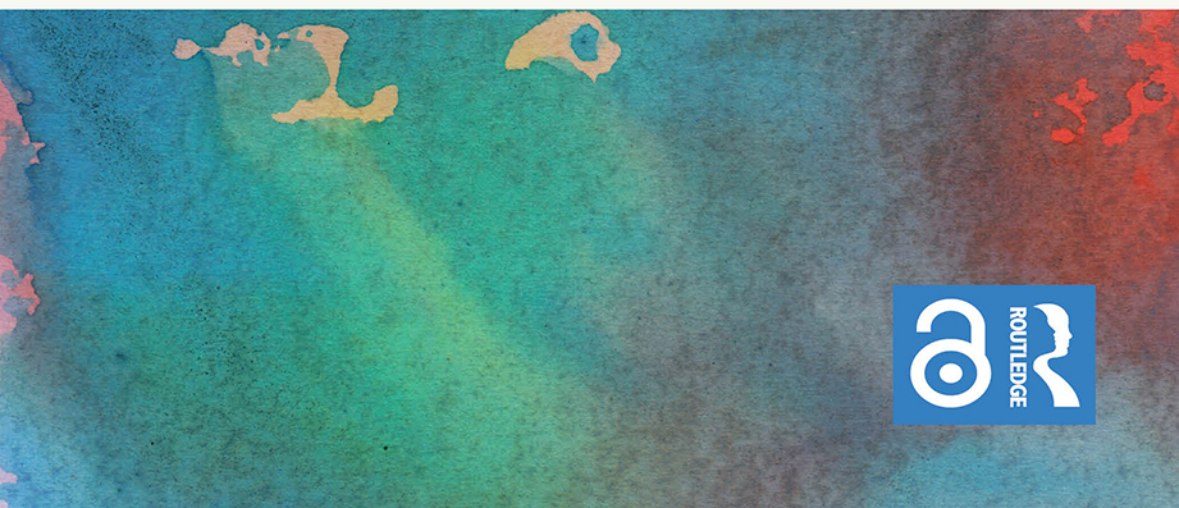
Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution

FUNCTIONAL COEXISTENCE IN SOCIO-POLITICAL CONFLICT

ENABLING SOCIAL CHANGE ACROSS DECADES

Edited by
Tatsushi Arai and Margarita Tadevosyan



Just as scientists have redefined "dark matter" in space, the writers in this brilliant volume have shifted what are often seen as frozen or transitional conflict spaces—defined in terms of what they are not—into areas worthy of support and dynamic study in their own right.

Melanie Greenberg, *Managing Director, Humanity United*

This important book explores the requirements of "non-violent functional coexistence" when so far prospects for conflict resolution are "out of sight." It opens a major new field of further study in a neglected field which offers pragmatic and innovative guidance for theorists, practitioners, policymakers - and conflict parties themselves. It is an invaluable contribution. Highly recommended and essential reading.

Oliver Ramsbotham, *Emeritus Professor of Conflict Resolution, University of Bradford, UK*

… a genuinely innovative effort to go beyond Johan Galtung's concept of "negative peace" as simply an absence of violence, and to show what positive changes might be possible in moving relations between former enemies in the direction of diminishing mistrust, stability, and a sense of independent security….

Christopher R. Mitchell, *Professor Emeritus of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University, USA*

This is an exceptionally important contribution to peacebuilding. It lays out a strong theoretical framework, supported by empirical data, for the proposition that many societies are locked in a precarious state of non-fighting—functional coexistence—characterized as neither war nor peace. We are given crucial insight into the dynamics within these societies and the adaptations taking place that might eventually lead to more positive peace. In this especially challenging period in international relations, this is inspired and inspiring work.

Eileen Babbitt, *Professor of Practice in International Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, USA*

Peacebuilders have long known that a linear progression from conflict to peace rarely happens in practice. This book proposes a creative way to deal with this reality. Functional coexistence is an important contribution to our thinking about how peace can be made and sustained.

Peter Jones, *Executive Director of the Ottawa Dialogue, Canada*

This book explores how to work with stuck relationships by promoting constructive engagement in negative peace. It develops a systematic approach to living together despite deep divisions. This is a novel theory that works well in a wide range of frozen conflicts. I highly recommend it to all theorists and practitioners interested in what to do when conventional conflict resolution processes prove incapable of facilitating agreement or healing broken relationships.

Kevin P. Clements, *Director, Toda Peace Institute, Japan*

Functional Coexistence in Socio-Political Conflict

This book introduces the concept of functional coexistence as a context for building practical strategies for long-term conflict intervention and social change.

Functional coexistence is a pragmatic relationship of mutual non-recognition sustained in the absence of physical violence. In this volume, a team of internationally recognized scholar-practitioners of peacebuilding presents seven in-depth case studies of functional coexistence, expanding its potential for practical conflict intervention. Bridging theory to evidence and vision to practice, the book offers guideposts for sustained conflict intervention, presents compelling examples of peace potential within the context of functional coexistence, and identifies common pathways for change among them. It also proposes a customized framework for program evaluation and highlights the merit of long-term policymaking and funding. Instead of losing hope based on traditional expectations of conflict resolution and reconciliation, this pioneering study of conflict non-resolution demonstrates the power of tenacious pragmatism, strategically guided by a decades-long historical view of social change.

This book will be of interest to students of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, international relations, foreign policy, and security studies.

Tatsushi Arai is Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Kent State University, USA, with extensive practitioner experience. He is author or editor of four books, including Creativity and Conflict Resolution: Alternative Pathways to Peace (2009).

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Functional Coexistence in Socio-Political Conflict

Enabling Social Change Across Decades

Edited by Tatsushi Arai and Margarita Tadevosyan

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To Professor Johan Galtung (1930–2024) for the pioneering example he set through over seven decades of enduring commitment to peace research and applied peacemaking practice, and to all those persevering for peace amidst ongoing conflicts.

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Alpaslan Özerdem is a professor of peace and conflict studies and the dean of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. His research specializes in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, with a particular focus on security rebuilding and the reintegration of ex-combatants. Dr. Özerdem has an extensive publication record, including co-editing works such as *Comparing Peace Processes*, the *Routledge Handbook of Conflict Response and Leadership in Africa*, and the *Routledge Handbook on Peace, Security, and Development*. Additionally, he is the co-editor of the Modern Turkey Series by Edinburgh University Press.

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Foreword

We are thrilled to present this groundbreaking book on the unique concept of functional coexistence. This concept, which we have had the privilege of witnessing and fostering in its early stages, has been nurtured through collaborative efforts among researchers from the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason and the School of Peace and Conflict Studies at Kent State, among other institutions. The initial work on this concept serves as a compelling example of the kind of mutually beneficial collaboration that we should all aspire to in the field of peace and conflict studies.

The journey with the concept of functional coexistence began with Dr. Tatsushi Arai's seminal article in the journal *Peace & Change*. Since then, it has evolved through a series of meetings, academic conference panels, online events, and collaborative discussions. This publication, a testament to the growing interest in the concept, offers a comprehensive discussion and a range of case studies that demonstrate its practical applicability and potential. For those new to the concept, it provides a valuable introduction and exploration of its principles, applicability, and its place in the field of peace and conflict studies.

The concept describes a condition that we find in every era and one that applies to interpersonal relations as much as inter-state relations. At the same time, when applied to the international level (the principal focus of this publication), it seems particularly timely given both the diminished space for more transformational approaches to conflict and the even more diminished levels of optimism about the potential for the success of such approaches. More substantively, functional coexistence describes a condition that is applicable to a small but significant subset of intractable conflicts, ones that have experienced a sustained condition of non-war and mutual denial/non-recognition—a condition that may even have persisted for several decades.

The case studies in this book illustrate the applicability of the concept to a wide range of contexts, including, but not limited to, coexistence in the local communities of post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia; coexistence and peacemaking in Cyprus; and exploration of its relevance to the sustained negative peace experienced in Northern Ireland following the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement,

as well as in the Western Balkans. Societies and conflict types that give rise to the condition of functional coexistence are, therefore, not insubstantial features of the international system. At the same time, such types of persistent non-war relations are relatively neglected by researchers working in the field of conflict resolution, not least because their very persistence means that they are neither considered urgent, fashionable, nor grant-worthy, particularly when compared to the newest war or peace process. The concept of functional coexistence and the associated case studies in this book, therefore, help fill a significant lacuna in the literature on this sub-category of intractable conflicts.

More fundamentally, the concept recognizes that in many conflict contexts, while active war may have ceased many years ago, the conditions for conflict resolution may still not have been achieved; and that its Sisyphean pursuit in the absence of such facilitating conditions is, at best, inappropriate, and at worst, possibly even counterproductive. It represents a call, therefore, for analysts and policymakers to adjust both their policy toolkit and their policy timeframes to fit the existing features of this particular category of non-war relations. The more notable lessons include the need to take a decades-long view on the formation, evolution, and transformation of conflict and to adjust policy frameworks accordingly.

Furthermore, the concept of functional coexistence highlights a need for policy actors to recognize the strategic and systemic factors that impact such conflict-affected societies and build an appreciation of these into policy frameworks rather than succumbing to the temptation to focus solely on the tactical day-to-day challenges inside these societies. Above all, there is a need to adopt integrated policy frameworks in which short-term immediate steps are conceived as elements in much longer-term processes. These, in turn, need to be designed with an awareness of the deep-rooted nature of such conflicts; the interconnections between the local, national, and systemic; and the fact that in such conflict contexts, strategies to support enduring trajectories toward peace are unlikely to be those designed to produce the policy sugar rush provided by simulated and short-term resolution placebos. Instead, they are more likely to be strategies that take the concept—and reality—of negative peace seriously; and where the pursuit of peace in all its dimensions is always contingent, recursive, and designed with both an appreciation of the *longue durée* and explicit recognition of the need to plan for it.

We acknowledge that the concept of functional coexistence is still in its infancy and that it will inevitably be subject to critique and further refinement. For example, while a convincing case is made for the need to adopt longer time horizons, skeptics will no doubt note that this invariably pushes up against the perennial pressure for exit strategies, as well as the budget and electoral cycles of donors. We think that the contributors to this book highlight ways such pressures can be addressed—starting with the cognitive leap involved in naming and recognizing the fact of functional coexistence itself. Nevertheless, we are sure that this, and other discussions about the concept, will form an inevitable part of the warp and weft of its evolution. Moreover, the focus of this

publication is principally on the international dimensions of functional coexistence. Further publications will undoubtedly explore the concept's utility for understanding relevant conflict categories at both the interpersonal and organizational levels. Nevertheless, this book certainly represents a landmark milestone in the evolution of what is destined to become an important new concept in the field of peace and conflict studies.

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Preface

We, as co-editors, share a commitment to applied peacebuilding practice among ourselves and with the international team of authors who contributed chapters to this volume. Through our field experience, research, and extensive discussions, we have come to see the usefulness of functional coexistence—an enduring state of non-fighting or negative peace characterized by deep mutual distrust and refusal to recognize each other—and its application to a new, previously unexplored approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding. Before we discuss our motivations for writing this book and our hopes for the kind of scholarly, policy, and public discussion we wish to launch based on this book, we first share our respective personal experiences and provide background for our co-editorship.

The kernel idea of what came to be called functional coexistence first began to crystallize in the mind of Tatsushi Arai ("Tats") when he was working as a member of a conflict resolution NGO organizing experiential learning visits and training workshops for Israelis and Palestinians between 2007 and 2009, during which Israel blockaded Gaza to contain Hamas' attacks and then conducted intense military operations. The opportunities to interact with people on the ground—such as Jewish settlement leaders, a Hamas official and youth members, Palestinian training participants from the West Bank who obtained their first permits to visit Tel Aviv and meet with Israeli mothers who lost their children to Palestinian attacks, and the speechless Palestinians inhaling an ocean breeze at sunset on Israeli beaches—left strong impressions on Tats. Having witnessed these human encounters and experiences during Israel's military operations in Gaza, and learning firsthand how far-fetched the popularized condition of mutual recognition in orthodox conflict resolution theory is under these circumstances, he began to ask: Is there any way we can significantly broaden the framework of peacebuilding, if not a formalized peace process, to even accommodate a prevailing reality of active mutual denial—and an "existential conflict"—as a starting point? Is such a broadened framework still justifiably called a peacebuilding framework? Can it be coherent enough to be practical?

A provisional idea Tats experimented with as a trainer in Israel-Palestine workshops was initially termed "A Tigris and Euphrates Approach to

Coexistence," deliberately removing the word "reconciliation" from the NGOs' suggested training curriculum. Invoking a familiar geographic reference in the Middle East, a Tigris approach was meant to seek coexistence through the conflict resolution orthodoxy of mutual recognition and, ideally, trust. A Euphrates approach, in the meantime, sought to give space for parties categorically refusing to recognize each other to still sit uncomfortably yet nonviolently, experimenting with the seemingly remote possibility of coexistence with unmitigated distrust and significant caution. The metaphors' underlying message was that the two rivers are separate but, further downstream, they eventually merge into the same ocean if the circumstances, such as geography and climate, permit.

Tats' search for answers to his questions progressively deepened and expanded over the years through his subsequent fieldwork, training missions, and dialogue initiatives in Myanmar with an emphasis on Rohingya-Rakhine-Burman relations in its western coastal area, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Syria, northeastern Nigeria under Boko Haram's insurgency, the Taiwan Strait, and, rather unexpectedly, in China-Japan relations over the East China Sea territorial dispute. Somewhere along this fifteen-year journey, the concept of functional coexistence began to take shape with sufficient clarity and coherence to be presentable.

In early 2022, Margarita Tadevosyan, Tats' long-term colleague in peacebuilding, joined his search after first learning about functional coexistence when Tats asked her to translate into Russian the abstract of his first forthcoming journal article on this concept in *Peace & Change*. As a practitioner from the South Caucasus region who transitioned from an insider to an outsider in the conflict resolution processes, Margarita was struck by the fragmentation of various peacebuilding efforts, often carried out by the same organizations. The apparent absence of a historical perspective on past and future actions significantly hindered the work of both local and international actors. Many colleagues, with whom she had worked for over a decade, expressed in their own words a lack of a framework beyond the existing project-based approach to engage with donors and other stakeholders, where the status quo of negative peace is not seen as a setback or failure. Often labeled as "grant-consumers" and "grant-opportunists" within their own societies, these peacebuilding actors faced significant challenges in conceptualizing their sustained constructive engagement in the absence of a full resolution or at least clear and measurable progress toward that end.

When Margarita first learned about the concept of functional coexistence, it provided her a pivotal moment of clarity—it was as if the scattered pieces of a puzzle suddenly came together. She realized that the theory of functional coexistence could provide a framework needed to support the challenging yet dedicated work of peacebuilders and enhance their ability to build a continuum of peacebuilding programs. Margarita finds this shift from a purely programmatic perspective to one informed by sustained constructive engagement truly transformative for her in the context of enduring non-resolution.

Tats and Margarita soon formed a partnership to expand the concept and examine its application to diverse contexts. However, the idea of writing this book originated from dialogues among a small group of scholar-practitioners with expertise in the Caucasus, including Margarita. The inclusion of two Caucasus case study chapters in this volume, one by Margarita and the other by Ann Phillips, evolved from this project's early history. Our initial intent and continued hope are to broaden the scope of case studies globally.

It required a leap of faith to accept "conflict non-resolution" as a reality worthy of serious scholarly attention. It also required much consternation before we formally embraced negative peace, a modest state of non-fighting so unsatisfactory for advocates of a more comprehensive "positive peace," as a baseline for peace and conflict work. Still, it was the pragmatism we developed in the field, together with the conflict parties and stakeholders on the ground, that ultimately convinced us of the need to accept these new starting points for theory building and applied practice. As readers will notice in the following pages, our proposed approach to conflict intervention presented in this book, despite its unorthodox starting points, complements the more familiar and orthodox theory and practice in conflict resolution, which we continue to firmly embrace.

It is our hope that the readers of this volume will come to share our discovery that recognizing non-resolution and negative peace as foundations of conflict intervention does not signal "capitulation" to the historical weight of conflict-habituated societies. Instead, we hope that readers will emerge from this volume with a broadened view of what the cumulative, collective wisdom of our field can offer through creative reframing. We also hope that our readers will join us in our earnest search for the tenacity, resilience, and ingenuity required to address the seemingly unchanging dynamics of enduring, intractable conflict that this volume examines. Plainly put, our main message in this volume is: Never give up.

As we write these pages, we are witnessing Israel's relentless military operations across the Gaza Strip in response to Hamas's October 2023 attacks, the prolonged fighting in the Russian-Ukrainian border regions, and the mass violence against and displacement of the Sudanese population caught in the intensive fighting between struggling governing authorities and powerful opposition forces. While these and other active conflicts dominate much of the global media, policy, and public attention, the regions focused on in the case studies in this volume—such as Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, post-genocide Cambodia, and Armenia-Turkey relations—are often considered "quieter," receiving less global public attention. Consequently, intensive mediation efforts or concerted fundraising campaigns to alter the political status quo for peacebuilding in these areas are highly unlikely to materialize as of this writing.

