

Bringing peace back in: Presidential address to the Peace Science Society, 2013

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A frame of reference

Two recent books, Pinker's the *Better Angels of our Nature* (2011) and Goldstein's *Winning the War on War* (2011), demonstrate that the long-term trend in human society is toward a dramatic reduction in violence. The reductions that they describe range from state-led violence against subjects to crime and to interstate war. This reduction in violence over the long stretch of human history, moreover, is so dramatic that Pinker opines that we should no longer ask the question "what causes war" but rather we should begin to ask the question "what causes peace". This is not a new idea, and in fact recent scholarship is beginning to make inroads (e.g. Goertz et al., 2011; Høglund and Kovacs, 2010; Wallensteen, 2012), but the idea that social scientists, historically and in general, focus on the wrong question is a key facet of my argument. Peace to us has many faces and it goes well beyond the traditional emphasis on the absence of war, both inter- and intra-state, to incorporate the conditions under which states have little need or incentive to use violence against their citizens, and conversely, citizens have little motivation or incentive to challenge a state by force of arms. In a perfectly peaceful environment our lexicon would only use words like "political repression", "genocide" and "civil war" in the context of historical discussions about social evolution from our violent past to our peaceful contemporary world.

Two main points motivate this paper: (a) that members of the Peace Science community should study peace directly rather than through war; and (b) that we should not let our methodological sophistication obscure the value-laden aspect of our intellectual focus. We should embrace the values that are at the foundation of our subject matter and we should do so without sacrificing rigor.

I start with the observation that contemporary social science focuses primarily on the study of war and lesser forms of armed conflict, and unless we study the pathways to peace as vigorously as we study those to war, we might miss the forest because the trees are in our way. Moreover, we should not assume that, because we have some understanding of the pathways to violence and war, we then understand the pathways to peace. Put differently, the methods of achieving peace are probably not simply the negative of the pathways to

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war. For example, the fact that democracy is negatively associated with war at the dyadic level does not necessarily imply that transitioning to democracy is necessarily a pathway to peace. The objective of this paper is to move forward the process of motivating the study of peaceful state interactions from a systematic perspective.

Studying peace

Our focus on war and lesser forms of armed conflict has not always been so central to the underlying intellectual traditions associated with the Peace Science Society, nor to the community of scholars that tend to identify with our intellectual tradition. In 1954 Quincy Wright and Fred Cottrell shared a prize to develop a research initiative for studying peace. The prize was 10,000 Norwegian Kronor, which at the time would have been a lot of money. Wright's proposal, while not implemented as such, introduced the distinction between positive and negative peace, and laid out a long-term agenda that could build on principles codified in the UN Charter to study peace with scientific methods. Even though the idea that there was a condition of structural violence that was short of armed conflict but far from a normative notion of what we might best consider peace was made more visible by Johan Galtung (1967, 1971); a core part of Wright's thinking revolved around developing a systematic understanding of what today we might call positive peace. Cottrell (1954: 99) presented five models of peace and called on "science to discover" how to get there.

Cottrell defined peace in terms of state actions that are unlikely to generate organized and effective resistance. His five models include (1) universally shared values, (2) the abhorrence of war being so engrained that leaders find little resistance, (3) state coercion so dispersed that resistance is impossible, (4) state coercive capability so concentrated that resistance is impossible, and (5) that the distribution of resources and values make war inferior to other means of contestation. Only models 1 and 5 provide any purchase on what we might think of as the study of peace. Models 2–4 only provide a metric for thinking about peace and the inverse of the conditions that cause war (Cittrell, 1954: 100).

