West Asia, South-East Europe and several regions of Africa. The impact of economic turmoil in Asian markets is still difficult to assess, but could lead to mounting political conflict in some countries. The global community, largely through the UN, is likely to react in a faltering and sporadic manner.

Over the next thirty years, two developing parameters are likely to influence global security trends. The first is the deep and enduring inequalities in the global distribution of wealth and economic power, likely to ensure that, within thirty years, one seventh of the world's population controls three-quarters of the wealth, largely but not entirely on a geographical basis. While there have been immense efforts at development, the global picture is one of enduring disempowerment and increasing socio-economic polarization.

Furthermore, environmental constraints are likely to exacerbate the effects of human activity on the global ecosystem, making it increasingly difficult for human well-being to be improved by conventional economic growth. The combination of wealth-poverty disparities and limits to growth is likely to lead to a crisis of unsatisfied expectations within an increasingly informed global majority of the disempowered.

Three broad conflict trends are probable. The first arises from a greater likelihood of increased human migration through economic, social and environmental motives. Focusing on regions of relative wealth, this is already leading to shifts in the political spectrum in recipient regions, including increased nationalist tendencies and cultural conflict, especially in western Europe and North America. Such tendencies are often most pronounced in the most vulnerable and disempowered populations within the recipient regions.

Secondly, it is probable that environmental conflict will escalate. This may be local or regional, on issues such as food, land, or water, and global on issues such as energy and mineral resources and transnational pollution, the 1991 Gulf War being an early example.

Finally, and probably most important, competitive and violent responses of the disempowered should be expected within and between states. The recent Zapatista revolt in Southern Mexico, earlier Shining Path action in Peru, and disempowerment responses in North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia are all early examples of a developing trend, not infrequently exacerbated by political, religious and nationalist fundamentalisms. This is linked to underlying historically-conditioned weaknesses in many post-colonial states, struggling as they are to accommodate twin pressures of globalization and fragmentation, and a prey to sectarian and factional exploitation. Increased internal political tensions, particularly secessionist movements, in populous states such as China, India and Indonesia, would have very wide repercussions.

At the beginning of this article we listed seven features that have characterized peace research since its inception in the 1950s. We conclude by reconsidering these in relation to the challenges described above. In the process, we take note of some current critiques of peace research, and suggest that it is how the field responds to these critiques that is likely to determine the quality of its contribution in future.

(a) As a problem-oriented field, peace research is defined in the first place by its core concerns. Although to a friendly critic like McSweeney the 'sudden end of the Cold War has left the formal organization of peace studies bereft of a clear focus',³⁵ in our view its central problematique, as defined for example in the 1973 issue of *Journal of Conflict Resolution* quoted earlier, remains of key relevance 25 years later. Nevertheless, the question of focus is an important one, and, in responding to the major challenges outlined above, peace research will do well to concentrate on three areas where its contribution is already distinctive and significant.

The first is in immediate responses, which include the principal *Agenda for Peace* peace support elements, themselves in part drawn from peace research terminology, such as crisis prevention, peace-keeping, peace-making and the shorter-term elements in post-settlement peace-building.³⁶ This also involves ethically-acceptable intervention, and regional and global arms control and demilitarization. They are required of an international community of states which shows little evidence of wisdom or leadership and consequently places most responsibility on an under-resourced UN system. While improvements in efficiency and capability must come from within the UN, the NGO role is substantial, especially in the more powerful member states of the UN.

The second area is the longer-term processes involved in conflict resolution and conflict transformation. This is a wide agenda, but now quite well understood and reasonably clearly focused, involving the contextual, structural,

³⁵ B. McSweeney, 'The Ethical Foundations of Peace Research: A Sociological Analysis', paper given at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, Minneapolis, 17–21 March 1998 (unpublished), p. 10.