And yet, we firmly believe that lessons from these contexts of enduring conflict non-resolution and negative peace, characterized by relationships that refuse to recognize each other's legitimacy and even social identity, will

increasingly become important to today's active conflicts, such as the ones mentioned above. Our inference of their growing relevance is grounded in our observation that these highly destructive and deeply polarizing conflicts unfolding today will necessarily, and sadly, undergo years, and perhaps even generations, of similar precarious circumstances of non-fighting, active mutual denial, and conflict non-resolution long after open periods of warfare have subsided.

For us as peacebuilding scholar-practitioners, the publication of this volume marks a significant step in sharing our newly developed framework of pragmatic peacebuilding, supported by an evaluation framework to ensure and enhance its efficacy. We warmly invite our readers to join us in what we hope will be a shared exploration of further steps to expand the scope and robustness of peacebuilding, capable of meeting the challenges posed by conflict non-resolution and resistance to transformation.

Tatsushi Arai
Margarita Tadevosyan

Acknowledgments

The laborious process of writing and editing a book requires not only commitment but also collegial support and candid critiques from thoughtful peers invested in both our success and the advancement of the field. As editors of this volume, we express our deepest gratitude to all those who made this project possible.

First and foremost, we recognize the pivotal role of Dr. Susan Allen from George Mason University in initiating the discussions that led to this volume. Dr. Allen's early conversations on the theory of functional coexistence and its application to peacemaking practice played a catalytic role in launching this project and bringing it to fruition.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our colleagues—accomplished scholar-practitioners Dr. Philip Gamaghelyan, Dr. Tamra Pearson d'Estrée, and Dr. Jeff Helsing—for their contributions in helping us explore the practical implications of the theory and articulating the conceptual direction of this volume. Dr. Helsing later joined our team to author an insightful synthesis of the case study chapters. Special appreciation also goes to Ms. Jesica Rehone, Director of International Programs at The McConnell Foundation in Redding, California. Her extensive input on the Foundation's longstanding commitment to peacebuilding philanthropy in Nepal significantly enriched Chapter 12. The insights, experiences, and critiques these and other senior professionals provided helped us refine the focus of our work and improve its quality significantly.

Moreover, we are deeply grateful to Dr. Neil Cooper, Director of the School of Peace and Conflict Studies at Kent State University, and Dr. Alpaslan Özerdem, Dean of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. Their strong institutional support for this project has been essential for our sustained effort. We also thank them for taking up the task of co-authoring the foreword.

We also thank our academic mentors and senior colleagues, Dr. Christopher Mitchell, Dr. Kevin P. Clements, Ms. Melanie Greenberg, Dr. Oliver Ramsbotham, Dr. Eileen Babbitt, and Dr. Peter Jones, for recognizing the significance of this volume and providing insightful endorsements. Additionally, we would like to recognize with gratitude the extraordinary hard work and

commitment Joshua Acosta and Leila Dossani demonstrated in proofreading and formatting the final manuscripts, with an eye for detail.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks go to our families and friends. Thank you for your continuous support and encouragement throughout this project. Your patience and understanding, including of missed family time, allowed us to dedicate the necessary time and effort to its successful completion.

Thank you all.

Tatsushi Arai
Margarita Tadevosyan
Co-editors

Part I

Theory of Functional Coexistence

1 Introduction

Facing Unresolved Conflict

Margarita Tadevosyan and Tatsushi Arai

Life is filled with contradictions. Some of these contradictions are irresolvable because the known measures of resolution, if adopted, would do more harm than good, or there simply is no solution available. One such contradiction is the irreconcilable gap between the human desire to stay young and healthy and the inevitable reality of aging and illness. When faced with such a fundamental contradiction in life, avoidance is not an option. We must acknowledge the contradiction, put it in perspective, and find a way to live with it.

The global COVID-19 pandemic we experienced in the early 2020s exemplifies such an inescapable contradiction, affecting billions of lives. While vaccination campaigns and other public health measures have mostly contained the further spread of the illness, a significant portion of the global population continues to suffer from long-lasting COVID-19 symptoms such as fatigue, memory problems, headaches, shortness of breath, loss of taste, and distorted smell. These symptoms are collectively known as long COVID. At the time of this writing, there are still neither tests nor therapies available for long COVID.

Resilient patients with long COVID strive to find effective and meaningful ways to fight it. Although none of these patients find their health challenge desirable and would prefer to avoid it, they choose to confront it once they recognize that long COVID has become a part of their lives. Instead of lamenting their misfortune of having long COVID and succumbing to uncertainty and fear, resilient patients actively engage with life while living with the illness. Some may even use their health challenge as an opportunity to renew their appreciation for life, remembering the loss of countless lives due to COVID-19.

Long COVID patients who choose to live proactively with their illness adopt various measures to mitigate its effects, such as maintaining a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, taking medications, and seeking psychosocial support. They strive to improve their quality of life in the midst of their illness. While their efforts may not lead to complete recovery in the near future, they can create promising conditions for potential recovery and increase their chances of getting better. Resilient patients with long COVID may find a better quality of life because of their positive outlooks and sustained efforts, regardless of the impact on their health.

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The proactive engagement of long COVID patients in their health challenges is instructive for those of us trying to navigate seemingly irresolvable conflicts. The remaining portion of this volume explores one approach to staying actively engaged in enduring conflicts while creating promising conditions for possible resolution from a long-term systemic perspective.

The Aims and Significance of This Volume

This edited volume develops a theory of conflict intervention designed to enable conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers to stay actively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution. It proposes the concept of functional coexistence: a sustained negative peace, a state of non-fighting, between conflict parties who refuse to recognize the social and political legitimacy of their opponents yet refrain from using physical violence to settle their seemingly irreconcilable differences.

This volume makes an innovative contribution to peacebuilding theory and practice, for it is the first of its kind to examine non-resolution in its own right. It makes a case for adding functional coexistence to the existing peacebuilding repertoire. Using a functional coexistence lens to frame intransigent contexts of social conflict expands the conflict spectrum for theorists and increases options for practitioners and policymakers to engage constructively. Furthermore, this volume demonstrates that under well-defined circumstances, such as the absence of an extreme, debilitating condition of power asymmetry, functional coexistence is both a necessary and a useful approach to mitigate the risk of an outbreak or resumption of violent conflict in fragile, conflict-affected societies and regions. This process requires concerned conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers to find peacebuilding potential in an enduring state of negative peace, even when the prospect of conflict resolution is out of sight.

Based on a range of case studies of long-standing intra-national and international conflicts, this volume explores how conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers can use functional coexistence as a basis for making the enduring state of non-resolution less susceptible to renewed violence. The functional coexistence approach requires a decades-long view of engagement that, over time, creates conditions to transform negative peace into an opportunity for more sustainable peacebuilding. It demonstrates that such a long-term view of social change helps conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers contextualize recurring setbacks and sustained resistance to change. Moreover, it explores how a long-term perspective can contribute to the development of macro-historical consciousness, which supports conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers in identifying immediate, practical steps toward constructive social change. Finally, it presents practical suggestions on how they can purposefully design incremental steps to pave the way for long-term systemic change.

The implications of functional coexistence for research, practice, and policy are significant and far-reaching. The acceptance of the functional coexistence

approach in public and policy discourse would encourage conflict-affected societies to embrace a longer-term perspective when transitioning toward new, nonviolent relationships. It would also prepare them to work with their conflict dynamics more self-consciously and strategically, remaining resilient in the face of setbacks. Moreover, it would deter conflict entrepreneurs from capitalizing on unmet expectations for a positive peace.

From the viewpoint of applied peacebuilding and policymaking, functional coexistence offers a fresh perspective on how conflict parties and intervention practitioners can define their objectives and desirable outcomes when working on an enduring state of non-resolution. It enables external assistance providers to reframe their program objectives, time frames, methods of work, incentive structures, and measures for evaluating and determining progress. These are all important yet under-researched themes that require serious attention because funders, policymakers, and civil society leaders are generally reluctant to devote time, resources, and political capital to programs unlikely to produce immediate, tangible outcomes for resolution. They become even more reluctant to stay actively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution in which their input does not generate measurable progress toward conflict resolution. However, their reluctance to tackle an enduring state of non-resolution can be somewhat mitigated by skillfully applying the proposed theory, which redefines what counts as success from a decades-long historical view of conflict intervention and social change. The theory suggests that implementing purposeful, incremental steps and creating enabling conditions for future change are indicators of success in and of themselves. By implication, the theory of functional coexistence challenges yet complements the prevailing mode of conflict resolution practice, which favors a discernible pattern of phased, linear progress–or at least some form of directionality–toward resolution. While accepting resolution as an ideal goal to strive for, the proposed theory and practice of functional coexistence aim to address the unmet need of conflict parties and practitioners searching for a more realistic, attainable goal of constructive, purposeful engagement. Functional coexistence fulfills this unmet need.

This edited volume brings together a combination of theoretical chapters that present the concepts and dynamics of functional coexistence, as well as case study chapters that intertwine these theories with compelling details to bring them to life. All chapters are authored by leading scholar-practitioners who possess a deep understanding of both the theory and the practice.

Overview of the Volume

The volume covers four themes: the theory of functional coexistence; case studies of enduring functional coexistence; transitional and emerging cases of functional coexistence; implications for applied peacebuilding practice; and and implications for theory, research, practice, and evaluation. Each of these themes has a part to which multiple authors contributed diverse perspectives through their own chapters. The rationale for case selection is presented at the end of this chapter.

Part I develops the theory of functional coexistence. Building on this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2, Tatsushi Arai elaborates on the conceptual foundations and significance of functional coexistence, providing an overarching analytical framework for the volume. In Chapter 3, Arai goes further by identifying the implications of the theory for purposeful social action and change. Specifically, this chapter proposes a *functional coexistence approach* to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, defined as an integrated framework of thinking and action designed to enable conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers to strategically use functional coexistence as both an operational context and an enabling condition for sustained, systematic social change. While cautioning against the frequently observed assumption of phased, linear progression toward resolution, the functional coexistence approach, like an extended, discovery-oriented journey, employs four guideposts for identifying practical ways of thinking and social interaction useful for long-term conflict intervention. The first guidepost is the need to cultivate a broad historical awareness of social change, fostering a decades-long perspective on how systemic change unfolds. This broad historical perspective is essential because it enables conflict parties and intervention practitioners to contextualize the short-term dynamics of social conflict and maintain willful resilience in the face of setbacks and contextual shifts during their extended engagement in the conflict. The second guidepost is a keen awareness of the multi-layered, structural nature of conflict-affected relationships in which mutual non-recognition and conflict non-resolution persist. Those enacting the functional coexistence approach must not only understand the systemic drivers behind resistance to change but also use this understanding to assist conflict parties in identifying practical and strategic ways to influence different levels of hierarchical relations within which the intractable conflict is structured and embedded. The third guidepost is the development of sustainable ways to remain actively engaged in the enduring state of non-resolution, resisting the urge to withdraw. The objective of this sustained constructive engagement is to create and seize emergent opportunities to alter the underlying condition of non-resolution. The fourth and final guidepost is the tenacity and adaptability to tailor each of the short-term (months to a few years) actions and projects as opportunities to foster conditions for realizing longer-term (decades) systemic change.

Part II shifts the focus from theory to practice by introducing a series of four case studies of functional coexistence: Cambodia, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and the Western Balkans. These cases illustrate the defining qualities of *enduring* functional coexistence, such as sustained negative peace and mutual non-recognition, which have lasted for at least a generation or twenty to thirty years. Additional details on the shared focus and structure of these case studies of enduring functional coexistence will be provided in the introduction to Part II.

The section starts with Chapter 4 by SungYong Lee, who examines the historical development of functional coexistence in Cambodia's intercommunal

relations. This chapter examines how former Khmer Rouge leaders and the victims of the Khmer Rouge's violence maintained functional coexistence between their groups at the local community level in post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia (1979–1993). The analysis focuses on the social practices that community members adopted when cohabitating with former Khmer Rouge cadres, as well as the social implications of preserving coexistence. These practices include social shunning, avoidance, subtle gestures to show tolerance, and indirect forms of social inclusion, which largely reflect the social and cultural contexts in which community members are situated. An analysis of these practices and contexts reveals that maintaining functional coexistence can positively contribute not only to stability and security in their lives but also to their social reconciliation. This analysis also reveals the role of functional coexistence in fostering human interactions through which community members could learn about the complex and multi-dimensional histories and identities of individual Khmer Rouge leaders. The chapter elaborates on how functional coexistence at the local level demonstrates elastic inter-group interactions, as well as the agency of community actors within this process.

In Chapter 5, Gül Gür applies the theory of functional coexistence to Cyprus, where the two historical communities, Turkish and Greek Cypriots, have been locked in a paradoxical relationship for five decades, since 1974. While actively engaged in a prolonged state of mutual non-recognition and negative peace, the two societies have managed to avoid resorting to violence to settle their fundamental differences. The conflict in Cyprus therefore serves as a pertinent example of enduring functional coexistence, providing a valuable lens to explore the evolving nature of the conflict that keeps parties engaged without resorting to violence, while creating opportunities for constructive coexistence. To illustrate some of the notable characteristics of enduring functional coexistence in Cyprus, this chapter begins with a succinct historical overview of the conflict. It then analyzes the interactions between the conflicting parties, recognizing the cumulative impacts of official and unofficial peace interventions on them. Furthermore, it examines distinct characteristics of functional coexistence in Cyprus, with a particular emphasis on the types of relationship challenges (denial, official non-recognition, and passive non-recognition) as well as the forms of interaction (in-person vs. remote; bounded vs. unbounded by geographic constraints; short-term transactional vs. long-term relational). The final section of the chapter explores potential paths for peacebuilding, theorizing how conflict resolution practitioners and conflict parties can more constructively build on an enduring state of functional coexistence exemplified by the case study of Cyprus.

In Chapter 6, Roger Mac Ginty examines the enduring state of functional coexistence in Northern Ireland, where a major peace accord was signed in 1998. This accord and the peace process that enabled it have ended most political violence and resulted in significant improvements in the quality of life for many. Yet, Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society. This chapter considers the balance between function and dysfunction in relation to

functional coexistence. By emphasizing the sociological or everyday aspects of functional coexistence, the chapter further interrogates the issue of livability in conflict-affected contexts and the extent to which livability impacts conflict longevity. The chapter argues that Northern Ireland is a site of both functionality and dysfunctionality, and this balance between the two means that the polity and society are "stuck" in a conflict holding pattern.

The fourth and final case study in Part II is Chapter 7, where Doga Eralp investigates the state of enduring functional coexistence in two divided Western Balkan societies: Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. As Eralp describes, both societies suffer from post-conflict trauma, mutual exclusion, and subsequent political and economic stagnation. To respond to these challenges, the European Union and the United States proposed and continuously support power-sharing frameworks designed to replace enduring functional coexistence with a form of agonistic peace, where all stakeholders are compelled to mutually recognize each other and cooperate for full integration into the liberal international order. However, the Euro-Atlantic perspective threatens those who politically benefit from the state of enduring functional coexistence. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the nationalist leadership of the Bosnian Serb entity, Republika Srpska, boycotts participation in state-level institutions, whereas in Kosovo, Albanian nationalists are unwilling to grant further autonomy to the Kosovar Serbs in the North, both citing concerns over sovereignty. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how the transition from enduring functional coexistence to agonistic peace in the Western Balkans can be supported, not only through incentives but also through meaningful sanctions that increase the cost of non-cooperation for all parties involved.

Part III expands the scope of case studies by analyzing conflict-affected societies and regions in which one or more of the defining characteristics of functional coexistence, such as sustained negative peace, are present or emerging. These cases are divided into two categories: social contexts undergoing a transition to functional coexistence (as exemplified by Armenia-Turkey relations, discussed below) and emergent states of coexistence (as illustrated by Arab-Jewish relations within the State of Israel and Armenia-Azerbaijan relations). These two additional categories of cases are conceptually distinct, yet they often overlap in practice.

Case studies of transition refer to conflict-affected societies, states, and regions that exhibit some of the qualities of functional coexistence. These cases demonstrate a combination of the following features: over (or close to) ten years of sustained negative peace, growing patterns of social interaction characterized by non-resolution and non-fighting, and implicit shared expectations of non-escalation. On the other hand, case studies of potential emergence describe *ongoing* intractable conflicts where negative peace is not a prerequisite. In this category, like the other two categories, the case studies illustrate non-resolution and non-recognition. However, the distinct focus of the case studies of emergent coexistence lies in purposefully seeking out social conditions that make the emergence of functional coexistence possible. These

two additional types of case studies examine context-specific qualities of coexistence and explore practical approaches to discovering, generating, and strengthening these qualities to achieve a more sustainable coexistence. In doing so, they combine empirical conflict analysis with imaginative and prescriptive thinking. Further details regarding the specific focuses and structures of the case studies in each of these two categories will be discussed in the introduction to Part III.

Margarita Tadevosyan's case study of Armenia-Turkey relations in Chapter 8 illustrates a potential transition to functional coexistence. This chapter sheds light on the longstanding absence of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey, fueled by mutual accusations and distrust. Reflecting on the history of ineffective attempts at formal political settlement, the chapter argues for the adoption of a functional coexistence approach to forge new paths forward. Specifically, it suggests that both sides recognize the evolving boundaries of their acceptable behavior, leverage the changing dynamics of their sustained negative peace, and take gradual steps to create conditions conducive to systemic change. Drawing on the core principles of functional coexistence theory, the chapter advocates for a more cautious and sustainable approach to the conflict, aiming to facilitate a transition toward functional coexistence.