We have come a long way from the days when peace was the subject to study and normative factors did not get in the way. The world appeared to be at such a precarious stage that finding out how to generate peace had immediate policy implications and therefore many saw our sub-discipline as an applied science with application to a more peaceful world. I was puzzled by the fact that the Peace Science Society by and large studies war and I wondered how we got to this point, so I went back to the writings of some of the initial peace researchers and the journals that shepherd our discussions and debates to see how we went from peace to war as the focus of study. The place to start was volume 1, issue 1 of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

The inaugural issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (1957) carried an editorial, probably written by Anatol Rappaport, that made the case that we are all interested in peace but that we too often abuse the term "peace". The editorial asserted what must have been a widely held view that we "prefer peace to war and creative conflicts to uncreative ones", and that "the intellectual challenge of our time is the prevention of war [because] war threatens us with irretrievable disaster" (*Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1957). So you might think that from this point the community of scholars that would eventually make up the core of the Peace Science Society would be ready to study peace so as to be in the position to influence it. Not quite. The articles of that first issue included Janowitz providing a study of military elites in war, and Schelling presenting a bargaining model in limited war. It was a rather inauspicious start for the study of peace.

Seven years later a group of Scandinavian scholars under the auspices of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo started the *Journal of Peace Research* and presumably Johan Galtung wrote the introductory editorial. His call was unabashedly for the scientific study of peace, but just as forthrightly he called for the pursuit of and understanding of peace so that we could work to realize it. His editorial articulated an idea of a system of Global and Comprehensive War (GCW) and a Global and Comprehensive Peace (GCP) and argued that “one may ... look upon peace research as research into the conditions for moving [toward] GCP” (Galtung, 1964). Galtung did not mince his words as he made the case for the community of social scientists to study peace as normatively driven, arguing that “peace research should be peace search, an audacious application of science ... to generate visions of a new world”. Recognizing that many in the peace research community might shy away from a normative orientation, Galtung argued that “if [peace] is a value it is among the most consensual” values. It is in this inaugural *Journal of Peace Research* editorial that Galtung, in fact, used Wright’s distinction between a positive and negative peace and introduced it to a broader peace research community. Oddly, it was this definition of peace that might have immediately stalled any effort to understand it. The articles that followed in that first volume focused heavily on international conflict and arms races. Peace, whether positive, negative or something in the middle, never generated much scholarly attention.

Hermann Schmid (1968) might have signaled the growing divergence among peace researchers by developing an argument that “peace research is an applied science, [it] ‘was nothing for pure academicians’” (p. 217). If it was not for pure academicians then most in the Peace Science Society would not be peace researchers, and if we are not going to research peace then we might as well have moved on to study war. “It was obvious, according to Schmid, that peace research was intended to be research *for* peace” (p. 217. italics in original), and the minute that we have an agenda for our research with a normative connotation, the Peace Science community gets uptight because presumably you cannot have good science in pursuit of a good outcome. I think this is unfortunate. Schmid’s claim that peace research involves the search for peace is close conceptually to Galtung’s notion of the application of scientific methods in the search of visions for a new world. Nor for that matter is it too distant conceptually from Rappoport’s version of peace research as an applied science that helps to prevent the catastrophe of war. If we research peace, according to Schmid, we do so to provide guidance for practioners who make the policies that generate peace or war.

Some of the struggle in our scientific community turns on the difficulty of defining peace. Galtung provided such a nebulous distinction between war, structural violence and something approaching harmony that an outcome variable of “peace” would constitute an ever-changing target for which we are to articulate models and generate evidence. In fact the state of the art for thinking about peace was so vague in 1977 that the editors of the first issue of the *Hiroshima Peace Science Journal* reported on a call to the peace research community to define peace. The concept of peace was so nebulous, the editors argued, that they asked the peace research community to provide a definition. Ten prominent peace researchers of the time responded, including Haward Alker, Anatol Rappoport, Edward Azar, Paul Smoker and Johan Galtung. Nine of the 10 focused on concepts that we might best think of as positive peace without providing much of a definitional way forward. The terms used to define peace included “harmonious interests”, “limited, balanced or regulated competition”, “empathy”, “trust”, “sense of community” (Alker); “problem solving without coercion”, “equitable distribution”, “cultural transformations”, “cooperation” and “love” (Azar). Peace to Galtung included “development”, “satisfaction”, “human capacities”, “security”,

“welfare and identify”, and each is an individual level condition without regard to the interaction within and among states. These are all laudable goals but it is little wonder that operational definitions that could provide a foundation for the application of scientific methods to this social problem were lacking.

