

## Conflict resolution research

[Conflict resolution](#) is any reduction in the severity of a conflict. It may involve [conflict management](#), in which the parties continue the conflict but adopt less extreme tactics; settlement, in which they reach agreement on enough issues that the conflict stops; or removal of the underlying causes of the conflict. The latter is sometimes called "resolution", in a narrower sense

of the term that will not be used in this article. Settlements sometimes end a conflict for good, but when there are deeper issues – such as value clashes among people who must work together, [distressed relationships](#), or mistreated members of one's ethnic group across a border – settlements are often temporary.

## Unproductive conflict communication cycle

Unproductive conflict; this can be done by analyzing the three stages executed during this type of communication: the early stage, the middle stage, and the later stage. Generally speaking, an argument's potential is determined within the first 3 minutes of exchange, setting the tone for the early stage. It is in this stage where cross-complaining becomes present – countering one's complaint with another complaint – a negative environment is immediately set and hostility is likely to be mirrored. Exiting the early stage and entering the middle stage, we can see the kitchen-sinking concept come into, "Once a negative climate has been set, it is stoked by other unconstructive communication. People often engage in kitchen-sinking, in which everything except the kitchen sink is thrown into the argument" (Wood 234). Constant interruptions, underdeveloped thoughts and the continuation of cross-complaining is apparent, leaving no time, breath or desire to form resolutions. Eventually, the conflict floats into the later stage. By this stage participants are exhausted from arguing and individual prosperity is emphasized over mutual solution; counterproposals are exchanged. As you can see, unproductive conflict communication truly is ineffective and puts relationships in jeopardy.

## Constructive conflict communication

Similar to the unproductive conflict communication cycle, the constructive conflict communication cycle can be divided into the same 3 parts – early stage, middle stage and later stage. To establish a positive early stage, it is crucial to acknowledge and confirm one another's concerns. Critical listening, open-mindedness and respect create a supportive climate. Once the solid groundwork is set, participants can shift into the middle stage and begin agenda building, that is, clarifying the concerns while staying on topic; interruptions are kept at a minimum and recognition is reinforced. Last but not least, solutions will be proposed as the conflict enters the later stage, where respect shall be maintained, ideas are exchanged, and resolutions are formed. Contrary to a negative climate, this form of communication seeks to create a positive, more tolerable environment.

## Negotiation research

[Negotiation](#), the most heavily researched approach to conflict resolution, has mainly been studied in laboratory experiments, in which undergraduate participants are randomly assigned to conditions. These studies have mostly looked at antecedents of the strategies adopted by negotiators and the outcomes attained, including whether agreement is reached, the joint benefit to both parties, and the individual benefit to each party.

### Negotiation research findings

Here are some of the more prominent findings from these studies (see Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993):

- [Problem solving behavior](#), such as giving or requesting information about a party's priorities among the issues, encourages high joint benefit.
- [Contentious behavior](#), such as making threats or standing firm on one's proposals, encourages failure to reach agreement or, if agreement is reached, low joint benefit.
- Conceding makes agreement more likely but favors the other party's interests.
- [Prosocial motivation](#) (resulting, for example, from positive mood or the expectation of future interaction with the other party) encourages problem solving and high joint benefit and discourages contentious behavior, but only when resistance to yielding is high (De Dreu, Weingart, & Kwon, 2000).
- The party who makes the first offer tends to achieve greater benefit than the other party.
- Three states of mind discourage concession making: viewing concessions as producing loss rather than as foregoing gain; focusing attention on one's goal rather than one's limit (i.e., the alternative that is minimally tolerable); and adopting a fixed-pie perspective, in which one views the other's gain as one's loss, rather than an expandable pie perspective.
- Adopting any of the states of mind above diminishes the likelihood of agreement; but if agreement is reached, it increases the likelihood of winning, especially if the other party adopts the opposite state of mind (Thompson, Neale, & Sinaceur, 2004).