Following Tadevosyan's analysis of a potential transition to functional coexistence is Chapter 9, in which Mohammed Abu-Nimer tackles the first in a series of two case studies of the potential emergence of coexistence. This chapter critically analyzes Arab-Jewish relations in Israel and proposes a model for genuine coexistence. It examines the tension between the dominant Jewish majority and Palestinian minority models of coexistence in Israel, illustrating how these models reflect contrasting Arab and Jewish discourses in scholarly and policy debates. To lay the groundwork for this comparative analysis, the chapter first describes the dominant Jewish Zionist model that emerged in the 1950s. Abu-Nimer argues that this model adopts an accommodationist approach to coexistence, accepting power asymmetry in Arab-Jewish relations and supporting pragmatic intercommunal dialogues within the existing sociopolitical framework of domination. Next, the chapter introduces the Palestinian minority model that emerged after the 1967 war, advocating for a transformative approach to Arab-Jewish coexistence in Israel. According to Abu-Nimer, the Palestinian model calls for systemic change in power dynamics and aims to achieve genuine intercommunal partnership and full equality through institutional and structural transformation. Acknowledging the tension between these two models, the chapter examines how Arab-Jewish dialogue programs in Israel have adopted either approach over the past two decades, highlighting their responses to major events such as the mass Palestinian protests in 2000, 2004, 2021, and the 2023 War on Gaza. The findings suggest ways to reconcile the accommodationist-transformationalist tension and support a strategic approach that combines incremental steps with systemic change, crucial for achieving sustainable functional coexistence amid enduring conflict.

The third and final case study in Part III is Chapter 10, in which Ann Phillips examines another emergent state of coexistence: Armenia-Azerbaijan relations. This chapter critically examines twenty-six years of diplomatic efforts, multiple peacebuilding dialogues and workshops between the first and second Karabakh wars (1994–2020), halting progress in implementing components of the November 2020 truce agreement, the exodus of Karabakh Armenians in 2023, and an ever-elusive peace agreement between Yerevan and Baku. The failure of past efforts, a fundamental shift in the balance of power between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the kaleidoscope of cross-cutting relations among regional and international actors engaged in the region inform the author's exploration of a functional coexistence approach to the reconfigured Armenian-Azerbaijani situation. The chapter argues that a functional coexistence approach presents a viable alternative to previous approaches by offering realistic objectives and means to avoid the recurrence of violent conflict, as well as a potential pathway toward eventual conflict resolution.

The next three chapters that comprise Part IV analyze lessons from the seven case studies, further develop the theory of functional coexistence, and explore the implications of the theory and cases for peacebuilding practice, policy, and program evaluation.

In Chapter 11, Jeffery Helsing presents a synthesis of the insights and conclusions from the seven case studies, providing an empirical basis for examining the validity and potential of functional coexistence, and furthering the exercise in theory building. Four key themes emerge from the comparison of the cases: the importance of economic well-being, the impact of disincentives for violence, the perceived possibilities for greater political equity and agency among most stakeholders, and the development of patterns of engagement through incremental steps that lay the groundwork for positive relationships. A functional coexistence approach is necessarily slow, deliberate, and incremental, but that is also its strength. Functional coexistence can provide the time and space needed for attitudinal and behavioral changes, including constructive engagement, trust-building, and the creation of positive relationships. At a minimum, the expectation of violence is significantly reduced over time. Despite incompatible political goals and contending visions of the future, a functional coexistence approach has the potential to enable parties to enduring conflicts to slowly move away from subduing the aspirations of and undermining the daily lives of the other. This chapter also explores how an emerging functional coexistence can help conflict parties realize the possibilities of staying constructively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution.

In Chapter 12, Arai and Tadevosyan examine the implications of the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, building an action research framework for evaluating programs over decades. The proposed framework views evaluation as a sustained, purposeful process of inclusive learning and continuous program improvement, ensuring accountability for the program's impact on fostering conditions for long-term systemic change. The guideposts for an extended, discovery-oriented process in the functional coexistence approach, as described in Chapter 3, provide general guidelines for

evaluation and learning. These guidelines include fostering a macro-historical view of enduring conflicts and social change, adopting a systemic and strategic perspective on conflict entrenchment and transformation, maintaining constructive engagement in ongoing conflict non-resolution, and purposefully linking short-term projects to a long-term vision of change. Furthermore, the chapter utilizes this evaluation framework to analyze existing policymaking and funding practices that prioritize short-term project cycles and immediate results. To mitigate their adverse effects, it proposes initiating and expanding multi-sectoral discussions. These discussions aim to enable funders and policymakers to learn about the necessity and effectiveness of the functional coexistence approach in engaging with long-standing conflicts. Participants in this process will jointly explore practical strategies to overcome institutional resistance to transitioning from short-term funding and policy programming cycles.

Chapter 13, a chapter by Arai, offers a succinct yet comprehensive review of the journey of collective inquiry undertaken to produce this volume, while also looking forward to the future prospects of functional coexistence research. Specifically, this concluding chapter summarizes the foundational concepts in functional coexistence and its approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, along with a review of the research process and its key findings. It then highlights two additional themes that emerged from the collective learning process leading to this volume: functional coexistence as a strategy for negotiating what conflict parties consider existential and thus non-negotiable, and the need to find integrative ways of reconciling tensions between process and outcome, as well as between continuous learning and program accountability inherent in the functional coexistence approach. The chapter concludes by identifying areas for future research, including the critical and imaginative exploration of how decades-long conflict engagement in the coming years may depart from its current form, given the global multidimensional shifts in the underlying conditions of social conflict and functional coexistence.

A Note on Case Selection

The outline of this volume primarily focuses on Europe, with additional case studies from the Middle East (Arab-Jewish relations in Israel) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia). Our selection of cases reflects the evolutionary path of our research team rather than intentional inclusion or exclusion of specific regions. Initially, we aimed for a broader global scope of case selection, which encompassed Africa, Latin America, and Asia Pacific. Examples considered included North-South Korea relations, intercommunal divides in Kashmir, Sinhalese-Tamil relations in Sri Lanka, Rohingya-Rakhine-Burman relations, Saudi-Iran relations leading up to their rapprochement in 2023, Syria, Yemen, the relationship between Washington and the Afghan Taliban regime, US-Cuba relations, Peru-Ecuador relations post-1995 war, and Eritrea-Ethiopia relations pre-2018 peace agreement. These cases were intended to illustrate ongoing or potential examples of functional coexistence.

Despite our efforts to engage authors with regional expertise from these areas, we were unable to secure their sustained time commitment required for the labor-intensive nature of our collective learning process. However, the depth and breadth of empirical and conceptual insights presented by the authors whose chapters are included in this volume, as demonstrated by Helsing's case synthesis in Chapter 11, effectively compensate for the lack of attention to regions not covered by this volume. While acknowledging the absence of a globally balanced array of cases, this volume presents a compelling argument for the global and historical significance of functional coexistence in guiding future research and applied conflict intervention practices.

Conclusion

Drawing upon scholar-practitioner insights from diverse regions of the globe, this edited volume presents the theory and practice of functional coexistence as a viable approach in deeply conflict-affected societies. In-depth case studies illustrate the effectiveness of functional coexistence approaches. These approaches adopt a long-term perspective, spanning decades. They also facilitate incremental peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies that navigate living in the absence of war and the absence of conflict resolution. By emphasizing realistic long-term engagement, the volume provides guidance and inspiration for addressing today's complex and multidimensional conflicts where resolutions remain elusive. Rather than losing hope based on conventional expectations of progress toward conflict resolution, the functional coexistence approach offers clarity of purpose and direction on strategically engaging conflict-affected societies from a long-term systemic standpoint. It is our hope that policymakers, professionals, researchers, and students in the field of peace and conflict research as well as related disciplines find the case studies, scholar-practitioner insights, and methodological innovations included in this volume engaging and valuable.

2 Functional Coexistence

Its Conceptual Foundations and Significance[1]

Tatsushi Arai

Introduction

During the past decades, the field of peace and conflict studies has made significant strides in building theories on how to bring conflict parties together to foster amicable relationships and achieve a peaceful resolution of social conflict (Allport 1954; Burton 1969; Fisher 1997). Despite the significant progress the field has made in this respect, it has devoted far less attention to how to deal with an enduring state of non-resolution whereby intervention efforts have made little to no substantive impact (Ramsbotham 2017). This chapter, as well as the rest of this edited volume, focuses on this under-researched question of non-resolution. While recognizing resolution as an ideal goal to strive for, it makes a case, out of pragmatism, for securing sufficient time and social space in which conflict parties refusing to deal with one another can sit uncomfortably yet nonviolently to work on the enduring state of non-resolution (Mayer 2009).

Toward this end, the first part of this chapter will review relevant literature on how to tackle intractable conflicts which resist resolution efforts. It will also outline the concept of functional coexistence, a distinct form of sustained negative peace, as an alternative framework of conflict analysis and intervention. The second part of the chapter will introduce the long-standing conflict across the Taiwan Strait to illustrate the essential characteristics of functional coexistence, highlighting its dynamic nature. Drawing upon this chapter, Chapter 3 will discuss the implications of functional coexistence for conflict intervention.

Conflict intervention forms a general framework for this analysis, which encompasses empirical, critical, and constructive aspects of peace research identified by Johan Galtung (1977). Following Arai (2019), conflict intervention is defined as "a general category of activities designed to prevent, mitigate, overcome, and/or reverse destructive manifestations of social conflict" (p. 288). It is an overarching concept which encompasses a range of approaches from conflict management to conflict resolution, transformation, and engagement.

1 This chapter is a revised and updated version of Arai (2022, 122–136).

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Conflict management, which will be the primary focus of this chapter, is a social process of conflict regulation (Kriesberg 2007; Mitchell 2014) in which destructive manifestations of a conflict are controlled and minimized through coercive or noncoercive means (Bloomfield and Reilly 1998; Stedman 1997; Zartman 1985; Crocker, Hampson, and Aall 2015). Conflict resolution, in contrast, is a social process through which the root causes and contexts of a given conflict are systematically analyzed and effective nonviolent means developed to remove and overcome the destructive aspects of the underlying social problems (Arai 2009; Burton 1987; Mitchell 1981). A purposeful effort to address the root causes is an essential requirement of conflict resolution, and this requirement distinguishes conflict resolution from conflict management. Conflict transformation, on the other hand, is a long-term process of social change in which different types and levels of actors from across social divides overcome a destructive conflict while building awareness of the power imbalances dividing and sustaining it (Curle 1971; Galtung 1998; Lederach 1997, 2003; Mitchell 2002). This awareness provides a foundation for building more equitable relationships and social structures necessary to prevent renewed outbreaks of destructive conflict (Lederach 1997, 63–71; Curle 1971). Proponents of conflict transformation view their approach as more far-reaching than conflict resolution in terms of depth and scope. The latest conceptual innovation in the field, conflict engagement consists of a sustained process of staying constructively engaged in enduring conflict in social contexts in which resolution, let alone transformation, is unlikely to be attainable in the foreseeable future (Mayer 2009; Ramsbotham 2017). Unlike conflict resolution and transformation, conflict engagement starts with an acceptance of the enduring state of non-resolution as a premise of intervention efforts.

By adopting conflict intervention as a general framework, this chapter, as well as the rest of this edited volume, considers all four approaches as relevant and potentially useful. The general framework of conflict intervention facilitates adaptive, flexible responses to conflict based on a context-specific decision to employ one or more of the approaches (Rothman 2018, 6–14; Arai 2009, 96–103). It also anticipates the need to make intentional shifts from one approach to another to respond to changing conflict dynamics.

Conceptual Foundations and Significance

Defining Functional Coexistence

The type of social issues under study is intractable conflict, defined as an enduring conflict that resists all forms of resolution attempts because of the nature of the issues, goals, identities, relationships, dynamics, social structures, and other drivers of conflict perpetuation (Bar-Tal 2013; Coleman 2011; Kriesberg 1993; Mitchell 2014). Many studies of intractable conflict examine international and transnational conflicts as well as civil wars. They generally analyze destructive situations in which armed struggles and battle-related deaths take place. In

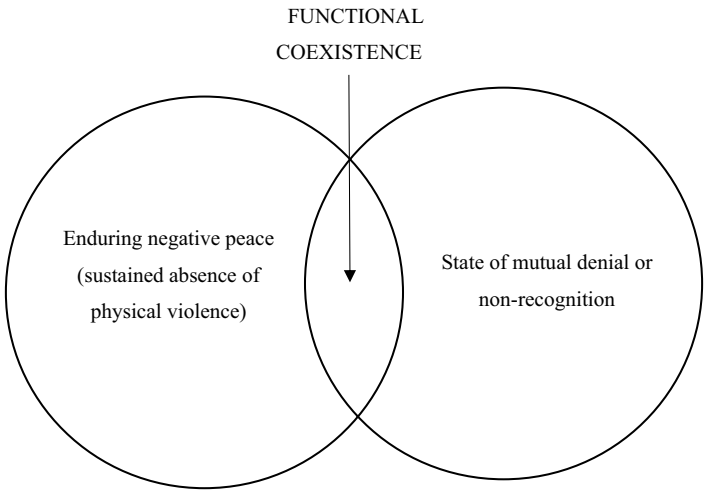

Figure 2.1 Functional coexistence.

Source: Arai (2022, 124)

contrast, the specific subtype of intractable conflicts under study falls short of degenerating into physical violence. Rather, it is concerned with the distinct nature of social context in which historical adversaries refusing to recognize the social and political legitimacy of each other have long managed to withhold the use of physical violence that harms their opponents. This edited volume, therefore, examines a subtype of negative peace (Wright 1954; Galtung 1969), a state of non-fighting, which has come into being under the sustained conditions of mutual denial and non-recognition. Such a distinct form of negative peace, illustrated by Figure 2.1, is hereafter referred to as functional coexistence.

Functional coexistence is a paradoxical relationship in which historical adversaries view each other as an existential threat but refrain from using physical force to settle their intolerable differences. Functional coexistence suggests that within each of the conflict-affected societies and across them, there is a minimum livable social space (MLSS).[2] A MLSS is a geographic and/or relational context in which each party or society has its required minimum access to basic human needs of material and non-material nature to ensure their survival and sustenance (Burton 1990; Maslow 1987). Power dynamics between parties sharing a MLSS may be symmetrical or asymmetrical. In order for a MLSS to be both functional and somewhat sustainable, however, the power dynamics cannot be so completely asymmetrical that the low-power party is colonized, enslaved, or decimated by the high-power party (Kriesberg 2001). Native Indian reserves under the US federal government and the historical Congo Free State under Belgian colonial rule illustrate such extreme circumstances of dysfunctional, debilitating asymmetry. Chapter 3 elaborates on this point further.

2 A suggested pronunciation of this acronym is "miliss.".

MLSS is a commonly observed attribute of functional coexistence. It is a social condition frequently identified across different contexts of functional coexistence. MLSS may materialize as a consequence of functional coexistence when individuals and groups in enduring conflict are willing and able to make use of the existing state of functional coexistence to meet their basic needs for survival and livelihood. However, MLSS is neither a precondition nor a requirement for the emergence or sustenance of functional coexistence. Functional coexistence may, in fact, occur in inter-group and intra-group settings in which separation barriers, whether physical, virtual (electronic), or both, are so robust and impenetrable that they systematically prevent any form of MLSS from materializing. A case in point is US-North Korea relations, where the powerful forces of enduring negative peace, existential fears, and mutual denial, coupled with geographic distance and differences in ideology, language, and culture, currently leave little to no room for MLSS to take shape.

Within the context of functional coexistence, the term "functional" signifies the utility of coexistence being limited to a minimalist condition of non-fighting. As such, being "functional" in this context is far from an ideal state of social interactions. In fact, it is a negative concept, clearly distinguished from a peaceful, sustainable form of coexistence. Indeed, functional coexistence can be paraphrased as minimalist coexistence or pragmatic coexistence.

Figure 2.1, in conjunction with Table 2.1, illustrates this highly problematic and negative quality of functional coexistence. Moreover, the proposed definition of functional coexistence implies that there is, by definition, much *dysfunctionality* built into functional coexistence. By way of analogy, this aspect of functional coexistence resembles negative peace; there is not much "peace" in negative peace, even though the term includes the word "peace." For these reasons, the conventional, everyday usage of the term functional, and by implication, dysfunctional, should be distinguished from the well-defined, specialized meaning of "functional" in functional coexistence.[3]

The use of the term "functional" requires further explanation. The concept of functionality has long been developed and popularized by proponents of the functionalist approach to international cooperation (Hass 1968; Mitrany 1966). Historically developed as a framework of practical cooperation between the polarized European nations in the aftermath of the Second World War, the functionalist approach advocates for "an incremental convergence of self-interest through economic and technocratic co-operation in a particular sector, which then can spill over to other sectors and enable broader political co-operation and integration" (Visoka and Doyle 2016, 865). As Hass (1968) argues, the establishment and evolution of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1953 illustrate how the functional approach was applied to regional cooperation and integration.

3 In Chapter 6 of this volume, Roger Mac Ginty examines the tension between the functional and dysfunctional aspects of conflict-affected societies, using Northern Ireland as a case study.