Rappoport, alone, made the case that the most fruitful approach for the peace research community is to focus on negative peace, or the absence of war, because it is easy to operationalize and observe. Paul Smoker, however, reminded readers that a process understanding of peace is different from a definitional one. Implicitly he was arguing that we need to develop models of peace as distinct from testing models for the absence of war, that there is a process that gets to peace. Definitionally—that is, in terms of identifying possible outcome variables—we remained no closer to knowing what peace meant than before the *Journal* issued its call for definitional clarity. Wright (1954) and Galtung’s (1964) positive peace held conceptual sway and the scientific community had no way to operationalize such a vague concept. We cannot be adequate problem solvers or social scientists if we cannot articulate a definition of or the conditions for peace. The peace research community stalled and appears to have moved toward the study of war and lesser forms of armed violence, what Wright and Galtung referred to as negative peace.

Models of peace and contemporary scholarship

If we put definitional issues aside for the moment, we have to confront what I see as the debilitating problem of a distinct lack of theoretical models of peace. As an intellectual community we seem to work from the premise that, if we could understand the causes of war, we could assume that the inverse of the “coefficients” associated with war will get us peace. To my mind we have no reason to assume that because X is associated with war that $\sim X$ will provide for us an understanding of peace. We are not completely without intellectual foundation but we appear to be far from a body of theoretically sound and empirically verified knowledge about the causes of peace.

A theory of peace and a useful definition of it are not independent issues, so I will point to some of the conceptual baggage that needs to be unpacked and then describe what I see as the contemporary foundation upon which we have to build.

Galtung’s notion of positive peace is overly vague in concept, in operational tractability and in units of observation (1969). So first we have to figure out where peace prevails. Systemic peace may have different casual roots than a dyadic peace; peace within countries might be conceptually different from that between states. Further, peace also should be a condition that we can understand outside the context of armed combat or something that can only obtain at the end of war. That is, we cannot only know peace as a function of the time since the previous war. For example, and without being critical, because I think it is laudable, Goertz et al. (2011, 2013) have a project to model dyadic peace as an outcome of enduring rivalries that involve territorial issues. What they do is impose a framework for understanding peace that relies on a very narrow spatial domain of enduring rivalries. Peace between Sweden and Norway, for example, does not fit their model. Nor can we readily make inferences about why Costa Rica or Botswana remained peaceful while the regions that surrounded them were swept up in armed rebellion. Therefore, we have to articulate models that account for systemic, dyadic and monadic peace.

Quincy Wright (1954) suggested that we think in terms of equilibria among the factors that push toward war or peace. The idea of an equilibrium condition is useful because it

allows us to think in terms of the balance between constructive and destructive conflict, concepts that social psychologists have developed more fully. Some of the conditions conducive for peace in Wright's terms come from the Charter of the United Nations that describes relationships, rights and responsibilities (Wright, 1954). Implicitly some forms of social conflict can serve to make peace more likely if it offsets those pressures or forms of conflict that give incentives to resort to war.

Building on Wright's proposal Johan Galtung used his notions of GCW and a GCP as conceptual poles to understand social relations that describe the conditions for war and peace. GCP was the normatively driven outcome to which we should all ascribe and from which the peace research community should not duck (Galtung, 1964). It is this GCP that generates the concept of "positive peace" that includes the elimination of any form of violence against groups within and between countries. According to Galtung, to fully understand peace we have to understand the ways in which structural violence violates the conditions for peace, who imposes the structural conditions and their impact on individuals and groups (Galtung, 1971). This idea of structural violence was very close conceptually to Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems models that described the exploitation of the weak by the strong (Wallerstein, 1979). To understand or "get to" peace, we had to understand those structures and figure out how to get rid of them.