### Cultural differences shown in research findings

Recent experiments have found cultural differences in negotiation behavior (Gelfand & Brett, 2004):

## Research into third party involvement

Third parties often become involved in conflict resolution, either being called in by the disputants or acting on their own because the conflict annoys them or the community they serve. Two common forms of [third-party intervention](#) are [arbitration](#) and [mediation](#). In arbitration, the third party listens to both sides and then renders a decision, which can be either binding or

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advisory. Most mediation consists of third-party assistance with negotiation. When conflict is severe and the disputants have difficulty talking calmly with each other, mediators can put them into contact and help them develop a [cease-fire](#) or settlement. If the disputants cannot or will not meet each other, mediators commonly become intermediaries and shuttle between them. Sometimes a chain of two intermediaries is necessary because there is no single individual who can communicate effectively with both sides.

### Mediation research findings

Mediation has been studied in both the laboratory and the field. Research (see Kressel & Pruitt, 1989) suggests that:

- [Interpersonal mediation](#) is usually successful in producing settlements.
- Disputants generally prefer mediation over arbitration, since it allows them to retain control over the final decision. This means that in [med-arb](#), where failure to reach agreement in mediation is followed by [binding arbitration](#), disputants will work harder to reach agreement than in straight mediation.
- In the case of small claims disputes, that mediation produces more compliance with the agreement than [adjudication](#) (a form of arbitration), perhaps because mediated decisions accord more with the parties' needs.
- To be fully successful, mediators must be seen as impartial between the two parties.
- Having stronger initial ties to one side than the other is less damaging to the perception of impartiality than exhibiting bias during the mediation session.
- Disputants even sometimes prefer that the mediator be close to the other party so that he or she can exert influence over that party.

More than 100 distinct [mediator tactics](#) have been identified. Among the tactics that have been shown to work well, in the sense of producing long-lasting agreements beneficial to both sides are:

- Helping the parties to understand each other's positions, challenging them to come up with new ideas, and requesting their reactions to new ideas.
- When conflict is severe, mediators often have to be quite active and even pushy (e.g., telling disputants that their demands are unrealistic) in order to achieve agreement.
- When conflict is less intense, and the disputants are capable of talking productively with each other, it is best for mediators to be relatively inactive.
- When disputant discussions are unproductive it is best to separate the parties ("caucusing") and engage in problem solving with each of them.
- Compliance to the terms of an agreement is enhanced when the parties emerge from the mediation with a positive relationship and when they view the mediation process as a fair one in which all of the issues came out.

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- Continued third-party attention to the conflict has been found to encourage compliance to agreements reached at the end of internal war (Hampson, 1996).
- When there is a continuing relationship between disputants, helping them find a settlement for their current disagreement is often not enough. New conflicts may arise or deeper issues resurface.
- Within the specific continuing relationship of marriage, [marital therapists](#) have found that training both the parties in problem solving skills, such as effective communication, identifying key issues, developing solutions that satisfy both parties' needs, helps ease marital problems. Two evaluation studies have shown the value of this approach, and one of them (Johnson & Greenberg, 1985) has demonstrated that [emotionally focused therapy](#) is even more effective.
- Emotionally focused therapy is the practice where, persistent maladaptive interaction patterns are identified, and husband and wife are encouraged to reveal the feelings and needs associated with these patterns and to "accept and respond to" their partner's feelings and needs.
- Programs have also been developed for training school children in problem solving skills, and evaluations of these programs have generally been quite positive.
- In addition, many school systems have adopted [peer mediation](#) programs, in which students are trained to mediate conflicts that arise in their school. Evaluations of these programs have also been quite positive (Coleman & Deutsch, 2001).

### **Ethno-political conflict research**

Investigators have looked at the impact of several kinds of third-party interventions in [international and ethno-political conflict](#), including [peacekeeping](#), mediation, and problem solving workshops. Peacekeeping is the use of lightly armed troops to manage conflict in a war zone. Most peacekeeping has been done by the [United Nations](#), drawing on the military forces of its members. Traditional peacekeeping involved enforcing ceasefires, but in the last few years, the peacekeeper's duties have grown to include such services as the delivery of humanitarian aid, the supervision of elections, and maintenance of law and order. Research shows that as they go about these new responsibilities, peacekeepers – officers more so than enlisted men – often become heavily involved in negotiation and mediation. One study found that as conflict becomes

more severe, peacekeeper mediators are more likely to meet separately with the disputants, to urge the disputants to relax, and to rely on force (Wall, Druckman, & Diehl, 2002).