Table 2.1 Different levels of coexistence

Level of coexistence (or lack thereof)	*Description*
Denial	Denouncing the legitimacy of the opponent's political-legal, historical-cultural, and/or social identity while refraining from using force to deny their right to exist.
Non-recognition	Refusing to acknowledge the opponent's legitimacy while stopping short of taking proactive measures to enforce the refusal; passive denial.
Acquiescence	Opting unwillingly to live with the undesirable reality of the opponent's presence and with their assertion of legitimacy while choosing not to protest; passive recognition, grudging acceptance.
Unofficial recognition	Taking affirmative steps to accept the legitimacy of the other though still unwilling or unable to make a formal commitment to acceptance; de facto recognition.
Official recognition	Taking affirmative steps to accept and act on the legitimacy of the other based on a formal commitment; de jure recognition.
Cooperation	Working together to realize shared goals.

Source: Arai (2022, 125)

From a conceptual standpoint, the functional approach differs from functional coexistence in at least two ways. First, while the functional approach promotes a purposeful development of institutionalized cooperation, functional coexistence has a more modest goal of conceptualizing an unintended systemic outcome of intractable conflict which none of the conflict parties wanted to create. Second, while the functional approach focuses on interstate relations, functional coexistence applies to different levels of analysis from interpersonal to interstate, regional, and global. Despite these differences, however, the two concepts both recognize and draw upon the practical utility of historical relationships affected by conflict.

A sustained absence of physical violence in functional coexistence can last for a generation (two to three decades) or even longer. Such a long timeframe is suggested because a significant passage of time necessary for a generational shift represents a useful indicator of the staying power of this distinct subtype of negative peace. It is inferred from previous studies such as Bell and Pospisil (2017), Feldman (2012), and Volkan (2004) that the endurance of a conflict system over a generation indicates its robustness and adaptability to outlive leadership transitions, regime changes, outside pressure, and possible longitudinal shifts in the public mindsets on conflict experiences.

Coexistence is an evolving relationship in which two or more parties, either individuals or groups, interact in a shared geographic and/or social-relational space. Interactions can take place in person (bound by geography) or remotely through communication technologies (thus social-relational only, free from

geographic, spatial constraints) (McKay 2016). Interactions can be either facilitated or inhibited by a unilateral gesture of one party or by reciprocal gestures of two or more parties (Kriesberg 2001). While this chapter, as well the remainder of this edited volume, focuses primarily on coexistence at national and international levels, the proposed framework of analysis can also be applied to interpersonal, organizational, and intercommunal coexistence.

The framework takes into consideration different degrees of coexistence summarized in Table 2.1. The table implies the social function of coexistence in preventing the worst-case scenario of conflict-affected relationships, namely, an elimination of adversaries, a genocide.

Table 2.1 does not imply linear progression from the top to the bottom. Nor does it presume clear boundaries between different forms of coexistence because boundaries, if present, constantly evolve and overlap. Table 2.1 instead suggests a conceptual framework for thinking broadly about the distinct nature of conflict-affected relationships under study, that is, the relationships in which one party performs an act of *denial* or *non-recognition* in relation to the other(s). According to this framework, a conflict of mutual denial and non-recognition worsens when it degenerates toward extermination; it deescalates when the parties move toward acquiescence, unofficial recognition, or other more positive forms of coexistence.[4]

The ways in which non-recognition affects intergroup relations must be specified and differentiated further to establish a conceptual foundation of analysis. States and sub-national groups are selected for this purpose as two types of actors because these types are most relevant to this edited volume. Table 2.2 summarizes types of non-recognition by conflict actor types.

Table 2.2 distinguishes states from non-state actors. It then presents frequently observed reasons for non-recognition relevant to each of the four types of conflict actors. With respect to the first actor type, it is noted that recognition of statehood is a highly consequential way of exercising state power over an opposing political group's assertion of exclusive control over its territory and its population as well as of its ability to govern itself and conduct interstate relations (Akehurst 1987, 53–69). It is consequential because non-recognition of statehood denies or at least undermines the opposing political group's exercise of self-determination on the international stage (Akehurst 1987, 53–69). Examples of non-recognition of this type include the mutual non-recognition of East and West Germanies' statehood during much of the Cold War as well as Beijing's rejection of Taipei's claim of the Republic of China's statehood.

Recognition of a new government should be distinguished from state recognition (Akehurst 1987, 53–69). The governments of other states, like intergovernmental organizations and influential civil society actors, can communicate and pronounce their judgments on the legitimacy of the new government.

4 The remainder of this chapter will refer to non-recognition only for brevity unless there is a need to mention both denial and non-recognition or denial alone should be mentioned.

Table 2.2 Types of non-recognition by conflict actor types

General categories of conflict actors	*Conflict actors facing a problem of non-recognition*	*Illustrative reasons for non-recognition*	*Examples of intergroup relations in which non-recognition plays an important role*
States	States	Statehood	The People's Republic of China's rejection of the Republic of China's statehood; East and West Germanies' mutual non-recognition of statehood during the Cold War
	Governments/regimes	Legitimacy	Washington's rejection of the Afghan Taliban regime's legitimacy
Non-state groups	Nations (historical ethno-linguistic communities)	Group identity & history; language; public use of the group's name	The Union of Myanmar's rejection of Rohingyas' citizenship and their use of their own group name
	Influential political groups (political parties, political movements, armed resistance groups, etc.)	Terrorist designation; legality	Israel's condemnation of Hamas as a terrorist organization

Source: Arai (2022, 126)

They may decide whether to recognize the government and in what way (officially or unofficially, for example). In this context, legitimacy refers to a socially constructed sense of authority for governance (Rigmar 2012). As such, an act of granting legitimacy reflects the approving entity's subjective political judgment of the righteousness and utility of recognition. Washington's position of non-recognition in relation to the Afghan Taliban regime illustrates such a politically constructed nature of regime recognition.

Like states and governments, non-state actors can become subjects of non-recognition. However, the two types of non-state actors listed in Table 2.2 generally differ from state actors in that the former frequently find themselves in an imposed state of non-recognition; these non-state actors are subjected to governing authorities' decisions on their legality and political acceptability.

One of the two types of non-state actors under study is nations, defined as ethnolinguistic and cultural communities with shared historical roots (Anderson 1991; Hannum 1990; Volkan 2004). Non-recognition of nations,

determined as such by governments, international organizations, other nations, and civil society actors, can severely limit their ability to fulfill their basic human needs of security, welfare, identity, and freedom (Galtung 1990). In many cases, non-recognition of nations is a consequence of unresolved historical disputes between dominant and marginalized nations within and across state boundaries about territorial claims, leadership roles in state governance, and other fundamental, highly consequential issues (Ghai 2000; Hannum 1990). As demonstrated by the Burmese government's treatment of stateless Rohingya Muslims (Myint-U 2020), government actions designed to enforce an imposed condition of non-recognition can be highly repressive and violent. While state-sponsored measures of non-recognition may vary from context to context, they may include a categorical denial of citizenship, employment, freedom of movement, freedom of belief, language, recorded history, and a public use of preferred group names such as Rohingya in Myanmar.

The other type of non-state actors listed in Table 2.2 are influential political groups with shared organizational histories and identities. Examples of such groups include political parties, established political movements, and armed resistance groups. Governments may decide these non-state groups to be illegitimate. They may even designate them as terrorist organizations. While state actors play a powerful role in denying and denouncing these political groups' legitimacy, other non-state actors opposing them can also play a complementary role in reinforcing the state actors' position. Israel's designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization is one example of such state-led condemnation and non-recognition.

To differentiate types of non-recognition further, it should be noted that non-recognition does not necessarily mean a wholesale rejection of an opponent's right to exist, which is what political references to existential threat and conflict often imply (Kelman 1999; Mitchell 2014; Ramsbotham 2017). Israel's rejection of Hamas, for example, is of such an existential character. However, it should be borne in mind that a state of non-recognition may also originate from much less categorical—and arguably more negotiable—sources, such as a rejection of a particular political cause or principle for which an opposing group stands. President Lai Ching-te's public commitment to Taiwan's political independence, which Beijing categorically rejects, is an example of such a principle. In a highly complex, dynamic reality of intractable conflict, such conceptual differences as outlined here on the underlying reasons for non-recognition may appear so subtle as to be meaningful. However, making a conscious effort to identify these differences is a step in the right direction in terms of stimulating conflict actors' critical and constructive thinking (Galtung 1977) about how to overcome an enduring state of non-resolution.

A Systemic View of Non-Resolution and Functional Coexistence

Functional coexistence is not only an actor-oriented concept, which refers to a horizontal nature of inter-societal relations. It is also a multi-layered conflict

system that is hierarchical and structural (Galtung 2010; Rubenstein 2017). To illustrate these concepts, Figure 2.2 presents the structural nature of functional coexistence. It adapts John Paul Lederach's (1997) pyramid model of peacebuilding while incorporating Gearoid Millar's (2020) multi-layered view of positive peace.

Figure 2.2 juxtaposes two societies, each with a hierarchical structure (Lederach 1997). It builds on Millar's (2020) trans-scaler (local to global) peace model while placing the two pyramids in the regional and global contexts. It is a simplified image of two-party interactions whose aim is to stimulate more expansive, imaginative thinking about how to work with a large number of societies interacting in a complex, evolving system of relationships (Coleman 2011; de Coning 2016).

Figure 2.2 also illustrates that the interactions between societies can take place at top (Track 1), middle-range (Track 2), and grassroots (Track 3) levels and across the three levels. The two outer circles show that these multi-level interactions can influence, and are in turn influenced by, the regional and global contexts in which they are embedded. Moreover, Figure 2.2 suggests that actors at each level can play a distinct role in conflict intervention within and across societies. More specifically, as Lederach (1997) argues, Track 1 leaders such as heads of state and senior military officials can lead intra and/or inter-societal conflict intervention from the top in order to initiate a top-down, or at least top-level, approach to social change (Mandela 1994; Stein 1995; Glad and Blanton 1997). Track 3 leaders at the bottom layer of the pyramid, such as grassroots religious and community leaders, can mobilize their own local constituents. They may demand that leaders at higher levels of the pyramid listen to the voices of community members and citizens for change. Track 3 leaders' core strength lies in their informal networks of personalized relationships to organize a bottom-up approach to change from within their communities. Finally, Track 2 leaders such as prominent international NGOs and business leaders who have established close working relationships with Track 1 and 3 leaders through professional, informal, and/or other channels of interaction can initiate a middle-out approach. A middle-out approach to conflict intervention, which Lederach (2005, 75–86) later rephrased as a web approach to invoke an analogy of spiders' web making, bridges people within and across societies both vertically (by crossing the social layers, which may correspond to socio-economic equity divides) and horizontally (by crossing the boundaries of religious, ethnolinguistic, regional, occupational, political, and other identity groups).[5]

In Figure 2.2, the overlapping area of the two pyramids at Tracks 2 and 3 illustrates people-to-people interactions, which may prove resilient to the polarizing effects of mutual non-recognition at Track 1 when there exists social

5 Millar's (2020) critique of a middle-out approach, which does not take into consideration the trans-scalar system of local-global dynamics, is worth attention as a cautionary note to Lederach's pyramid model.

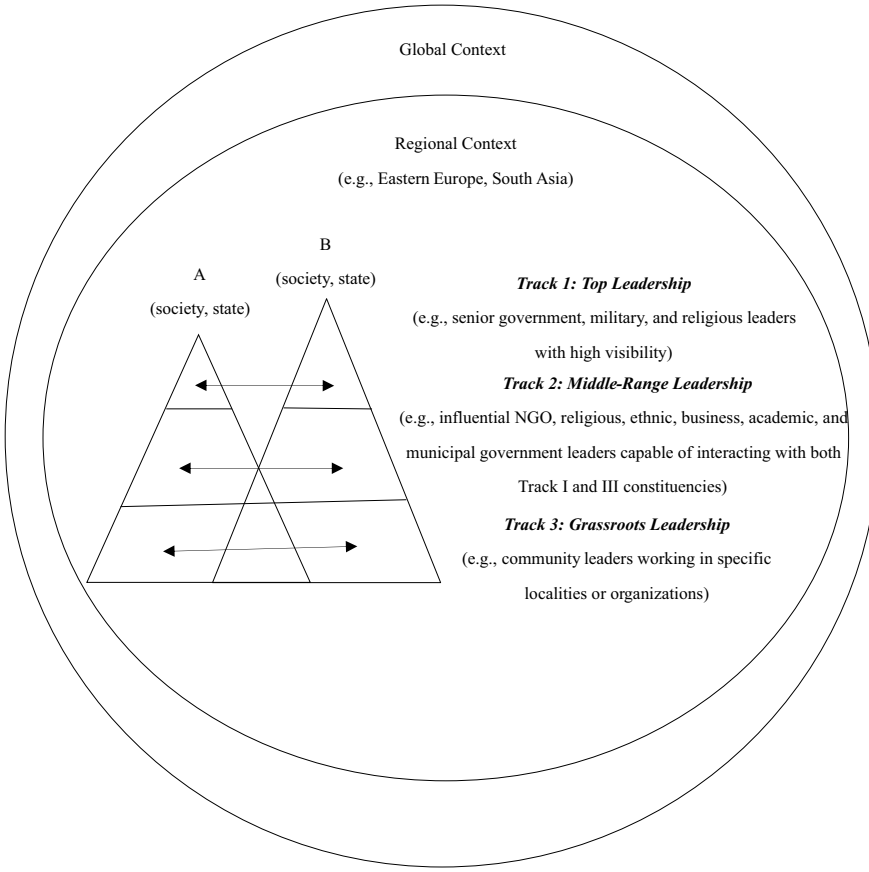

Figure 2.2 A systemic, multi-layered view of functional coexistence.
Source: Arai (2022, 128)

space which allows for such interactions (Mac Ginty 2014, 2021). It should also be noted that while Lederach's pyramid model is intended to describe a state or society, it can also be applied, as an analogy, to a hierarchical system of international relations made up of states and nations.

As Millar (2020) argues, social conflicts in today's increasingly interconnected world take place within the trans-scalar system of structural inequity which cuts across global, regional, international, national, and local levels. Structural inequity manifests in such varied forms as differences in national and regional military capabilities, uneven access to public health resources and climate change responses, unfair trade agreements, and disparity in decision-making power over global governance. These manifestations of structural inequity normalize structural violence (Galtung 1969)—an institutionalized form of systemic denial of access to resources and opportunities—within and

across conflict systems and societies. They also resist systemic change; the hegemonic, stabilizing effect of the trans-scalar system is conspicuously reflected in a relatively small number (zero to five) of *interstate* wars recorded in any given year since the 1990s (Davies, Petterson, and Öberg 2022). It must be kept in mind, therefore, that functional coexistence takes place within this trans-scalar system of structural violence and inequity.

One commonly observed way in which structural violence and inequity built into the trans-scalar system supports an enduring state of functional coexistence is the ruling elite's (Track 1) hegemonic control over the rest of the population (at Tracks 2 and 3) within and across conflict-affected societies. As Galtung (2010, 158–162) argues, elite control of such a hegemonic nature keeps the controlled population politically unaware and subservient (conditioning). Moreover, it exposes them to only a very limited scope of activities so that they do not see the larger picture (segmentation), keeps them divided so that they are prevented from mobilizing and organizing (fragmentation), and excludes them from political participation and decision making (marginalization). The deeply penetrating and all-encompassing impact of capitalism complements and reinforces these forms of state-based political control (Galtung 2012; Rubenstein 2017).

The overlapping areas at the lower levels (Tracks 2 and 3) of the pyramids in Figure 2.2 illustrate human interactions which resist such hegemonic elite control. They illustrate the possibility of a social space open to at least minimalist interactions between and within societies divided by intractable conflict. Roger Mac Ginty (2014) calls this space everyday peace and describes it as follows:

> Everyday peace refers to the routinized practices used by individuals and collectivities as they navigate their way through life in a deeply divided society that may suffer from ethnic or religious cleavages and be prone to episodic violence in addition to chronic or structural violence. It involves coping mechanisms such as the avoidance of contentious subjects in religiously or ethnically mixed company, or a constructive ambiguity where people conceal their identity or opinion lest they draw attention to themselves. … [E]veryday peace can go beyond coping mechanisms to encompass more ambitious activities that can challenge the fixity of conflicts.
>
> (p. 2)

Everyday peace, then, has much in common with the proposed concept of minimally livable social space (MLSS), a frequently observed feature of functional coexistence. Everyday peace and MLSS both highlight the informal human dimension of social life kept intact in deeply conflict-affected societies. As Mac Ginty (2014) notes, "conflict is rarely total" (p. 4), an observation which echoes the resilience of the overlapping areas in Figure 2.2. Moreover, both everyday peace and MLSS suggest a foundation and a logical starting point of social action to counter and alter the prevailing social systems of structural violence

and inequity. Equally important, both concepts presuppose the existence of a minimum underlying condition, namely, the absence of debilitating power asymmetry and genocidal projects, which categorically deny resilient members of the conflict-affected societies their ability to interact with each other and maintain at least the most basic of the means they need to ensure their survival and livelihood.

Everyday peace and MLSS complement one another as well. For example, everyday peace as a distinct form of social practice takes place within the *context* of MLSS; MLSS as a relational (e.g., social media) and/or geographic (e.g., public space) context allows for individuals and groups to practice such strategies of everyday peace as communications for avoidance and strategic ambiguity (Mac Ginty 2014, 2021). Despite the complementary nature of the two concepts, they differ in one important respect. Everyday peace is modeled after mixed ethnic-religious societies such as Northern Ireland and Lebanon (Mac Ginty 2017), and it is thus mainly concerned with interpersonal and community relations. MLSS, and the social environment of functional coexistence in which it manifests, on the other hand, are much broader concepts than everyday peace. They encompass not only interpersonal and community levels but also national, international, regional, and global levels of sustained negative peace and enduring social conflict.