³⁶ These terms appear, for example, in J. Galtung, 'Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding' in *Peace, War and Defence – Essays in Peace Research Vol. 2* (Copenhagen, Christian Ejlertsen, 1975), pp. 282–304.

relational and cultural elements mentioned earlier with reference to analyses of protracted social conflict.³⁷ Peck describes the building-blocks of sustainable peace and security as 'well-functioning local, state, regional and international systems of governance, which are responsive to human needs'.³⁸

The third area concerns fundamental responses at global level. If the analysis offered above of a polarized, constrained and increasingly unstable world is correct, then the issue of rich-poor confrontation is likely to acquire a far greater saliency in future. This will demand a comprehensive rethinking of concepts of security, incorporating unprecedented co-operation for sustainable international economic development and environmental management. This needs to be paralleled by progressive demilitarization linked to the establishment and enhancement of regional and global conflict prevention processes mentioned above. For peace researchers there is now an even greater imperative for them to deepen their understanding of the interconnected problems of international economic relations, the possibilities of sustainable development, and their relationship to security.³⁹

(b) The second characteristic feature of peace research is its interdisciplinary nature. This has long been a strength, but also opens peace researchers to the charge of eclecticism and the absence of a distinctive peace research methodology and theoretical base. They have been accused of being insufficiently aware of historical perspectives, wedded to simplistic campaigning which ignores difficult choices, given to woolly concepts such as positive peace or structural violence which could be applied to almost all structures of society, and all too ready to see arms races and militarization as sufficient causes of war.⁴⁰ Just though these charges may have been in individual instances, the field as a whole is more substantial than that. We have seen how at least three broad approaches have been combined: a practical problem-solving and needs-based approach; a rational quantitative and comparative-empirical approach;⁴¹ and a theoretical-structuralist approach. It is unrealistic to expect a single peace research methodology or grand theory. What can be expected, however, is continuing high standards of research methodology in these areas, and much greater efforts to increase mutual dialogue with related fields, such as international relations and

³⁷ For a survey of the field today, see Miall *et al.*, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Also, R. Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1997).

³⁸ C. Peck, *Sustainable Peace: the Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict* (Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), for the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, p. 45. See also, C. Alger and M. Stohl (eds), *A Just Peace through Transformation: Cultural, Economic and Political Foundations for Change* (Boulder CO, Westview, 1988); L. Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts: from Escalation to Resolution* (New Haven CT, Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

³⁹ See, for example, Ben Jackson, 'Promoting real security – implications for policy in the North' in G. Tansey, K. Tansey and P. Rogers (eds), *A World Divided – Militarism and Development after the Cold War* (New York, St. Martin's, 1994), pp. 83–106.

⁴⁰ A. Roberts, 'New Peace Research, Old International Relations', in J. Nobel (ed.), *The Coming of Age of Peace Research* (Groningen, Styx, 1991), pp. 1–23.

⁴¹ For example, efforts to quantify correlates of war and large-scale violence since the time of Sorokin, Richardson and Wright; game-theoretic analyses of conflict; and, latterly, empirical studies of negotiation and mediation (see footnotes 26 and 27) and quantitative analyses of the 'democratic peace hypothesis' (see N. Gleditsch and T. Risse-Kappen (eds), Democracy and Peace Special Issue, *European Journal of International Relations*, 1,4 (December 1995).

development studies. It is notable how sparse such dialogue has been in the past, and peace researchers must share a good measure of blame for this.

(c) A third feature is the focus on non-violent processes of political and social change. Here mainstream peace research has been criticized, on the one hand by realists for whom power and coercion is the only international currency, and on the other by neo-Marxist and radical thinkers for whom it is misconceived to attempt to reconcile interests that should not be reconciled. These are large issues and subject to continuing debate within the peace research field.⁴² In our view peace research must keep its main focus on 'the peaceful settlement of disputes', but also has a significant contribution to make on ways in which military forces, for example in peace support operations, can best play their part within overall peace processes. The neo-Marxist critique is misconceived to the extent that it ignores the strong tradition within peace research which espouses vigorous struggle for social justice, albeit by non-violent means.

(d) What has from the beginning been a refusal to accept the 'internal'/'external' conceptual straitjacket and a focus on multi-level analysis of complex conflict formations in peace research is now less controversial, having latterly been more widely accepted in other academic circles. Perhaps the most significant recent development here has been criticism of earlier concentration on 'top-down' peace-building processes guided by outside 'experts', and insistence on the importance of 'peace-building from below' with a main emphasis on supporting transformative indigenous capacity.⁴³ This remains an important agenda for the future in which peace research is well-suited to take a leading role.

(e) The original global and cross-cultural aspirations of peace research remain central, but a vigorous gendered critique of past peace research,⁴⁴ and the current saliency of the 'culture question' show that these aspirations are in many ways as yet unfulfilled. In addition to its roots in Eastern as well as Western religious traditions, the question of multi-cultural validity became important in peace research in the 1960s through the influx of anthropological perspectives,⁴⁵ and erupted into a major controversy in the 1980s in the form of critiques of universalist or 'generic' (and, in particular, 'western') conflict resolution models.⁴⁶ Recent comparative studies of culturally diverse ethnoconflict theory and ethnopraxis in African, Latin American, Asian and Islamic countries points the way ahead.⁴⁷ In our view this is perhaps the most important single challenge in peace research today – its evolution in to a fully global and cross-cultural venture.