Kenneth Boulding (1978) articulated a model of peace that turned on a competing balance between peace systems and war systems. A war system would be the institutions and behaviors that push toward war as an outcome or policy. The dominance of one system over the other was a function of the strain and strength of each, suggesting that peace or war systems could come under strain and whether or not they broke down was a function of their core strength. When a war system is weak and comes under strain, it will break down and a peace system will result. A peace system will have its strengths but come under strain, and whether we observe war is a function of the strengths of the peace system and its ability to overcome the strains pushing toward war. From both a theoretical and applied perspective, this points to the need to articulate models of the strains on and strengths of various systems of peace and war. Boulding, to my mind, does not provide much of a way to think about the sources of the strengths and strains within a system, but in many ways this is the foundation of a project developed by Goertz et al. (2013), so we are making progress.

In short, despite a half century of some prominent colleagues thinking about—or arguing that we ought to study—peace as its own outcome, contemporary scholarship is rather meager. Vasquez (1992) devoted a chapter of his book on war to ideas about peace, but again we were left wanting for a theoretical argument to which evidence could be brought to bear. Vasquez's (1992, chapter 8) definition of peace was a situation in which there was a very low probability for war. A low probability for war could be a result of the strength of the peace system relative to the war system (Boulding, 1978), or something of the equilibrium condition suggested by Wright (1954). The core of Vasquez's argument is that rules of government are instrumental in generating peaceful systems; he builds on Wallenstein (1984) to make a key distinction between universalist and particularist policies as determinants of peace or war and to suggest how those rules might differ under alternative circumstances. Vasquez's more recent treatment of what we know about war includes a brief call from Peter Wallenstein for a Correlates of Peace project (2012), and Joshi and Wallenstein (2014) and Davenport et al. (n.d.) are working on projects to define and measure the quality of peace.

Goertz et al. (Diehl and Goertz, 2012; Goertz et al., 2013), to my mind, take us further by articulating a set of conditions based on institutions and relationships within and between rivals that are increasingly conducive to peace. While in theory their model could be applied universally with some fine tuning, they place their peace model into the context of dyadic interstate conflict between pairs of countries with a significant history of armed disputes and war. In effect we only understand peace through the context of war. Some of what is left out of their model involves peace within countries and the relationships and institutions that facilitate or ensure peace among nondestructive conflict actors, such as the USA and the UK or Canada; Sweden and Norway, and the like. We might learn as much about peace by understanding very peaceful relationships as we would from understanding how to gradually refrain from violence between historical antagonists.

Other contemporary scholars study peace in the context of armed conflict (e.g. Joshi and Darby, 2013; Hoddie and Hartzel, 2003; Gurses and Rost, 2013; Davenport et al., n.d.), but mostly this is in the form of postwar peace agreements, so our understanding of peace is in terms of how long the postwar condition of peace lasts. That is, peace is understood in terms of its postwar duration. What “makes for peace” is the terms of the agreements and the institutional arrangements that they create (e.g. Hartzel and Hoddie, 2007; Joshi and Wallensteen, 2014; Nilsson and Jarstad, 2008; Nilsson, 2012). While these types of studies provide an understanding of the processes and institutions that can help make peace after war, they do not model peace in its own right.

My summary of what we know about peace might suggest that some good people have put considerable thought into studying peace, and while this might be true, if you were to take that body of knowledge and try to develop and test a model of peace, I suspect we would all find it difficult. What 50 years of scholarship has done is to provide some accumulation in the theoretical grounding that might allow us to identify key concepts like rules, institutions and relationships, but it would not allow us to put them together in what we might productively think of as a general model of peace that would provide for testable implications. Importantly, 50 years of research provides almost no way to think about operationally rigorous testing. To put this more succinctly, we know remarkably little about peace.

A way to think about peace

In the audacious act of writing what amounts to a nonpeer-reviewed article for one of the major journals of our society, I am going to try to point a way forward that builds on much of the prior research discussed above. My call to study peace is not meant to suggest that it is easy. I suspect it is not, and in fact I would venture to say that, if peace were easier to study than war, we would today have models and evidence about the conditions for and processes of making peace. Peace is hard to study because, at least in part, an operationally tractable definition is elusive and the models that we have to work from are more rudimentary than those for war. We have had Thucydides, Morgenthau, Singer, Bueno de Mesquita and many others to shape our thinking about war; with peace we do not have immediate corollaries. One way to move this forward is to be bold and describe my thinking.