A Decades-Long View of Non-Resolution and Functional Coexistence

Having outlined a systemic view of functional coexistence, mention must now be made of another key aim of this chapter, which is to overcome the limitations of the prevailing assumption in peace and conflict research on the desirability of bringing historical adversaries together for conflict resolution (overcoming goal incompatibility) and reconciliation (restoring relationships). As stated earlier, this chapter contends that this mainstreamed assumption, though continuously important for conflict resolution and reconciliation, fails to account for the complexity and severity of the specific subtype of intractable conflicts in which historical adversaries categorically refuse to recognize each other (Coleman 2011; Ramsbotham 2017). This chapter further contends that functional coexistence offers a more realistic alternative because it helps broaden the repertoire of practical intervention methods.

One of the highly influential concepts employed to justify a premature push to bring reluctant adversaries together for conflict settlement is ripeness theory. Established by leading conflict theorist William Zartman (2000), it explains when and why parties to deadly conflict choose to enter negotiation. Ripeness, according to Zartman (2000), is conflict parties' readiness to negotiate. He argues that ripeness is a product of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS), which materializes "when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them…" (Zartman 2000, 228). Policy prescriptions of ripeness theorists include taking proactive, strategic steps, including an overwhelming use of force, to generate what they view as objective conditions for a MHS when such conditions do not

exist. To illustrate, Zartman (2000, 234–235) cites the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) bombing of the Serb positions in August 1995, a military campaign intended to support the Croatian offensive against the Serbs. As this example indicates, despite ripeness theory's appeal to pragmatic, rational thinking, it runs the risk of being misused. The theory can be enlisted, for example, by powerful states to justify a use of overwhelming force against less powerful opponents to compel the latter to accept a settlement and a new system of hegemonic stability.

To overcome the urge for settlement, which ripeness theory exemplifies, conflict intervention in an enduring state of mutual non-recognition and functional coexistence requires firmly resisting a premature push for resolution for which enabling conditions for mutual acceptance have not materialized. What a decades-long process of conflict intervention requires instead is what Bernard Mayer (2009) calls staying with conflict. Mayer (2009) argues that enduring conflicts rooted in people's "most deeply held values, their sense of who they are, and the structure of the organizations and communities they are part of" (p. 11) are, in principle, irresolvable. Examples of an enduring conflict Mayer (2009, 77–78) cites include a child custody dispute between divorced parents. Writing for conflict intervention professionals, Mayer (2009) states:

> Part of this work requires that we learn to accept a story that has no near or foreseeable ending as an essential reality… We also need to maintain a sense of what can be accomplished, of the constructive potential that exists in a conflict that continues, and of the ways in which we can lead our lives and help others to lead their lives productively and even to flourish in the face of non-resolution.
>
> (p. 53)

Mayer (2009) nevertheless supports the possibility that an enduring conflict becomes less harmful and less consuming for the parties when they can create a significant shift in the underlying conditions of the conflict. The developmental process of a child growing up to become an adult who no longer needs parental custody illustrates such a transformative contextual shift. However, Mayer (2009, 10–11, 40) observes that direct resolution efforts alone rarely create such a transformative shift in enduring conflict. While rejecting a fatalistic submission to enduring conflict, Mayer makes a strong case for conflict parties and interveners to stay focused on the core issues of identity, value, and structure instead of avoiding them. He recommends that conflict parties and interveners continuously develop responses to the evolving dynamics of the conflict and purposefully build support systems within and across societies to withstand recurring setbacks, hopelessness, and other challenges to continued engagement. All in all, Mayer's proposal for staying with conflict, which is a form of intervention he calls conflict engagement, points to a paradigm shift in the field because the field has generally emphasized conflict de-escalation, termination, and resolution (Kriesberg 2007; Mitchell 1981), which ripeness

theory cogently illustrates. Mayer's call for reexamining the field's primary focus on resolution and being open to an alternative goal of securing a quality of life within a state of non-resolution deserves attention. Moreover, his argument reinforces the significance of MLSS, a sphere of pragmatic social life in functional coexistence.

In addition to Mayer's seminal contribution, this chapter draws upon Marvin Soroos' (1976) pioneering work on intergenerational peacebuilding. It proposes expanding the timeframe of conflict intervention to decades and generations. It suggests practicing conflict intervention with a macro-historical awareness (Galtung and Inayatullah 1997). This chapter, however, does not suggest that such prolonged, uncertain processes of intervention are better than time-bound processes. Rather, it emphasizes the need to examine under-researched social contexts in which a macro-historical view of conflict intervention is required but fails to be recognized as such (Bell and Pospisil 2017). It argues that the field must invest more to examine the role of such a macro-historical view of conflict intervention and social change (Braudel 2009; Lederach 2015; Soroos 1976).

In summary, this chapter, as well as the remainder of this edited volume, contributes to peace and conflict research in two complementary ways. First, it proposes functional coexistence as a framework of sustained constructive engagement in intractable conflict. A key element of this framework is a systemic, structural understanding of intra and inter-societal relations as well as the broader regional and global contexts in which they evolve. The concept of minimally livable social space (MLSS) highlights a distinct attribute of functional coexistence. While MLSS is far from ideal as a state of social life, it serves as a foundation and starting point of long-term systemic change which resists and undermines structural violence and inequity characteristic of functional coexistence.

Second, this edited volume, starting with Chapter 3, proposes a decades-long view of conflict intervention which requires working proactively and continuously on an enduring state of non-resolution. While rejecting a fatalistic submission to an assumption of changelessness (Freire 2009; Mandela 1994), it advocates for expanding the current thinking in the field by theorizing how to stay constructively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution. It is hoped that an expansion of the repertoire of intervention theories and practices along this line of thinking will increase the collective capacity of the field to discover a greater potential of resolution. A purposeful effort to keep the potential of resolution open is especially important when hope for resolution has long been lost, and both public and policy support for fresh interventions has long been discredited.

The Dynamic Nature of Functional Coexistence: An Example from the Taiwan Strait

Having outlined the concept of functional coexistence and defined its significance, we now turn to the final major topic: the dynamic shifts inherent in the seemingly unchanging nature of enduring functional coexistence. To provide

concreteness and clarity to what might otherwise become a highly abstract discussion, we introduce the relationship between Mainland China and Taiwan regarding the latter's political status. This example cogently illustrates a dynamic conflict system in which functional coexistence has evolved over eight decades.

Cross-Strait relations not only offer an empirical basis for conceptualizing functional coexistence but also provide a decades-long perspective on the challenges and opportunities of conflict intervention. These insights on intervention, falling under the conceptual umbrella of constructive peace research (Galtung 1977), will be the focus of Chapter 3, building upon the empirical peace research presented in this section.

Cross-Strait relations exemplify functional coexistence at the national/state level. While distinct in scope and nature, they stimulate fruitful discussions applicable to a broader universe of regional, international, and intra-national contexts. Cross-Strait relations are chosen for their timeliness, evocativeness, and representativeness, as well as their ability to meet the conceptual requirement of sustained mutual denial and/or non-recognition on the one hand and enduring negative peace over decades on the other. The following analysis first examines the scope and nature of the intractable conflict across the Taiwan Strait, then proceeds to the essential characteristics and dynamic evolution of functional coexistence over the decades.

The long-standing conflict across the Taiwan Strait is a consequence of the Chinese Civil War in 1927–1949 between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Chinese Nationalist Party–Kuomintang (KMT). The war resulted in 7.5 million civilian and military deaths (White 2011). As the Second World War ended in 1945, Japan handed over Taiwan to the KMT-led Republic of China (ROC). The CCP's victory in the Chinese Civil War became decisive in December 1949, when some two million KMT soldiers and followers retreated from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan. The establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October that year, along with the KMT's retreat, prepared the ground for over two decades of intense rivalry between the PRC and the ROC, the two political entities with mutually exclusive claims of international recognition. During the next two decades, the Taiwan-based ROC represented China in the United Nations. In 1971, however, the PRC took over the Chinese seat at the United Nations as it gained international recognition (Kissinger 2011; Zuo 2012). As Richard Nixon assumed US presidency in 1969 and set in motion the policy of détente, the cumulative steps Washington had since taken, including Nixon's visit to China in 1972, had led to the US recognition of the PRC in 1979 (Kissinger 2011).

The cross-Strait conflict experienced a significant turning point at the onset of the Korean War. In 1950, President Harry Truman dispatched the United States Navy's Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to contain the cross-Strait conflict by preventing the two sides' armed forces from fighting each other. This US military intervention played a pivotal role in preserving the ROC regime in Taiwan because it deterred the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of

the PRC from seizing Taiwan when such an outcome was highly likely. Although the two sides of the Strait underwent a series of serious security crises in 1954–55, 1958, and 1995–1996, they have managed to avoid direct military conflict to this date (Tucker 2009, 231–252; Kissinger 2011).

Despite the tumultuous nature of cross-Strait relations since the KMT's flight to Taiwan in 1949 and the Korean War in 1950–1953, the basic political structure of cross-Strait relations has remained resilient and stable. Beijing sees its sovereignty over Taiwan as an irreversible, nonnegotiable gain from the CCP's victory over the KMT. From Beijing's perspective, therefore, the PRC's legitimacy as the sole representative of One China remains essential as the foundation of all cross-Strait interactions. Moreover, a loss of control over Taiwan would mean a failure to restore China's national identity and territorial integrity (Arai 2016), which Beijing has continuously striven to strengthen through its governance of Hong Kong, Xingjian, Tibet, and the rest of the provinces under One China. Taipei, on its part, views Beijing's exclusive sovereignty claim and its expressed readiness to enforce its claim as an existential threat to Taiwan's freedom to choose its political future (Arai 2016). Through decades of nation-building experience, a great majority of Taiwanese people, especially the young generation, have come to see themselves as culturally and politically distinct from China (Lin 2019; Arai 2023). At the core of the Taiwanese nation-building experience is the deepening of a distinct Taiwanese identity (Lin 2019; Zuo 2012), a collective recognition of nationhood that has matured alongside its education system, liberal democracy, market economy, and relationships to China, the United States, and the rest of the world.

One of the controversial issues underscoring the unique characteristics of cross-Strait functional coexistence is the 1992 Consensus (Xinhua 2020)—a loosely interpreted mutual understanding of the two sides' acceptance, in principle, of One China, which had paved the way toward a semi-official cross-Strait exchange established in 1993 (Bush 2005, 35–78). Acceptance of One China, however, meant that the two sides had chosen to tolerate different interpretations of the concept, at least as a transitional arrangement to keep direct communication intact (Bush 2005, 45). Specifically, as of the early 1990s, the KMT administration under Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui viewed the ROC and the PRC as part of One China, an entity comprised of the two separate political regimes (Bush 2005, 45). Beijing, on its part, maintained that Taiwan had been an integral part of the PRC under One China and that the PRC was the only legitimate governing authority of China (Bush 2005, 45). Consequently, Beijing regarded the ROC's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan as an existential threat because such a claim would signal Taiwan's denial of not only the CCP's victory in the Chinese Civil War but also the PRC's role in the unity of China (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2020). The ROC, on the other hand, accepted the PRC's legitimacy as a ruling authority. The ROC, however, has continuously striven to establish itself as a separate entity based in Taiwan.

Judging from this historical background, the relationship between the two sides is neither outright mutual denial nor mutual non-recognition, as the ROC

accepts the PRC's legitimacy. However, cross-Strait relations clearly depart from *mutual* acceptance. They also fall far short of reaching a state of mutual *non-denial*, a passive form of mutually non-aggressive posturing. This state of mutual non-denial was what Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou of the KMT attempted to build through cross-Strait economic cooperation during his presidency from 2008 to 2016. Ma's policy, however, was decisively reversed by his successor, President Tsai Ing-wen (2016–2024) of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), who strove to advance Taiwan's status as a sovereign, independent state. Lai Ching-te, another DPP president who took office in March 2024, also pledges to work toward Taiwan's independence. Cross-Strait relations, in short, exemplify a distinct, dynamic, and contested form of functional coexistence as illustrated by Figure 2.3.

In Figure 2.3, the Y axis indicates degrees of formality/informality in cross-Strait exchange. Formal interactions refer to an institutionalized form of government-sponsored cross-Strait exchange. Informal interactions, on the other hand, take place outside the official, institutional framework of exchange. While government officials and leaders are the main participants in formal exchange, private citizens are the main participants in informal exchange.

The X axis indicates the degrees to which a cross-Strait exchange is organized collectively or individually. The more collective an exchange becomes, the more uniformly the actors behave in accordance with their organizational mandates and constraints. The more individual-oriented an exchange becomes, the more independently each individual actor behaves by exercising greater freedom from organizational mandates and structural constraints.

Points (1) through (5) in Figure 2.3, which extend from the origin to the upper-right corner, represent five examples of cross-Strait interaction. The higher the numbers, the more formal and collective they become. The five events, taken together, present a panoramic view of how far the two sides have gone in negotiating and finding mutually acceptable limits of exchange, which, in turn, have been constrained by their existential "One China vs. independence" dilemma. The main criterion for selecting the five events is their usefulness to show a long-term view of the dynamic nature of the seemingly unchangeable limits of cross-Strait interactions. As such, the chosen examples highlight conciliatory, associative interactions instead of divisive, dissociative ones (Galtung 1976).

The five examples of cross-Strait exchange are numbered and listed as follows:

1 *Cross-Strait tourist and business visits*: The lifting of Taiwan's martial law and the KMT's authoritarian rule in the late 1980s, as well as Beijing's decision to reciprocate Taiwan's conciliatory move, ended the four decades of a vacuum in cross-Strait economic and human exchange (Bush 2005, 27–35). The advent of Taiwan's Ma administration (2008–2016) and the start of direct cross-Strait flights led to an exponential increase in the number of private citizens crossing the Strait for employment, businesses, tourism, family reunions, and other

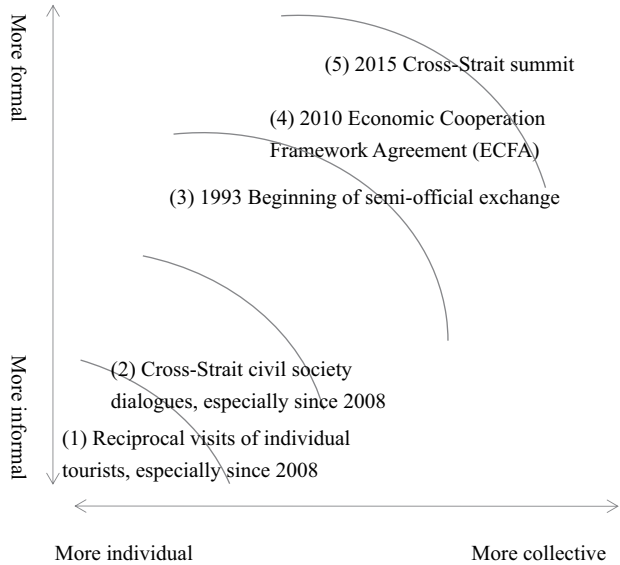

Figure 2.3 Elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition: The case of cross-Strait relations.

Source: Arai (2022, 134)

informal, personal reasons. However, since the election of President Tsai in 2016, Beijing has applied fresh restrictions on cross-Strait tourism to protest the DPP administration's rejection of One China. Consequently, while the annual number of mainland tourists in Taiwan reached an all-time high of 4.2 million in 2015, it plummeted and then plateaued at 2.7 million over the following three-year period from 2017 (Taiwan Tourism Bureau 2020). In Figure 2.3, reciprocal visits of private citizens are placed near the origin of the two-dimensional space because these visits are the most informal, individual activities among the five examples of cross-Strait exchange.

2 *Cross-Strait civil society dialogues*: Civil society dialogues include joint academic seminars, students' symposia, and coordinated cultural exchanges organized outside formal cross-Strait institutional frameworks. This form of cross-Strait interactions, like cross-Strait tourism, has also expanded in 2008–2016. However, Beijing's critical response to the Tsai administration's mainland policy since 2016, as well as the introduction in July 2020 of China's National Security Law in Hong Kong, significantly increased restrictions on cross-Strait civil society dialogues. In Figure 2.3, this type of interaction is placed some distance away from the origin because they are more group-based and institutionalized than private citizens' informal exchanges.

3 *Semi-official exchanges*: The 1992 consensus on the mutual acceptance of One China made it possible for the two sides to hold their first semi-official meeting in 1993. The representatives of Beijing's Association for Relations

across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) and Taipei's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), both of which were established in 1991 as semi-official bodies for cross-Strait communication, met in Singapore in 1993 to discuss administrative issues of mutual interest. This meeting became the precursor to the subsequent semi-official cross-Strait meetings. Despite the technical and administrative nature of the interactions, the ARATS-SEF meetings are more institutionalized, formal, and collective than civil society dialogues. Exchange (3) in Figure 2.3 is placed accordingly.