#### Peacekeeping research findings

Peacekeeper mediation is done at the local level. Mediation at the intergovernmental level is a much older practice that has recently come under study with statistical analyses of large samples of historical mediations (Bercovitch & Houston, 2000). Among the findings in this research are:

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- Mediation is more likely to be successful when the parties are of equal power, when they have been friendly in the past, when there have been relatively few fatalities in the period before mediation, when the mediator is of high rank, and when mediation comes after a test of strength between the parties.
- The latter finding is compatible with [ripeness theory](#) ([Zartman, 2000](#)), which was developed from comparative case studies of violent ethno-political conflicts. This theory holds that two conditions are necessary for disputants to enter into and move forward in negotiation, bilateral or mediated: (a) both sides perceive that they are in a hurting stalemate, and (b) both sides develop optimism about the outcome of mediation—a "perceived way out."

### Putting conflict research to use

Several types of [negotiation strategies](#) have been developed for repairing faulty international and inter-group relations. Negotiations are usually held over a period of several days, and attended by mid-level opinion leaders and decision makers from both sides of a conflict, under the leadership of scholar and/or practitioners.

The aims of these workshops are to teach the parties about conflict in general and their conflict in particular, to forge understanding between the parties and, if possible, to develop joint projects that will contribute to reconciliation.

One evaluation study conducted showed that these workshops improved attitudes toward the other side, increase complexity of thinking about the conflict, and facilitate further communication with people on the other side (Fisher, 1997). There is also evidence that some alumni of these workshops have later contributed to high level negotiations between the conflicting parties.

**Peace and conflict studies** is a [social science](#) field that identifies and analyzes [violent](#) and [nonviolent](#) behaviours as well as the structural mechanisms attending [conflicts](#) (including [social conflicts](#)), with a view towards understanding those processes which lead to a more desirable [human condition](#). A variation on this, peace studies (**irenology**), is an [interdisciplinary](#) effort aiming at the prevention, de-escalation, and solution of conflicts by peaceful means, thereby seeking "victory" for all parties involved in the conflict. This is in contrast to [military studies](#), which has as its aim on the efficient attainment of victory in conflicts, primarily by violent means to the satisfaction of one or more, but not all, parties involved. Disciplines involved may include [philosophy](#), [political science](#), [geography](#), [economics](#), [psychology](#), [sociology](#), [international relations](#), [history](#), [anthropology](#), [religious studies](#), and [gender studies](#), as well as a variety of others. Relevant sub-disciplines of such fields, such as [peace economics](#), may be regarded as belonging to peace and conflict studies also.

## Historical background

Peace and conflict studies is both a pedagogical activity, in which teachers transmit knowledge to students; and a research activity, in which researchers create new knowledge about the sources of conflict. Peace and conflict studies entails understanding the concept of peace which is defined as political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices, and norms.

As pedagogical activity

Academics and students in the world's oldest universities have long been motivated by an interest in [peace](#). American student interest in what we today think of as peace studies first appeared in the form of campus clubs at United States colleges in the years immediately following the [American Civil War](#). Similar movements appeared in Sweden in the last years of the 19th century, as elsewhere soon after. These were student-originated discussion groups, not formal courses included in college curricula.

The [First World War](#) was a turning point in Western attitudes to war. At the 1919 [Peace of Paris](#)—where the leaders of France, Britain, and the United States, led by [Georges Clemenceau](#), [David Lloyd George](#), and [Woodrow Wilson](#) respectively, met to decide the future of Europe—Wilson proposed his famous [Fourteen Points](#) for peacemaking. These included breaking up European empires into nation states and the establishment of the [League of Nations](#). These moves, intended to ensure a peaceful future, were the background to a number of developments in the emergence of Peace and Conflict Studies as an academic discipline (but they also, as [Keynes](#) presciently pointed out, laid the seeds for future conflict). The founding of the first chair in International Relations at [Aberystwyth University, Wales](#), whose remit was partly to further the cause of peace, occurred in 1919.