We seem to agree that war is (1) a relatively rare event and that for the most part, (2) peace is preferred to war, and at least at the intrastate level, (3) armed conflict is rooted in incompatibilities that we might think of in terms of distributional issues (Collier et al., 2003; Hegre and Sambanis, 2006; Regan, 2009). If we consider territory to be a distributional issue,

then distribution is important at the interstate level of observation as well (e.g. Goertz et al., 2013; Tir, 2005; Vasquez, 1992). In pursuit of (1) it would make sense to understand how most groups or countries work out (3). Articulating the structural or behavioral aspects of the war calculus does not immediately allow us to “flip” the results in a way that gets us to models of peace. Democracy is a good example. Studies show that it is not democracy per se that saves countries from civil war, but rather transitions, political stability and distribution of wealth that provide for a stronger understanding (e.g. Gates et al., 2006; Goldstone et al., 2010; Regan and Bell, 2010). Britain had the conflict in Northern Ireland, Spain had the Basques, India had numerous groups rebel, and the USA had the Weather Underground, the Black Panthers and the South all take up arms. Each was democratic. The flip side of that is that there are numerous highly autocratic countries without armed rebellion. If I were playing a lottery and trying to reduce the pool of countries at risk of war so that I could better “choose” my pick, I would use regime type as a selection tool. Democracies have a lower probability of observing war, at either the monadic or dyadic level, so we know it is important. However, this does not seem to be quite enough to allow us to model peace. In fact what we call the democratic peace is really an observation of the absence of interstate war.

I have begun to think about peace as an equilibrium condition much along the lines of Wright (1954) or Boulding (1978), but rather than as an equilibrium among competing forces (strain and strength, for example), an equilibrium where the probability of any one group challenging the status quo by force of arms is perilously low (Vasquez, 1992). If we think of peace as a continuum that has “almost war” on one end and “social harmony” on the other, then what we want to know is how the conditions extant in that country change the probability that some group will take up arms. The fewer the number of groups with any incentive to think that change by force of arms has a better payoff than the status quo, the more peaceful the country. This would not point to the absence of serious debates and challenges within a country, but rather that the perceived usefulness of force to achieve an alternative outcome is low. That is, groups might see alternative pathways to achieve their preferences, or they might simply see that war is too costly relative to the goals they seek. These internal conditions can be quite different.

Two steps are needed to begin moving scholarship toward studying peace: good theoretical models and good measures of peace. I am not going to claim to hold the market on either, but until we have strong conceptual and operational definitions of peace we will lack data that allows us to understand when and how we generate it. There are at least two ways to think about measuring peace. One is through direct indicators that would be consistent with a peaceful society; the other is through proxies that capture an underlying risk of armed conflict. In the first approach there are a few recent projects trying to develop indicators consistent with peaceful environments and relationships. Goertz et al. (2013; and with Klein et al., 2008) identify five categories or conditions associated with peace between former rivals, Davenport et al. (n.d.) articulate conditions at multiple levels of observation, and Melander (n.d.) uses indicators of rights and equality to measure the quality of peace within and between countries. An alternative, and one that I think might be more productive, is to develop a proxy that taps into a behavior that would be consistent with preferences for the status quo conditions. The premium on black market currencies and sovereign bond prices reflects perceptions of risk and, to the extent that there is a greater risk of armed conflict, people will have to pay more for money. Bond prices are a direct measure of risk of default and black market currency prices have been linked to uncertainty, risk and civil war (Acharyya, 2001; Edwards, 1989; Easterly, 2001).

I pick up on this theme elsewhere (Regan and Ricardella, n.d.; Davenport et al., n.d.), but by focusing conceptually on the evaluation of risk that is perceived by the economic elite, we can develop a proxy measure for that risk. If the proxy can correctly predict war onset—or lesser forms of intra-state violence—then we can begin to develop models that account for the relative risk (Arnold, 2013). Moreover, thinking about a proxy for risk allows us to build on the ideas of strains and strengths in systems (Boulding, 1978) while avoiding the overly vague ideas incorporated into the concept of “positive peace” (Galtung, 1964). An indicator of the risk of war based on elite monetary concerns would be sensitive to local changes and vary in something close to real time.