4 *Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA)*: Signed by ARATS and SEF in 2010, this cross-Strait trade agreement was based on the two sides' decision to eliminate tariffs on over eight hundred commodities. While the two sides refrained from calling it a free trade agreement (FTA), a term reserved for an inter-state agreement, ECFA was a cross-Strait FTA in effect. In 2014, however, the Ma administration's attempt to ratify a cross-Strait service agreement, expanding on ECFA, was met with a powerful protest by Taiwanese students known as the Sunflower Movement (Lin 2019, pp. 3–5). Consequently, this movement further bolstered the popularity of the DPP while diminishing the support for the KMT. Despite the controversies surrounding ECFA, its establishment as a binding official agreement is interpreted in Figure 2.3 as a significantly more formal, collective form of interaction than the semi-official ARATS-SEF meetings.[6]

5 *The cross-Strait summit*: In November 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Taiwanese counterpart Ma Ying-jeou held the first-ever cross-Strait summit in Singapore. During the summit, the two leaders affirmed the 1992 consensus and agreed on the need to set up a high-level cross-Strait hotline for confidence building (Leng and Zhen 2015). Figure 2.3 places the Xi-Ma summit on the upper-right corner because it is by far the most formal, collective form of cross-Strait interactions.

The historical significance of these events must be interpreted with caution. Figure 2.3 makes no assumption on the plausibility of informal, individual interactions paving the way for formal, collective interactions. This cautionary note is important because informal, individual interactions, as illustrated by the shifts in cross-Strait tourism, can merely be an effect, not a cause, of formal, collective decisions made by senior political leaders in Beijing, Taipei, and Washington. Moreover, Figure 2.3 implies no value judgment on the desirability of the shifts toward a greater degree of formality or collectivity because a desirable change for some conflict actors may be undesirable for others.

Despite these cautionary notes, the analysis of cross-Strait relations convincingly illustrates the long-term shifts in the perceptions of the two sides

6 The Sunflower Movement as an expression of Taiwanese identity, as well as Beijing's critical response to it, illustrate the limitations of the functionalist approach (Hass 1968; Mitrany 1966), which the technical and economic measures such as the ARATS-SEF talks and ECFA appear to be promoting.

regarding actions that are mutually acceptable within the structural constraints of the unresolved cross-Strait conflict. It demonstrates the value of adopting a perspective spanning decades to understand social change, revealing how conditions of non-resolution and mutual non-recognition, which may initially seem unchangeable, can actually transform significantly over time. Furthermore, the analysis of cross-Strait relations demonstrates the interconnected nature of the horizontal (*cross*-Strait) and vertical (across Tracks 1–3) changes, exemplified by dynamic shifts along the individual-collective and informal-formal axes.

Conclusion

This chapter has developed a theory of functional coexistence, a sustained negative peace in intractable conflict with existential characteristics. It has examined the necessity and feasibility of staying constructively engaged in an enduring state of mutual non-recognition while resisting premature conflict settlement. To this end, this chapter has identified the multi-layered, structural nature of enduring conflict and proposed a decades-long view of conflict analysis. The analysis of cross-Strait relations not only demonstrates the dynamic nature of seemingly non-negotiable limits of interaction but also underscores the importance of macro-historical consciousness required to address such a deep-rooted and persistent conflict.

These findings and insights suggest the need to explore practical and sustainable approaches for conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers to effectively navigate the prevailing condition of non-resolution. Furthermore, they highlight the value of exploring how to leverage the shifting boundaries of non-recognition as a starting point for sustained conflict engagement and systematic social change.

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3 Implications of Functional Coexistence for Conflict Intervention and Peacebuilding

Tatsushi Arai

Introduction

The preceding chapter developed the concept of functional coexistence—a sustained negative peace among historical adversaries who refuse to recognize each other's political status, legitimacy, and/or social identity yet choose not to use force to settle their seemingly intolerable differences.[1] Using the historical conflict across the Taiwan Strait as an example, it also illustrated the highly dynamic and evolving nature of the deeply entrenched and seemingly unchangeable system of social conflict in which functional coexistence has come into being. This chapter builds on this dynamic nature of the entrenched conflict system and functional coexistence as an empirical basis for developing a practical way to transform the conflict system. Of particular interest is how to use the shifting boundaries of mutual non-recognition, explained in Chapter 2, as a starting point for long-term systemic change.

The proposed shift in emphasis from empirical to constructive thinking (Galtung 1977) requires creativity (Arai 2009; Lederach 2005). This chapter thus endeavors to demonstrate how to purposefully orchestrate this creative shift. It outlines illustrative steps that self-reflective conflict actors, practitioners, and policymakers can take by making use of the suggested entry points for social change strategically. While this chapter is primarily designed to contribute to conflict interveners' planning and action, it also supports conflict parties' self-reflective effort to find a new way of engaging their opponents.

A broad range of purposeful efforts to realize constructive social change, based on a systematic analysis of the existing state of functional coexistence and its underlying conflict, is hereafter termed a *functional coexistence approach* to conflict intervention and peacebuilding. While functional coexistence is a concept used to describe an empirical state of conflict-affected relationships, a functional coexistence approach is a normative and prescriptive concept for designing and implementing purposeful actions for long-term peacebuilding. It has much in common with what Bernard Mayer (2009) refers

1 This introductory section, along with the next one, adapts Arai (2022, 140–144) with major revisions.

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to as conflict engagement, a purposeful process of staying constructively engaged with enduring conflict without raising unrealistic expectations of resolution in the foreseeable future. Unlike conflict engagement, however, a functional coexistence approach focuses specifically on the intersection of conflict non-resolution, enduring negative peace, and mutual non-recognition, anticipating and waging a decades-long process of incremental, systemic change, as discussed below.

Like the concept of functional coexistence, the functional coexistence approach encompasses different levels of analysis, from interpersonal to communal, national, international, and global. In anticipation of the national and international levels of analysis on which the case study chapters in this volume primarily focus, this chapter outlines the essential characteristics of the approach as applied to large-scale intractable conflicts involving states, nations, and political groups.

For practitioners of a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, the empirical reality of functional coexistence presents both the context in which they take action and a condition to build on.[2] First and foremost, functional coexistence provides a *context* for practicing the approach because it consists of a dynamic, evolving system of conflict-affected relationships among parties and stakeholders in a lasting state of conflict non-resolution and negative peace. This conflict system involves such distinct features as:

- Relationships of mutual non-recognition and/or denial (discussed in Chapter 2)
- A highly restricted scope and nature of human interaction and communication across the line of division
- Entrenched social structures, institutional arrangements, and cultural practices guarding against meaningful change in the political and strategic status quo (Rubenstein 2017)
- Societal traumas and historical narratives highlighting one's unhealed wounds and antagonizing any conciliatory gesture toward the other party (Bar-Tal 2013; Volkan 2004, 2006)
- A diminishing proportion of the population with direct conflict experience, increasingly relying on inherited—and recently created—social memories, narratives, and analyses of conflict across generations (Feldman 2012; Wang 2012)

In social contexts of enduring conflict with a history of intervention efforts, the conflict system undergirding the state of functional coexistence also encompasses:

2 The dual role of functional coexistence as a context and condition for action and change is proposed by Jeffrey W. Helsing, the author of Chapter 11, which integrates lessons from the case study chapters.

- A long catalogue of ineffective, stalled, aborted, and/or failed resolution efforts, justifying hopelessness and apathy for further efforts
- Difficulty in identifying mutually acceptable intermediaries willing and able to initiate or revive credible peace processes and resolution efforts
- A chronic shortage of willing funders and a lack of both international and domestic political will to take risks and break the status quo

Moreover, it is important to recognize that these characteristics of functional coexistence as a context of conflict intervention reflect conflict history evolving across generations (Arai 2015, 2023). In any given context of extended conflict history, the whole system of conflict-affected relationships—comprising conflict actors, their goals and needs, presenting issues, perceived root causes, salient conflict memories and experiences, prevailing technologies of communication, and even political leadership, regimes, and systems—has likely evolved considerably. Consequently, what was commonly understood as the principal causes of a given conflict and their potential remedies, say thirty years ago, can be far outdated, though one must still understand their lasting implications for working effectively in the present context.

What makes the functional coexistence approach especially unique and challenging is that the conflict system observed at this moment has deep-seated characteristics with significant staying power. These characteristics include an enduring state of conflict non-resolution, mutual non-recognition, and existential tension, convincing conflict parties and attentive observers to believe that a variation of the present conflict system will last and evolve into future decades. This possible extension of the conflict's prolonged lifespan into future years and decades—into the mid to late twenty-first century—will take place amid an accelerated pace of unforeseen contextual shifts—technological, strategic, environmental, demographic, epidemiological, socio-economic, psychosocial, cultural, and otherwise—significantly altering how conflict parties and stakeholders view who they are, how they interact with each other, and how they define their conflict and resolution potential (Arai 2022, 144–145).

Informed by such a broadened and continuous view of conflict history, the functional coexistence approach must adopt a well-educated historical consciousness to comprehend each of the emergent challenges and contexts of enduring conflict that call for intervention. As discussed below, this broadened consciousness is both the prerequisite and foundation of time-sensitive, realistic conflict interventions to tackle the presenting issues while being mindful that the present context is a window of opportunity to engage with the broader universe of cumulative conflict experiences as well as unexplored possibilities for transformative change.

Practitioners of the functional coexistence approach must take into consideration these and other distinct features of the conflict-affected context in which functional coexistence arises. They must also find strategic and effective ways of interacting with these features and the conflict parties and stakeholders who embody them.

In addition to providing a context for organizing a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, an enduring state of functional coexistence presents a *condition* to build upon. This condition is characterized by an extended period of negative peace, where historical adversaries in a state of mutual non-recognition manage to sustain varying degrees of agency to express their goals and act on them. Although it is a less-than-optimal basis for planning and action, it remains somewhat promising because it reflects a non-war situation that has long proven resistant to potential genocidal projects and mass extermination campaigns. However, it is also a highly problematic condition given the sustained absence of any meaningful progress toward conflict resolution, reconciliation, or positive peace. Those striving to orchestrate an effective functional coexistence approach must therefore find a skillful, pragmatic, and adaptive way to utilize this precarious condition to identify, cultivate, and extend peacebuilding potential.

Recognizing these challenges and opportunities of the functional coexistence approach, this chapter addresses the following two questions. Our attempt to answer these questions is part of a broader effort to find useful guideposts—markers showing direction—for applying the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding.

- How can self-reflective conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers effectively use functional coexistence as a basis for systemic conflict intervention and social change?
- How can they stay constructively engaged in an enduring state of conflict non-resolution while identifying immediate, practical steps toward transforming the entrenched system of conflict non-resolution over time?

An emphasis on "system" in each of the two questions underscores the systemic nature of structural violence and inequity inherent in functional coexistence. It recognizes the requirement of conflict intervention to tackle social hierarchy and hegemonic stability, which suppresses in-group dissent and upward social mobility necessary for systemic transformation (Coser 1956; Tajfel 1978).

In terms of the structure of the presentation, this chapter first provides four responses to the abovementioned two questions combined, recognizing their interconnectedness. These responses serve as guideposts for a long-term process of initiating and sustaining a functional coexistence approach. The next part of this chapter builds on these four responses and identifies illustrative project objectives that may be useful for short-term action planning and implementation as part of an extended process of organizing a functional coexistence approach. The third and final part identifies and answers a set of frequently encountered challenges and questions regarding the functional coexistence approach, further clarifying its aim, scope, and limitations. The questions discussed in this section not only explore how distinct or complementary the functional coexistence approach is relative to existing methods of conflict intervention but also identify the conditions under which the proposed approach must be suspended and replaced by more conventional ways of peacebuilding.

Four Guideposts for the Functional Coexistence Approach to Conflict Intervention and Peacebuilding

Adopting a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding is akin to embarking on a purposeful, discovery-oriented journey—an extended period of travel in search of something significant, such as an evolving goal or greater clarity about a meaningful destination. Depending on how we define the journey, it encourages self-examination, exploration, unforeseen discoveries, and constant course corrections, all guided by a well-conceived, yet evolving, sense of purpose that makes it productive and worthwhile. Such an extended journey conceived in this way may develop into an unfolding series of stops and encounters, some foreseen and others not. It may even involve returning to the same places for further reflection. Within the context of such a purposeful journey, returning is not negative, nor a failure or setback; rather, it is potentially meaningful and even essential because it may deepen the learning experience, which in turn helps define the next steps with greater clarity. However, there are circumstances in which such an extended, discovery-oriented journey may be considered a failure; for example, when the search is abandoned prematurely without meaningful learning and discoveries.

In contrast, a trip is commonly understood as a well-planned, short-term travel with a fixed destination, return date, and itinerary. Those organizing a trip must be punctual to avoid missing the planned departure times of scheduled transportation and failing to cover their required itinerary on time. The success or failure of a tightly planned trip is clearly measurable in these respects.

Initiated under distrustful relationships, structural constraints, and uncertainties of outcomes, a functional coexistence approach requires the mindset of embarking on a journey—a purposeful and adaptive search for hopeful discoveries that may, under conducive circumstances, guide the conflict parties, interveners, and policymakers in the general, aspirational direction of conflict transformation. This direction, inspired by conflict transformation, necessitates responding strategically to emergent expressions of underlying conflict and purposefully using these responses as steps toward building more equitable and mutually respectful relationships within and across conflict-affected societies (Curle 1971; Galtung 1998; Lederach 1997, 2003, 2005; Mitchell 2002). Success or failure in such a discovery-oriented search is determined by a combination of extraordinary tenacity, robust ingenuity, and much serendipity (Lederach 2005) necessary to turn vision and purpose into pragmatic immediate steps within the highly restrictive environment of conflict non-resolution, mutual non-recognition, and negative peace. Conversely, a short trip with a clear, predetermined itinerary resembles a time-bound conflict intervention project with a set and often prescribed objective. Its success or failure is measurable and conspicuous when the objective is achieved or not within a predetermined timeframe and allocated budget.

While travelers may incorporate one or more short, carefully planned trips as part of an extended, discovery-oriented journey—to see someone important or visit a specific place—such trips are only interim steps within the broader

process of the journey. Likewise, a functional coexistence approach may purposefully incorporate short-term conflict intervention projects if it is both feasible and worthwhile to do so.

The following references to "guideposts" in this section point to markers, however sporadic and interspersed, in the journey of a functional coexistence approach, suggesting the general mindset of travelers on such an extended, discovery-oriented journey. The markers do not dictate to the travelers where to go. Instead, the travelers, exercising their own agency and guided by their own discovery of purpose, make use of the markers each step of the way to recognize where they are and decide where they are headed next.

From a conceptual standpoint, the functional coexistence approach fulfills a dual goal. It aims to use an empirical understanding of functional coexistence as a basis for constructive future-oriented action, and to find strategic and practical measures to transform the long-standing, entrenched system of adversarial relationships over time. Each of the four responses presented below addresses part of this dual goal; in combination, they form an integrated framework of reflective practice designed to inform policymaking, civil society action, and program evaluation. (See Chapter 12 on the latter.) The sequence in which the four responses appear suggests neither the inevitability nor the desirability of a linear progression, although the first response is foundational for the others.

Guidepost One: Cultivating a Broad Historical View of Intractable Conflict and Social Change

The first of the four responses involves recognizing that a decades-long view of conflict intervention requires conflict parties, intermediaries, and policymakers to expand their historical awareness of conflict as well as a prospect of conflict transformation. Such a long-term view of conflict intervention calls for trainings and dialogues for consciousness formation (Freire 2009; Habermas 1987; Lederach 1995) necessary to recognize opportunities and entry points for conflict intervention. One of the facilitation techniques useful for such trainings and dialogues is the visualization of the elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition presented in Chapter 2. The visualization technique, if employed skillfully, can help the parties see the potential of negotiability in the seemingly non-negotiable nature of the enduring state of non-recognition and non-resolution. The present author has indeed regularly used this visualization technique in annual three- to five-day conflict resolution dialogues for civil society participants from both sides of the Taiwan Strait and the United States since 2005 and has repeatedly observed its efficacy and potential.

Examples of elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition may be adapted from the participants' own contexts or from other analogous contexts (Arai 2009, 203–208). An essential goal of the awareness-building activities is to enable the parties to restore their agency, which the powerful undercurrents of macro-historical conflict constrain and undermine (Giddens 1984; Habermas

1987; Jabri 1996). A more ambitious goal of these activities is to empower the parties over time to act as self-motivated agents of change capable of finding strategic roles in reshaping the boundaries of mutual non-recognition. Such activities of awareness building and empowerment are necessary and useful for individuals and groups who seek to make use of a minimally livable social space (MLSS) within and across societies. They may use MLSS as a basis for expanding the sphere of everyday peace (Mac Ginty 2014, 2021) while countering and undermining the prevailing systems of structural violence and mutual non-recognition.

These activities for awareness building and empowerment, however, should not push the boundaries prematurely or carelessly to the point of placing the individuals and groups in danger. Instead, they should enable and prepare them to expand their historical and social awareness so that they can see the larger picture of the conflict system and functional coexistence in which they have been embedded (Arai 2009; Galtung 1998). Such activities should also help conflict actors increase their preparedness to identify and select a strategic timing and context-specific method of engagement capable of shifting the boundaries of mutual non-recognition over time (Ramsbotham 2017).