⁴² P. Wehr, H. Burgess and G. Burgess, *Justice without Violence* (Boulder CO, Lynn Rienner, 1994).

⁴³ J. Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Communities* (Washington DC, United States Institute of Peace, 1997).

⁴⁴ A. Harris and Y. King (eds), *Rocking the Ship of State: toward a Feminist Peace Politics* (Boulder CO, Westview, 1989); A. Taylor and J. Miller (eds), *Conflict and Gender* (Cresskill, Hampton, 1994).

⁴⁵ R. LeVine, 'Anthropology and the study of conflict: an introduction', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 5,1 (1961), 3–15; M. Ross, *The Culture of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven CT, Yale University Press, 1993).

⁴⁶ See, for example, K. Avruch, P. Black and J. Scimecca, *Conflict Resolution: Cross Cultural Perspectives* (Westport, Greenwood, 1991).

⁴⁷ For example, P. Salem (ed.), *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays* (New York, American University of Beirut, 1997).

(f) The sixth distinctive feature of peace research, its combination of objective analysis and normative commitment, can also be seen as both a strength and a difficulty. The tension between aspirations to build a 'science' of peace in which the analysis of violent conflict could be likened to the analysis of disease in the medical sciences, and the ethical political goals inherent in non-positivistic moral choices at the heart of the peace research project, is a creative one, but has also been seen by some as academically suspect. Here peace researchers would do well to accept the full implications of the ethical basis of the subject, along the lines suggested by McSweeney,⁴⁸ acknowledging constructivist critiques, and establishing clearly that, while peace research does not prescribe specific solutions or end goals for society, its commitment to the search for non-violent processes of political change implies deep transformations in existing power structures.

(g) Finally, there is the close relationship in peace research between theory and practice, once again controversial academically, but a strong and distinctive tradition. In addition to the problematic but fruitful relationship between peace research and peace activism, there is the characteristic way in which, when all goes well, practice informs theory and theory is properly questioned as to its practical implications. This applies, for example, to current attempts to apply critical theory within the field.⁴⁹ With reference to the three traditional approaches outlined above, neither the 'subjectivist' problem-solving approach, nor the 'objectivist' rationalist-empirical approach are considered adequate to the core issues of ethical choice and social action, since both assume purposive agents and utility-maximising decision-makers and ignore constitutive constraints. The theoretical 'structuralist' approach, on the other hand, is seen to ignore constructivist insights and to fail to account for the way social contradiction transmutes or does not transmute into violent conflict. From this perspective the danger of failing to adopt a critical-theoretic approach which bridges the ontological gap between agent and structure and adequately questions the institutional, discursive and practical origins of exclusion and violence, is that otherwise well-intentioned interventions are likely simply to reproduce them. From a peace research perspective one crucial value test of this approach will be its pragmatic pay-off in terms of better insights into practical problems and improved responses. Here again there are hopeful signs.

Conclusion

Faced with the challenges outlined above, and equipped with what is now a 50-year tradition of applied analysis, peace researchers have a more complex and difficult role than the relatively straightforward activities of the Cold War era, but one that is essential if scholarship is to contribute with any effect to achieving a more genuinely just and peaceful world. Hampson has identified 'four different schools of intervention' in the international community's responses to contemporary violent conflict: hard realism and soft realism which have a 'state-security orientation', psychological approaches which have a societal or human security-based orientation, and governance-based approaches

⁴⁸ McSweeney, 'The ethical foundations of peace research'.

⁴⁹ See, for example, V. Jabri, *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996).

which focus on state-society linkages.⁵⁰ In its historical concerns, peace research has things to say about the latter three. Our overall conclusion, therefore, is that, so long as the response to current critiques is positive and creative, inherited traditions have equipped the peace research community with a corpus of knowledge, outlooks and attitudes which is well suited to responding to the developing problems of insecurity and conflict which are likely to be such a dominant feature of the early twenty-first century.

⁵⁰ F. Hampson, 'Third-party roles in the termination of intercommunal conflict', *Millennium*, 26, 3 (1997), 727–50.