Trading on the black market is in effect a method of circumventing the rules laid down by the government, and when individuals and groups have an incentive to violate the rules of the state, we might also posit that they have an incentive to change those rules that they are currently violating. Peace is a condition where the incentives and motivation to change the system are minimized by institutions and policies that are accepted in the norm, violated in the breach. In this sense the size of the premium on black market exchange might provide an indicator of the incentives to change the status quo. Black market currency exchange rates are conceptually like crime and corruption. The latter two are violations of the rules of society, and as such as they increase the level of the peace in the country decreases. Black market currency would respond in a similar manner and reflect to some degree similar problems of governance. Because illegal currency transactions take away from the ability of the state to provide social welfare (Edwards, 1989), the greater the size of the market, the larger the number of the disaffected in society is and therefore the more likely it is that there is an incentive to change the system.

Developing a proxy that will allow us to model the conditions for peace does not provide those models, but it does move us forward with a way to think about peace as something that (1) is an outcome other than not war, (2) can be expressed as a continuum, and (3) generates an outcome variable based on underlying conditions within a society that point toward the value of the status quo. One of the problems with studying peace is that there is a range from highly dissatisfied and “almost war” to “most everybody is content and war is largely unthinkable”. There are undoubtedly other ways to think about indicators of peace and moving forward on multiple dimensions will simply make the task more efficient.

Peace as a normative pursuit

In my presidential address I spoke at length about the need for the Peace Science community to embrace the notion of peace as a normative topic for study. I could productively let it go here, but because I raised it in the address I will stick with it. To my mind a normative orientation goes hand-in-hand with a focus on peace.

It seems that in the early phase of the peace research community talking about normative approaches and our science was not only acceptable, it was at the foundation. To some degree the normative orientation was driven by an understanding of the science of peace and war being an applied endeavor, such that we were seeking a better outcome for the world we inhabit. The mission statement of the peace science society, on the other hand, says that we do not, as a society, engage in activism or polemical debates. I accept that polemical debates are not the same as normative-free scholarship, but this is walking a perilously narrow line. To my mind we should be normatively driven and we should not run away from

identifying a world where universal human rights, rights of women, freedom from poverty and the distinct lack of armed violence and all that goes with it are preferred—not strictly that a zero is better than a one in our outcome variables, but that we seek to generate the knowledge for how to create a world that we want our children to thrive in. This does not require that we relax our science in pursuit of answers that fit our normative perspective, but rather that we recognize our focus and redouble our efforts to find out how and why we get to that better world. In Boulding's terms, we should want to understand peace systems so that we can create them. To hold to a position that we are normatively free is, to my way of thinking, a mistake of serious proportions.

Chenoweth and Cunningham (2013) make the case that nonviolent campaigns are less well studied than their violent counterparts to some degree because of how those in the social science discipline—and I think they are speaking specifically to the systematic social scientist who is more likely to be a member of the Peace Science Society—equate the concept of nonviolence with social activism. This, they mention, might be because there is a “norm of neutrality in the field”. To think that we would neglect a critical topic that bears on questions of peace and social justice because it might appear that we are not being neutral is surprising because war is of course a neutral subject and peace implies that you are biased in favor of it! I would suggest that most of us are biased against the condition we call war and therefore are no more neutral than someone who studies peace or nonviolence. Because of our biases we miss opportunities to understand more about creating a peaceful world to the extent that we scare off any research that might investigate it under the charge of activism or non-neutrality.

Sometimes it is difficult to see how values inform our science, so I use an example that should make this clear. This could be one of many examples, just as the neutrality of studying violence but the bias of studying nonviolence makes clear. One of the things that we do well is to categorize and measure so that we can develop theoretical models and empirical tests. We use concepts like “resolved/not resolved”, “capabilities” and “terrorists” to organize our thinking and our data, and ultimately to draw inference about how things work in the world. How we develop categories and who or what we put in them can reflect our values.