Guidepost Two: Building a Strategic Vision of Systemic Social Change

The second of the four responses concerns being strategic about structural constraints and systemic change. It requires recognizing that functional coexistence within and across societies in intractable conflict often builds on the ruling elite's (Track 1) control of the rest of the population (at Tracks 2 and 3). As far as the example of cross-Strait relations presented in Chapter 2 is concerned, the existential characteristics of the social divide are most salient at the top state leaders' (Track 1) level. In cross-Strait relations, the social divisions at both grassroots (Track 3) and middle-range (Track 2) levels are generally less severe and existential. This is most cogently illustrated by the rise of cross-Strait tourism and commerce under the right political circumstances.

Bottom-up activities organized at critical junctures of conflict history contribute to a transformative shift in the very foundations on which hegemonic stability rests. It should also be noted that a top-down approach to systemic change is no less important. An example of a top-down approach took place in 2008, when Beijing and Taipei introduced direct cross-Strait flights and tourist visits. These measures significantly increased the scope and ability of citizens, business leaders, students, scholars, media professionals, and political leaders to engage in previously restricted discussions on the future possibilities of cross-Strait relations (Arai 2016, 2015).

Furthermore, a middle-out approach, in which middle-range leaders reach out to conflict parties across horizontal and vertical social divides, can help orchestrate systemic change. An example of a middle-out approach employed in cross-Strait relations is the Taipei-Shanghai Twin City Forum. Established in 2010, the Forum alternates between the two cities to convene annual

meetings, where the mayors, municipal government officials, and civil society leaders of the respective cities explore inter-city cooperation regarding the environment, business, transportation, regional governance, culture, health, and other areas of mutual interest despite heightened cross-Strait tensions over politics and security (Hellman 2022; Huang 2020; Strong 2024). One of the distinct features of this inter-city forum is its longevity amid increasingly polarized cross-Strait relations. This longevity is enabled in part by the continued support and participation of successive Taipei mayors, such as Ko Wen-je, who served from 2014 to 2022 and established the independent Taiwan People's Party (TPP) in 2019 as its founding chairman. These mayors, widely considered viable presidential candidates in Taiwan, have expressed varying degrees of openness or opposition to Beijing's policy of cross-Strait rapprochement aimed at unification, yet they have consistently upheld their support for sustaining the forum.[3]

Guidepost Three: Staying Constructively Engaged in an Enduring State of Conflict Non-Resolution

The third response to the questions under consideration involves resisting a premature push for resolution while continuously searching for concrete, practical ways to remain constructively engaged in the prevailing condition of conflict non-resolution. This form of conflict intervention requires a skillful and delicate balance between self-restraint and proactiveness.

One way of orchestrating such a balancing act in cross-Strait relations is to support government and civil society actors' efforts, away from public view, to stay engaged in trainings, dialogues, and other forms of humanizing exchanges within and across the two societies. The discussions organized as part of these activities can address the core issues of Chinese identity, integrity, and stability on the one hand, and Taiwanese identity and freedom to choose their political future on the other (Arai 2015, 2016, 2023). Responding to Ramsbotham's (2017) call for negotiation about negotiation in the face of refusal to negotiate, these intra- and inter-societal activities can expand avenues of pragmatic cross-Strait exchange. Through these exchanges, influential opinion leaders on each side, at either Track 1, 2, or 3, can *directly* hear the other side's authentic views and personal experiences about why their opponents refuse to consider their own ways of thinking about Taiwan's future status.

The mere act of listening and learning across the historic divide may not ensure progress toward a substantive resolution of the cross-Strait conflict. However, it can help the parties overcome the widely held dualistic view of one's victimized status and the opponent's unjust position, thereby fostering an enabling condition for a new, previously unthinkable way of sustained conflict

3 The author is grateful to four experts on cross-Strait relations, both Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese, for their varied and insightful assessments in June 2024 of the Taipei-Shanghai Twin City Forum's role and limitations as a possible middle-out initiative.

engagement. Such opportunities for humanizing cross-Strait exchange are currently rare and increasingly difficult to find, but they are necessary and feasible.[4]

In this context, it is important to distinguish purposeful efforts to remain engaged in a prolonged state of conflict non-resolution from self-serving motivations for sustained engagement merely for the sake of continued involvement. The functional coexistence approach is decisively purposeful, guided by a broad, aspirational vision of conflict transformation. As such, it firmly rejects "talk for the sake of talk" or any other self-contained or self-directed activity that does not subject itself to the test of efficacy for social impact and accountability. Having articulated this fundamental requirement of the functional coexistence approach, it is important to acknowledge the distinct challenges faced by its practitioners in confronting the highly adversarial context of their work. This context often offers little opportunity for immediate transformative changes and strongly discourages sustained forward-looking efforts to achieve such shifts. Therefore, in many of these adverse contexts of functional coexistence, the ability of motivated conflict actors, intervention practitioners, and policymakers to stay engaged over years or even decades must be recognized as an achievement, because such a demonstrated ability to remain engaged preserves the aspirational vision and prospect of potential future transformation. In this regard, the functional coexistence approach promotes "advocacy for one over zero." This advocacy involves a deliberate effort to recognize and sustain even a single active or surviving initiative, regardless of the current state of its program development and social impact. It considers such an initiative as a valuable, pioneering addition to an inhospitable context of enduring conflict where there are either no functioning initiatives or very few to begin with or build upon. Illustrating the significance of such sustained, pioneering engagement, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2016) employ the analogous concept of strategic engagement, which they define as a pragmatic effort within and across conflict-affected societies to develop greater clarity about how to engage in intractable conflict.

> Strategic engagement may not lead to a revival of conflict resolution. But at least it helps to keep sails up to catch any winds of opportunity that may be blowing. The sails may not catch enough wind to propel the ship forward in a particular preferred direction. But one thing is certain: if the sails are not raised, there will be no motion, however many winds are blowing. Without sails permanently hoisted in this way, it will be much more likely to be a continuing story of mistiming and missed opportunities.
>
> (p. 470)

4 As previously stated, the present author has facilitated a series of annual conflict resolution dialogues since 2005 for civil society delegates from Mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States to experiment with this idea. See the website of Strait Talk at http://www.straittalk.org/ as well as Arai (2016, 2023) for lessons from these cross-Strait dialogues.

The analogy of permanently hoisted sails cogently illustrates what is required to stay engaged in a functional coexistence approach. It suggests the need to embark on such a highly uncertain, discovery-oriented process of engagement with a broad, long-term perspective of change. The vision of change guided by such a perspective centers around reduced existential fear and distrust, movement toward mutual recognition, safeguarding the parties' agency in decision making and communication, increased resilience to debilitating systemic control and hegemonic stability, and above all, a diminishing possibility of initiating a genocidal project to eliminate the perceived existential threat, the opponent. These illustrative elements of the required perspective for aspirational long-term change derive from the concept of functional coexistence itself, yet they are also rooted in the overarching principles of conflict transformation.

However, another essential requirement for staying engaged is to fully anticipate that none of the pragmatic, incremental steps taken within the highly restrictive environment of functional coexistence may generate immediate, tangible effects toward conflict transformation. This sobering assessment of the deep-seated systemic resistance to change highlights the need to develop historical consciousness, a strategic mindset as a practitioner (Ramsbotham 2017), leadership principles (Glad and Blanton 1997; Mandela 1994; Sharp 1979), institutional arrangements, resource mobilization strategies (Foster, Kim, and Christiansen 2009; Lederach 1997, 2015; Santa Barbara, Dubee, and Galtung 2009), and monitoring and evaluation frameworks (discussed in Chapter 12), as well as other context-specific foundations of sustained engagement. This approach fully embraces and strategically leverages the persistent reality of circular intervention-outcome dynamics (Lederach 2003), where recurrent setbacks, reversals of project gains, and unexpected contextual shifts are more likely than smooth, linear progression toward conflict transformation. The next guidepost offers further insight into navigating the creative tension between purposefulness and circularity, a central dilemma in the functional coexistence approach.

Guidepost Four: Identifying Practical Short-Term Steps to Foster Long-Term Transformational Change

The fourth and final response consists of recognizing the divergent timeframes of short-term conflict intervention and long-term social change and finding a strategic way to integrate them under a broad, aspirational vision of conflict transformation. Specifically, conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers can deliberately link short-term (months to a few years) and long-term (decades) steps for conflict intervention to foster *enabling conditions* for systemic change (Taplin et al. 2013; Valters 2015). Figure 3.1 illustrates how to integrate different timeframes of planning and action to orchestrate such long-term systemic change.

In the face of sustained non-resolution, structural constraints, and uncertainty, individuals and organizations seeking long-term systemic change often

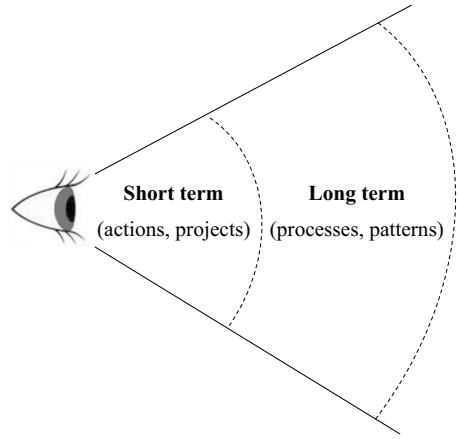

Figure 3.1 Integrating short-term and long-term perspectives on conflict intervention.
Source: Arai (2022, 143)

face significant pressure to prioritize short-term actions and projects. This pressure is heightened by the widespread expectation from donors and policymakers for immediate project impacts as evidence of their support's effectiveness (Lederach 1997, 2015). Consequently, those pursuing long-term systemic change may find it necessary to devote much of their limited time and resources to organizing conferences, trainings, exchanges, and other attainable activities of non-controversial nature within and across societies. Meanwhile, negotiations and agreements on less contentious technical or procedural matters may take precedence over more challenging substantive issues with long-term consequences (Mayer 2009).

The short-term actions and projects organized by these individuals and organizations are usually time-bound. These actions and projects typically target specific actors and issues. They are usually modest in scope and impact. However, in order for these short-term actions and projects to influence the broader context of intractable conflict and functional coexistence, they must help reshape the underlying processes and patterns of conflict behavior, thinking, and interaction that have kept the prevailing conflict system intact (Coleman 2011; de Coning 2016; Ricigliano 2012). Here, a process refers to a systematic series of actions, while a pattern refers to their recurring nature. Based on our working definition of conflict intervention (discussed in Chapter 2), we hypothesize that processes and patterns conducive to positive long-term change draw upon cumulative short-term actions and projects designed to "prevent, mitigate, overcome, and/or reverse destructive manifestations of social conflict" (Arai 2019, 288). In other words, short-term actions and projects must be purposeful, striving to achieve the long-term aspirational vision of conflict transformation.

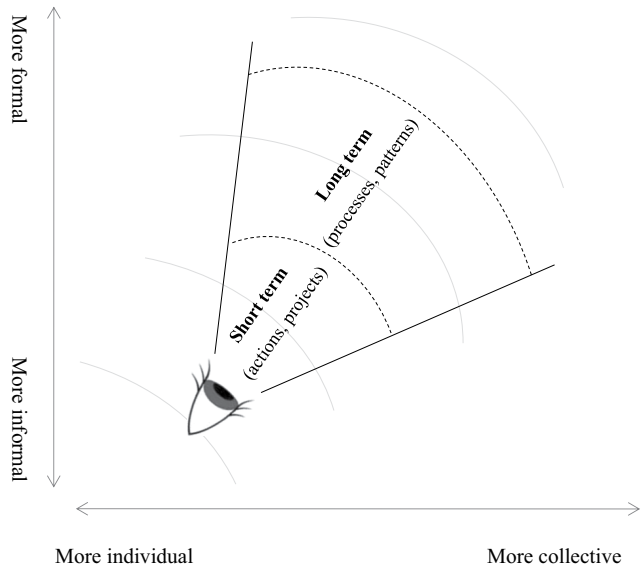

Figure 3.2 Interacting with the boundaries of mutual non-recognition from long-term and short-term perspectives.

Source: Arai (2022, 144)

The integrated view of different timeframes can be combined with the spatial-relational thinking that the example of cross-Strait relations has illustrated earlier. Figure 3.2 places the model of integrated timeframes within the formal/informal and individual/collective axes, which were used in Chapter 2 to present the elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition.

Figure 3.2 shows one possible way in which a motivated actor such as cross-Strait dialogue convener and facilitator can initiate a practical short-term project, such as a cross-Strait conflict resolution workshop series. While the actor's long-term aspiration aims to shift the boundaries of mutual non-recognition over time (as depicted in the northeast direction in Figure 3.2) to foster more formal, collective, and sustainable coexistence, the immediate outcomes of this actor's short-term project are highly uncertain and most likely limited due to structural constraints.

Despite uncertainties and constraints, it is essential to continuously monitor, evaluate, and leverage any gains from short-term steps. Remaining relentlessly purposeful and strategic in using these gains is crucial for linking short-term actions to long-term visions of coexistence (Arai 2009, 96–137). These efforts must be pursued simultaneously with sustained vigilance and preparedness to cope with recurring setbacks, reversals of gains, and unforeseen contextual shifts (Allen 2022; Lederach 2003, 2005). The series of case studies presented in this volume, such as those analyzing Cambodia, Cyprus, and

Armenia-Turkey relations, illustrate diverse and context-specific ways of linking short-term and long-term perspectives on social change and continuity.[5]

Here, we may come full circle to the opening analogy of an extended, discovery-oriented journey with an aspirational purpose combined with well-planned short-term trips. The journey of a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding extends over time, possibly decades. It also spans layers of relationships and structural constraints in socio-political space. The travelers on this journey—self-conscious conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers—have the option of introducing pragmatic steps and time-bound projects, akin to planned short-term trips, to continuously expand the potential of what the functional coexistence approach can offer and accomplish at each step of the way.

Interim Objectives in the Extended Process of Organizing a Functional Coexistence Approach

The four guideposts for the functional coexistence approach offer broad suggestions on what to consider when conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers prepare for and undertake an extended, discovery-oriented journey toward conflict transformation. These guideposts generally provide long-term *process* advice, such as how to stay engaged in enduring conflict and functional coexistence.

Since the vision of conflict transformation is too aspirational to be practical for conflict parties and stakeholders on the ground who are struggling with the day-to-day realities and effects of mutual non-recognition and existential tension, additional input focusing specifically on more accessible and attainable objectives is helpful to keep them motivated and engaged. This, in fact, has been one of the essential, hard-learned lessons from this author's experience in the field. These accessible objectives identify the immediate priorities of short-term (several months to a few years) to medium-term (several years) projects and activities. If conflict transformation is the guiding North Star of an extended, discovery-oriented journey, these immediate objectives correspond to well-defined destinations on a time-bound trip, or a series of related trips, within the context of the extended journey.

Derived from the crosscutting elements of the four guideposts as well as the defining characteristics of functional coexistence, including sustained negative peace and agency, the following three objectives—preventing violence, creating enabling conditions for change, and sustaining a minimally livable social space (MLSS)—are identified. These objectives are illustrative in nature, intended as a starting point for diverse context-specific adaptations and creative reframing. They also serve to elaborate on Guidepost Four by specifying the qualities of short-term strategic projects and steps necessary to create enabling conditions

5 Also, see Arai (2022, 136–140) for an additional illustration from East-West German relations and the Helsinki Process in Cold War Europe.

for long-term systemic change. One or more of these objectives, either on their own or in combination, may provide direction and clarity for short-term to medium-term project planning and policymaking, informed by the principles of the functional coexistence approach.

It must be stated clearly here that none of these short- to medium-term objectives serve as adequate contributions to long-term conflict transformation. They may, in fact, be seriously inadequate. Pursuing these objectives, unless done with significant vigilance and skill, can deepen and expand the existing conditions of structural violence—an institutionalized denial of access to resources and opportunities (Galtung 1969)—and cultural violence, which is the cultural justification of direct and structural violence (Galtung 1990).

However, the fundamental stance of the functional coexistence approach in pragmatic conflict intervention processes is to take actions, however modest in scope and impact, within the existing condition of negative peace. These actions may, in turn, lead to purposeful inventions and serendipitous discoveries of practical and strategic ways to change the underlying conditions for conflict non-resolution, and by extension, for structural and cultural violence, all within the aspirational vision of conflict transformation.

The three objectives are described as follows:

- *Preventing Violence*: Based on empirical evidence, identify vulnerabilities within and across conflict-affected societies that are likely to become immediate triggers or drivers—political, economic, psychosocial, and/or security-related—of the outbreak or resurgence of systemic violence, and take measures to mitigate and/or remedy them as much as practical. The extensive literature and empirical findings available on this theme offer guidance (Jentleson 2000; Lund 1996; Shaw 2015; Straus 2016; Waller 2007). Violence prevention focuses on avoiding worst-case scenarios, where the status quo of negative peace required to sustain a precondition for the functional coexistence approach disintegrates, giving rise over time to large-scale violence, such as mass killings and genocide.
- *Creating Enabling Conditions for Change*: Identify immediate, practical steps that can be implemented to move the prevailing condition of conflict non-resolution and mutual non-recognition closer to the aspirational vision of conflict transformation. This process requires formulating and communicating best-case scenarios despite difficulties, and being creative and forward-looking. It builds on many of the recommendations presented earlier, such as facilitated dialogues and trainings that utilize elastic boundaries of non-recognition to instill a dynamic, historical perspective and optimism for change (Guidepost One), promoting the "one over zero" principle to sustain the functional coexistence approach (Guidepost Three), and strategically linking short-term to long-term change while avoiding simplistic assumptions of linear progress (Guidepost Four).
- *Sustaining a MLSS*: Make the existing MLSS more robust and resilient to the enduring adverse conditions of mutual non-recognition and conflict

non-resolution or develop one if none exists. The availability of an MLSS can moderate the effects of these adverse conditions on the daily lives of conflict-affected people and communities. It serves as a step toward safeguarding their sustained access to basic human needs for survival and livelihoods, irrespective of the immediate realization of the other two objectives.