After [World War II](#), the founding of the [UN system](#) provided a further stimulus for more rigorous approaches to peace and conflict studies to emerge. Many university courses in schools of higher learning around the world began to develop which touched upon questions of peace, often in relation to war, during this period. The first undergraduate academic program in peace studies in the United States was developed in 1948 by Gladdys Muir, at [Manchester University](#) a liberal arts college located in [North Manchester, Indiana](#). It was not until the late 1960s in the United States that student concerns about the [Vietnam War](#) forced ever more universities to offer courses about peace, whether in a designated peace studies course or as a course within a traditional major. Work by academics such as [Johan Galtung](#) and [John Burton](#), and debates in fora such as the [Journal of Peace Research](#) in the 1960s reflected the growing interest and academic stature of the field. Growth in the number of peace studies programs around the world was to accelerate during the 1980s, as students became more concerned about the

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prospects of nuclear war. As the [Cold War](#) ended, peace and conflict studies courses shifted their focus from international conflict and towards complex issues related to political violence, [human security](#), [democratisation](#), [human rights](#), [social justice](#), [welfare](#), [development](#), and producing sustainable forms of peace. A proliferation of international organisations, agencies and international NGOs, from the UN, [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#), [European Union](#), and [World Bank](#) to [International Crisis Group](#), [International Alert](#), and others, began to draw on such research.

Agendas relating to positive peace in European academic contexts were already widely debated in the 1960s. By the mid-1990s peace studies curricula in the United States had shifted "...from research and teaching about negative peace, the cessation of violence, to positive peace, the conditions that eliminate the causes of violence." As a result, the topics had broadened enormously. By 1994, a review of course offerings in peace studies included topics such as: "north-south relations"; "development, debt, and global poverty"; "the environment, population growth, and resource scarcity"; and "feminist perspectives on peace, militarism, and political violence."

There is now a general consensus on the importance of peace and conflict studies among scholars from a range of disciplines in and around the social sciences, as well as from many influential policymakers around the world. Peace and conflict studies today is widely researched and taught in a large and growing number of institutions and locations. The number of universities offering peace and conflict studies courses is hard to estimate, mostly because courses may be taught out of different departments and have very different names.

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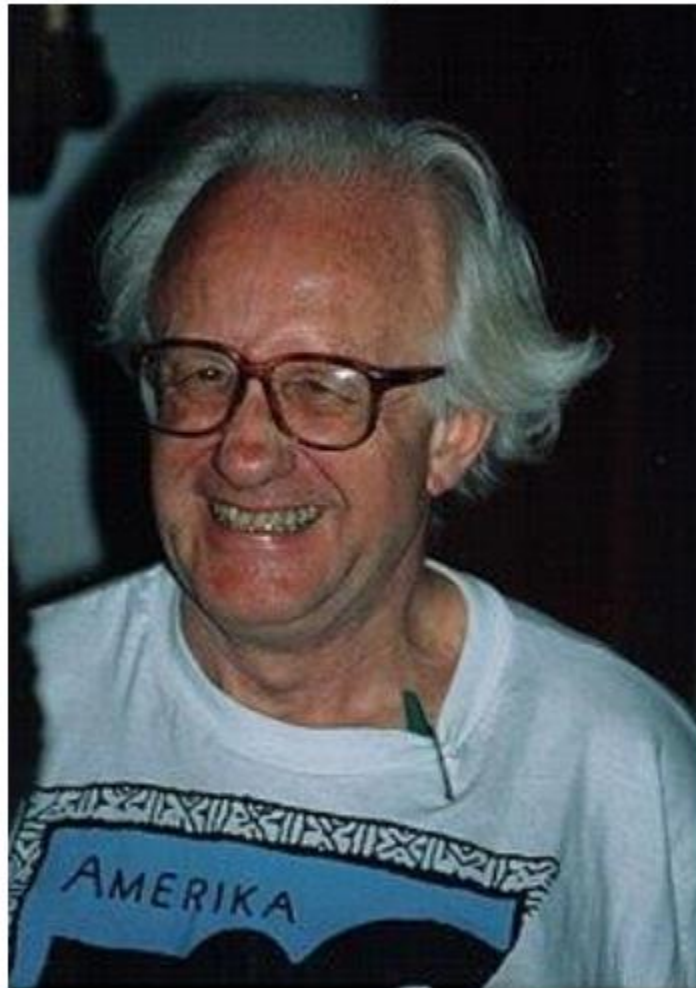
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A 1995 survey found 136 United States colleges with peace studies programs: "Forty-six percent of these are in church related schools, another 32% are in large public universities, 21% are in non-church related private colleges, and 1% are in community colleges. Fifty-five percent of the church related schools that have peace studies programs are [Roman Catholic](#). Other denominations with more than one college or university with a peace studies program are the [Quakers](#), [Mennonites](#), [Church of the Brethren](#), and [United Church of Christ](#). One hundred fifteen of these programs are at the undergraduate level and 21 at the graduate level. Fifteen of these colleges and universities had both undergraduate and graduate programs."