In my address I gave the example of four men. One was a “villain”, one a “savior”, two were noble laureates of peace, two were advocates of nonviolence, while two were leaders of violent movements. At least two were leaders of social movements, one became, post hoc, the spiritual leader of multitudes, one the president of a country, and three were assassinated. Each to a greater or lesser degree relied on God for their inspiration or motivation, all had ideas and values that resonated with wide audiences, and in many ways each of their ideas challenged the status quo ante of the time. Putting them into readily identifiable categories would pose a problem—for example, terrorist or not; rebel leader or not. Although other people could stand this test, the four men I refer to are, of course (or maybe not), Jesus, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr and Osama bin Laden.

They are not an unlikely cast of characters, but if we were categorizing them, some of the pairing will give us pause. Nelson Mandela and Osama bin Laden would be in the same category of “terrorist”, at least taking their own statements at face value. Martin Luther King and Osama bin Laden would be in the same category if you were focusing on those leaders who relied on divine motivation, even though the God on which they relied was apparently different. Only Mandela missed the executioner's wrath, but only Mandela spent any serious time in jail as a political prisoner. How we think about each of these iconic

people might shape how willing we are to put them into one or the other category. It would be hard to put Mandela into the category of a terrorist along with bin Laden, in part because most would agree that his cause was just. bin Laden, on the other hand, would probably generate little sympathy among those in the Peace Science community because his cause was certainly less just than Mandela's. We would easily categorize him as a terrorist. Oddly, however, he made the case that he was not a terrorist—or at least that his form of terrorism was good terrorism—and certainly not when compared with the USA or Israel (Lawrence, 2005). This is really the same charge that Mandela made against the Apartheid government in South Africa, that his violent actions were justified because of the unjust actions of the white government (Mandela, 1964). So the difference—at least one of them—between Nelson Mandela and Osam bin Laden turns on our view of justice. Many, however, see the cause of Al Qaeda to be the pursuit of justice for the oppressed Muslim community.

There are some who see Jesus as a revolutionary leader and argue that crucifixion was a punishment reserved for sedition (Crossan, 2009). These inferences are drawn, of course, from a reading of the history of the Roman Empire and not the portrayal of Jesus as Christ in the New Testament. So by one version of the lexicons of today, Jesus was the leader of a movement challenging the status quo government and could be accorded the label of a rebel leader. However, all four of these men were challenging the status quo at the time, and many would be hard pressed to put Jesus in the same category as Osama bin Laden. However each of the four justified their actions based on their notion of justice. I could easily extend this to include different outcomes and movements. For example, the American Revolution was a form of armed insurrection. These insurrections are sometimes derided because they go against what we generally see as a good outcome—that is, what we see as our values—and other times applauded for the same type of reason. What we see as “right” and “wrong” also tends to change with time, as we can see in the gay rights movement in this country. When I was born into this world it was generally acceptable to abuse a gay man; today two men (or two women) can get legally married or serve in the military, and any abuse against them can be considered a hate crime. Our categories change based on contemporary ideas about justice and what we consider to be just might be tempered by our need to appear neutral in the face of potentially value-laden outcomes (Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013).

In short, and maybe just from my perspective, there is a better and a worse world out there and we as a scientific community have a unique set of skills that should allow us to figure out the conditions that provide for that better world. I do not see that this makes us any less scientific, any more polemical or any less intellectual. To do this effectively we might have to branch out to consider the insights that other disciplines can offer, to help with both theoretical modeling and empirical testing, but importantly to see peace in a broader context. To me this seems to be a tall challenge to a scientific community that has prided itself in being rigorous and “value free”. However, as Cliff Morgan argued in his presidential address to the Peace Science Society in 2010, we have come a long way from the early days of this intellectual community. Our predecessors (Morgan, 2013) were the ones to call for the study of peace, but maybe the tools did not provide the mechanisms to do so at that time. We now have the tools, but we might be inhibited because of our need for “neutrality” in outcomes; maybe now is the time to go back to our intellectual roots and apply those tools to the study of peace. This might be a bigger question than we have heretofore confronted, but it gives us the opportunity to live up to our name: the Peace Science Society.

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