Norwegian academic [Johan Galtung](#) is widely regarded as a founder of peace and conflict studies



Although individual thinkers such as [Immanuel Kant](#) had long recognised the centrality of peace (see [Perpetual Peace](#)), it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that peace studies began to emerge as an academic discipline with its own research tools, a specialized set of concepts, and forums for discussion such as journals and conferences. Beginning in 1959, with the founding of the [Peace Research Institute Oslo](#)- PRIO – (associated with [Johan Galtung](#)), a number of research institutes began to appear.

## Description

Peace studies can be classified as:

- Multidisciplinary, encompassing elements of [Politics](#) and [International Relations](#) (particularly [critical international relations theory](#)), [Sociology](#), [Psychology](#), [Anthropology](#) and [Economics](#). [Critical theory](#) is also widely used in peace and conflict studies.
- Multilevel. Peace studies examines intrapersonal peace, peace between individuals, neighbours, ethnic groups, marriages, states and civilisations.
- Multicultural. [Gandhi](#) is often cited as a paradigm of Peace Studies. However, true multiculturalism remains an aspiration as most Peace Studies centres are located in the West.
- Both [analytic](#) and [normative](#). As a normative discipline, Peace Studies involves value judgements, such as "better" and "bad".
- Both theoretical and applied.

There has been a long-standing and vibrant debate on [disarmament](#) issues, as well as attempts to investigate, catalogue, and analyse issues relating to arms production, trade, and their political impacts. There have also been attempts to map the economic costs of war, or of relapses into violence, as opposed to those of peace.

Peace and conflict studies is now well established within the [social sciences](#): it comprises many scholarly journals, college and university departments, peace research institutes, conferences, as well as outside recognition of the utility of peace and conflict studies as a method.

Peace Studies allows one to examine the causes and prevention of war, as well as the nature of violence, including social oppression, discrimination and marginalization. Through peace studies one can also learn peace-making strategies to overcome persecution and transform society to attain a more just and equitable international community.

Feminist scholars have developed a speciality within conflict studies, specifically examining the role of gender in armed conflicts. The importance of considering the role of gender in post-conflict work was recognised by the [United Nations Security Council resolution 1325](#). Examples of feminist scholarship include the work of [Carol Cohn](#) and [Claire Duncanson](#).

## Ideas

Delegates at the 1953 [Korean Armistice Agreement](#) achieved negative peace, ending [the war](#) but not [the wider conflict](#)

The negative and positive peace framework is the most widely used today. Negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence. Positive peace refers to the absence of indirect and [structural violence](#), and is the concept that most peace and conflict researchers adopt. This is often credited to Galtung but these terms were previously used by Martin Luther King in the [Letter from a Birmingham Jail in 1953](#), in which he wrote about "negative peace which is the absence of tension" and "positive peace which is the presence of justice." These terms were perhaps first used by Jane Addams in 1907 in her book [Newer Ideals of Peace](#).

Several conceptions, models, or modes of peace have been suggested in which peace research might prosper.

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- The crux of the matter is that peace is a natural social condition, whereas war is not. The premise is simple for peace researchers: to present enough information so that a rational group of decision makers will seek to avoid war and conflict.
- Second, the view that violence is sinful or unskillful, and that non-violence is skillful or virtuous and should be cultivated. This view is held by a variety of religious traditions worldwide: Quakers, Mennonites and other [Peace churches](#) within Christianity; [Jains](#), [the Satyagraha tradition in Hinduism](#), [Buddhism](#), and other portions of [Indian religion and philosophy](#); as well as certain schools of [Islam](#)
- Third is [pacifism](#): the view that peace is a prime force in human behaviour.
- A further approach is that there are multiple modes of peace.

There have been many offerings on these various forms of peace. These range from the well known works of [Kant](#), [Locke](#), [Rousseau](#), [Paine](#), on various liberal international and constitutional and plans for peace. Variations and additions have been developed more recently by scholars such as Raymond Aron, Edward Azar, John Burton, Martin Ceadal, [Wolfgang Dietrich](#), Kevin Dooley, [Johan Galtung](#), Michael Howard, [Vivienne Jabri](#), John-Paul Lederach, Roger Mac Ginty, [Pamina Firchow](#), Hugh Miall, David Mitran, [Oliver Ramsbotham](#), [Anatol Rapoport](#), [Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen](#), [Oliver Richmond](#), [S.P. Udayakumar](#), [Tom Woodhouse](#), others mentioned above and many more. [Democratic peace](#), liberal peace, sustainable peace, civil peace, hybrid peace, post-liberal peace, [everyday peace](#), trans-rational peace(s) and other concepts are regularly used in such work.

### Sustainable peace

Under the conceptions of peace, sustainable peace must be regarded as an important factor for the future of prosperity. Sustainable peace must be the priority of global society where state actors and non-state actors do not only seek for the profits in a near future that might violate the stable state of peace. For a sustainable peace, nurturing, empowerment, and communications are considered to be the crucial factors throughout the world. Firstly, nurturing is necessary to encourage psychological stability and emotional maturity. The significance of social value in adequate nurturing is important for sustainable peace. Secondly, in order to achieve real security, inner security must be secured along with arranged social systems and protection based on firm foundation. Lastly, communications are necessary to overcome ignorance and establish a community based on reliable and useful information. It will prevent isolation to take place which is critical to bring sustainable peace.

### Conflict triangle

[Johan Galtung's conflict triangle](#) works on the assumption that the best way to define peace is to define violence, its opposite. It reflects the normative aim of preventing, managing, limiting and overcoming violence.

- Direct (overt) violence, e.g., direct attack, massacre.
- Structural violence. Death by avoidable reasons such as malnutrition. Structural violence is indirect violence caused by an unjust structure and is not to be equated with an [act of God](#).

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- Cultural violence. Cultural violence occurs as a result of the cultural assumptions that blind one to direct or structural violence. For example, one may be indifferent toward the homeless, or even consider their expulsion or extermination a good thing.

Each corner of Galtung's triangle can relate to the other two. [Ethnic cleansing](#) can be an example of all three.

To simply understand these three

- Direct violence = harming or hurting body & mind
- Structural violence = economic exploitation & political repression
- Cultural violence = underlying values & epistemic models that legitimize direct & structural violence

Cost of conflict

[Cost of conflict](#) is a tool which attempts to calculate the price of conflict to the human race. The idea is to examine this cost, not only in terms of the deaths and casualties and the economic costs borne by the people involved, but also the social, developmental, environmental and strategic costs of conflict. The approach considers direct costs of conflict, for instance human deaths, expenditure, destruction of land and physical infrastructure; as well as indirect costs that impact a society, for instance migration, humiliation, growth of extremism and lack of civil society.

[Strategic Foresight Group](#), a think tank in [India](#), has developed a Cost of Conflict Series for countries and regions involved in protracted conflicts. This tool is aimed at assessing past, present and future costs looking at a wide range of parameters.