Activities pursuing the first two objectives, aimed at preventing negatives and generating positives, may appear indistinguishable in practice due to the complex interplay of destructive and constructive forces inherent in enduring conflict and functional coexistence. However, these objectives are presented separately to enhance conceptual clarity, which is essential for both theory building and program development in conflict intervention.

From the viewpoint of applied peacebuilding practice, policymaking, and program evaluation (see Chapter 12), actors engaged in a functional coexistence approach may use the three interim objectives mentioned above as the principal framework for planning and action. Alternatively, they may use the four guideposts as their main reference. As a general rule, it is recommended that if the leaders of a functional coexistence approach already have a well-developed long-term vision of systemic change and sufficient clarity on the basic direction of action, they may use the guideposts to start or continue their extended journey. With the help of the guideposts, they may purposefully identify and undertake immediate, practical actions and projects, evaluate their impact (Chapter 12), learn lessons, and take stock of them to perform a broad scan of the journey's direction and cumulative impact from time to time. In other words, plan the journey first and design initial trips second.

If, on the other hand, the leaders of the approach are at an early stage of vision development and lack sufficient clarity on the broad terrain in which their extended journey is likely to unfold, they may first focus on the three interim objectives to design concrete, immediate actions and projects, keeping conflict transformation principles as a general direction and a placeholder vision. By starting with small steps, they have a greater chance of minimizing potential risks and retaining their preparedness to absorb likely initial setbacks and correct courses. Over time, these leaders may learn lessons from their cumulative short-term engagements and use these lessons, along with research, to form a long-term aspirational vision that brings the macro-historical frame of the guideposts to life more vividly. They should continuously develop both practical short-term steps and an unfolding long-term vision of possible systemic change. In summary, start with a carefully designed short trip or two and build them up to a journey.

Finally, integrated application of both approaches, where the guideposts provide long-term process advice and the interim objectives define specific project goals within sustained conflict engagement, can also be considered. Such an option is most useful for program leaders prepared to effectively combine two orientations of thinking in a dialectical and mutually reinforcing manner.

Defining the Scope and Limitations of the Functional Coexistence Approach

The theory of functional coexistence and its application to conflict intervention and peacebuilding has evolved from over a decade of sustained, iterative processes of field-based experiments, dialogue, action research, and scholarly discussions. These processes have involved a broad range of conflict parties, peacebuilding professionals, policymakers, diplomats, and conflict researchers across diverse conflict-affected countries and regions, such as Nigeria (Arai 2017) and Syria (Arai 2019). This section focuses on ten of the most frequently raised questions and critiques about the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding and responds to them systematically. In doing so, it further clarifies what the functional coexistence approach entails, how distinct or complementary it is to more conventional approaches to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, and under what conditions it should be suspended and replaced by other existing approaches.

1 What are the defining characteristics of the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding?

The functional coexistence approach consists of: (1) enabling conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers to develop a long-term perspective and historical awareness of the formation, evolution, and transformation of social conflict; (2) remaining self-conscious and strategic about structural constraints and systemic changes within and across conflict-affected societies; (3) finding concrete, practical actions to engage with the enduring reality of conflict non-resolution while resisting a premature push for resolution and uninformed, unrealistic expectations of positive peace; and (4) building and acting on an integrated view of short-term immediate steps and the macro-historical, systemic changes necessary for conflict resolution. Identification of well-defined, attainable short-term objectives can enhance the effectiveness of the fourth measure.

Concrete, practical actions described under point (3) may keep conflict parties' agency intact and ensure their MLSS. Conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers who take point (4) seriously adopt a contingent approach, that is, a way of conflict intervention in which they take immediate, practical steps based on a decades-long historical perspective on the conflict at hand and its resolution; remain conscious that their steps may not necessarily generate any immediate, measurable progress toward resolution; and still identify and pursue additional steps to engage the prevailing condition of the conflict strategically.

Ultimately, conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers who choose to adopt the functional coexistence approach are redefining the guiding principles and incentive structures. These changes manifest in the form of new program objectives, timeframes, evaluation criteria, definitions of progress, program impact, and even the very notions of success and failure. Chapter 12 elaborates on these themes.

2 *Does the functional coexistence approach promote a decades-long perspective on the historical evolution of social conflict from an empirical point of view, or does it promote sustained conflict intervention and peacebuilding efforts from a normative and prescriptive point of view?*

The functional coexistence approach encompasses both perspectives, with the ultimate goal of promoting sustained conflict intervention and peacebuilding. It seeks to achieve this goal by encouraging conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers to adopt a decades-long view of conflict history (Arai 2015). This in turn enables them to recognize the elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition, as described in Chapter 2, and assists them in finding peacebuilding opportunities while working within the dynamic nature of these boundaries.

3 *How do practitioners of a functional coexistence approach tackle the enduring condition of conflict non-resolution and changelessness while coping with recurring setbacks?*

The functional coexistence approach is as empirically grounded and historically informed as it is purposeful and forward-looking. It challenges and rejects the fatalistic view of enduring conflict, which is often justified and reinforced by the widely shared perception of changelessness. The dynamic and elastic nature of the seemingly non-negotiable limits of mutually acceptable interactions between conflict parties suggests that setbacks and reversals of any gains made toward resolution are recurrent and inevitable. These challenges are integral to a long-term process of conflict intervention and peacebuilding.

From the viewpoint of a functional coexistence approach, setbacks and reversals are not necessarily signs of definitive failure. They are challenges—and even potential opportunities to be seized—within a strategic framework of conflict intervention informed by historical consciousness. Moreover, a long-term view of the dynamic and tumultuous nature of conflict history enables conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers to recognize both the need and advantage of staying actively engaged in the seemingly unchangeable reality of conflict non-resolution. Strategic, visionary thinking is required to proactively shape this historical process.

4 *Is the functional coexistence approach different from the existing, more conventional approaches to conflict intervention, such as conflict resolution and reconciliation?*

The functional coexistence approach complements and builds on the existing approaches to conflict intervention and peacebuilding. As such, it neither contradicts nor replaces them substantively. Instead, the functional coexistence approach adapts a broad range of existing peace and conflict theories, methods, and skills such as confidence building, conciliation, negotiation,

mediation, and dialogue facilitation (Barsky 2014; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2016). However, the functional coexistence approach repurposes them to enable conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers to stay actively engaged in an enduring state of conflict non-resolution, instead of avoiding or abandoning it. This way of thinking marks a clear departure from the uncritical acceptance and idealized image of conflict resolution as the only viable and desirable goal of social action in response to enduring conflict.

5 Is the functional coexistence approach an extension of pre-negotiation?

The functional coexistence approach is fundamentally different in intent and scope from the conventional task of pre-negotiation, a preparatory process undertaken by conflict parties before entering formal negotiations (Stein 1989). While the functional coexistence approach takes the prevailing condition of mutual non-recognition as the context in which it takes place, pre-negotiation generally considers mutual recognition as an essential requirement to fulfill in preparation for formal negotiations to begin (Mitchell 1981, 206–211). Moreover, the functional coexistence approach anticipates decades-long conflict engagement, while pre-negotiation generally expects a much shorter timeframe of intensive activities. Finally, and most importantly, the functional coexistence approach, unlike pre-negotiation, accepts that the short-term, practical steps it adopts may not necessarily lead to what conflict resolution practitioners commonly view as an ideal next step, such as the commencement of formal negotiations. As such, the functional coexistence approach does not presuppose a phased, linear progression toward resolution. Instead, it anticipates, orchestrates, and purposefully engages in a complex interplay of pragmatic immediate steps, occasional "progress" toward resolution, recurring setbacks, unexpected pauses in activities, and serendipitous yet consequential events—all of which may occur in an iterative, circular manner within the enduring state of negative peace and conflict non-resolution. As discussed earlier, the functional coexistence approach requires purposeful engagement in circular processes.

6 Should conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers employing the functional coexistence approach rule out the option and possibility of resolving their conflict within a shorter period, for example, within several months to a few years?

The functional coexistence approach should never be used to justify an intentional delay in conflict resolution when there are truly promising conditions, genuine prospects, and serious mutual commitments to resolution. It aims to broaden the range of alternative approaches to conflict intervention by providing a decades-long perspective on how to remain actively engaged in situations of enduring conflict non-resolution and negative peace when such a process is truly necessary.

7 *Should the proponents of the functional coexistence approach find peacebuilding potential, forces, and/or action steps from within the existing context of negative peace?*

The functional coexistence approach is, first and foremost, a sustained, purposeful process to discover and build on social spaces and opportunities for human interaction realized within the confines of the negative peace in which it has come into being. However, this is only part of a more comprehensive scope of what the functional coexistence approach entails. Its proponents may also seek peacebuilding potential, actors, and processes from *outside* the geographic and social-relational context of negative peace, as well as in its interaction with the broader outer environment (Arai 2009; Galtung 2010), whether regional, global, or otherwise. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that the functional coexistence approach generally requires more skillfulness and creativity than merely making use of human interactions permitted by negative peace, because it must be enacted within the highly restrictive environment of mutual non-recognition and/or denial.

8 *What if large-scale violence breaks out, thus terminating an extended period of negative peace and functional coexistence?*

Once sustained, systematic violence takes place, the functional coexistence approach is no longer applicable because it lacks the precondition of sustained negative peace to build on. Under such circumstances, conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers must seek context-specific strategies of peacekeeping and peacemaking (Galtung 1976; Boutros-Ghali 1992; Williams and Bellamy 2021), such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, in order to prevent the violence from spreading.

9 *Can conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers adopt the functional coexistence approach as a deliberate response to an ongoing armed conflict or its immediate aftermath?*

The functional coexistence approach proposes a framework of conflict intervention useful for addressing an enduring state of conflict non-resolution and functional coexistence. Therefore, it is unlikely to substitute for a peace process designed to facilitate a transition from war to peace, as well as post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction, and reconciliation. However, conflict actors may selectively adapt specific components of the functional coexistence approach, such as a strategic way of linking short-term steps to a long-term vision, when doing so effectively complements their peace process or conflict resolution initiative. This purposeful and selective adoption of analogies and insights from the functional coexistence approach may prove prescient, strategic, and proactive when the deep-seated structural and psychosocial characteristics of the underlying conflict foreshadow a prolonged state of conflict non-resolution,

active mutual denial, and/or negative peace for years or even decades after an open period of fighting is over. In other words, carefully selected components of the functional coexistence approach may be put in place to anticipate and tackle a forthcoming period of functional coexistence.

The case studies presented in this volume, especially those focusing on Armenia-Azerbaijan and Armenia-Turkey relations, as well as Arab-Jewish relations in Israel, illustrate such a proactive approach to using the functional coexistence approach as a framework for addressing active conflicts and post-conflict transitions. These case studies explore how to utilize the functional coexistence approach as an alternative to, or an extension of, a peace process or conflict intervention initiative whose long-term outcome is highly uncertain.

Having stated the above, it must be noted unambiguously that the functional coexistence approach should not be uncritically prioritized over well-established approaches to peace process design and implementation simply because the intractable conflict at hand has a long history, deep roots, complex underlying structures, and/or deep-seated values and social identities at stake. Nor should the proposed approach be used to relieve peace process stakeholders from striving to find the most effective ways of transforming the conflict and alleviating human suffering within the shortest period possible. Instead, the functional coexistence approach should serve as an assurance to them, as its inclusion in their repertoire of approaches to conflict intervention expands their preparedness and capacity to tackle well-defined circumstances of functional coexistence if and when they arise.

10 What should conflict parties, practitioners, and policymakers do when there is an enduring state of negative peace in which one or more parties have lost their agency?

As discussed in Chapter 2, the ability of each conflict actor to maintain and exercise their agency is a prerequisite for the functional coexistence approach. If their agency—their independent will and capacity to express their goals, make decisions, and act on them—is categorically denied or decimated by systematic repression, oppression, or other debilitating forms of structural violence, these actors' priority should be to wage nonviolent action and/or use other effective means of empowerment to restore their agency. While we may not be able to determine, without adequate analysis, how much agency a low-power party in debilitating asymmetrical conflict must regain or acquire to fulfill its role in shaping a viable functional coexistence approach, we may reasonably infer from historical precedents that the low-power party's demonstrated capacity to formulate its own independent program of political action and communicate it with the other conflict parties is a minimum requirement (Ackerman and Duvall 2000; Gandhi 1993; Mandela 1994; Sharp 1979, 2002). These considerations are essential because the functional coexistence approach should never be used to justify a situation where a high-power party or an overarching system of social and political control enforces hegemonic stability

over a low-power party, depriving them of their ability to meet their most basic human needs for survival and self-preservation.

Conclusion

Recognizing the highly dynamic nature of the seemingly non-negotiable and unchangeable limits of conflict behavior and interaction, this chapter has explored how to use functional coexistence as a basis for practical conflict intervention and peacebuilding. It has identified the need to stay constructively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution based on a long-term perspective and historical awareness of social change and continuity; the usefulness of building a systemic, multi-layered perspective on conflict intervention to overcome structural violence and submissive inaction; and the possibility of turning short-term practical actions into long-term systemic change, using well-defined, attainable objectives to support such actions. These guideposts for long-term conflict engagement caution against prematurely bringing reluctant conflict parties together for an unsustainable settlement. Instead, they propose an alternative framework that emphasizes securing sufficient time and creating a conducive social space, enabling historical adversaries to remain constructively engaged in an enduring condition of conflict non-resolution and mutual non-recognition.

Furthermore, this chapter has examined both the distinctness and complementarity of the functional coexistence approach in relation to the existing framework of conflict resolution. It has made the case for repurposing available conflict resolution skills to constructively engage in enduring states of non-resolution. Additionally, it has articulated the limitations of its applicability to social contexts with active armed conflict and/or where conflict parties have lost agency.

The functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, like its foundational concept of functional coexistence, is still in an early stage of development. Experimentation with its application to diverse conflict-affected societies, starting with the regional contexts of the case studies presented in this volume, will serve to refine its purpose and scope, enrich its content, and enhance its rigor and efficacy.

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Part II

Cases of Enduring Functional Coexistence

Introduction

Part II presents four case studies of *enduring* functional coexistence: Cambodia, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and the Western Balkans. The case study of the Western Balkans includes two parts, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, analyzed from a comparative perspective. These case studies illustrate how the essential qualities of functional coexistence manifest in different regional and historical contexts. Each of these contexts has experienced a sustained period of negative peace lasting for over a generation, or twenty to thirty years. Additionally, they have endured a lasting condition of mutual non-recognition or denial.

As explained in Chapter 2 and elaborated further in Chapter 3, enduring functional coexistence occurs when conflicting parties maintain their agency to assert their status and goals while avoiding a debilitating form of power asymmetry that would severely undermine or even eliminate the agency of the lower-power party. Furthermore, enduring functional coexistence typically enables the creation and sustenance of a minimally livable social space (MLSS) wherein individuals and groups can exercise some level of agency to interact across group boundaries to fulfill their respective basic human needs.

The case studies of enduring functional coexistence address a set of common themes. Firstly, they describe the historical and social context of the conflict, including major conflict parties, key issues, and significant events and milestones relevant to functional coexistence. Secondly, they examine the emergence and evolution of functional coexistence, acknowledging the distinct characteristics of this process. Thirdly, they explore whether and how functional coexistence has facilitated or hindered conflict intervention and peacebuilding. Fourthly, they propose how to leverage the existing condition of functional coexistence to further advance conflict intervention and peacebuilding. Lastly, they identify lessons from these case studies and discuss their implications for theory, practice, and policy.

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Since the case studies presented in this section differ significantly in terms of levels of analysis (ranging from communal to national and regional) and the historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts involved, the authors of the case study chapters have flexibly adapted these guidelines for analysis to respond to their respective contexts.

4 Functional Coexistence in Local Communities in Post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia

Sung Yong Lee

Introduction

Functional coexistence takes place between various social groups at different levels. The features of functional coexistence vary according to the types of actors involved. This chapter examines the distinct features of functional coexistence at the *local community level*. The local community is the fundamental unit of society, usually situated at the bottom of society's hierarchy. The pressure and restrictions imposed by various factors—such as the actions of dominant groups, prevailing social conditions, and cultural restrictions—influence the everyday practices of community members. As the local community unit is small, it offers a space for close daily interactions among its members. It enables them to adopt practices and narratives that they consider familiar and desirable. Recognizing these characteristics of close-knit community ties, this chapter examines how community members shape and maintain functional coexistence.

To investigate this question, this chapter examines the distinct form of functional coexistence that emerged in Cambodia's local communities in the aftermath of Khmer Rouge (KR)[1] rule, which lasted from 1975 to 1979. More specifically, it addresses the following sub-questions: What social practices and narratives did community members adopt to maintain nonviolent coexistence with former KR leaders? What roles has functional coexistence played in nurturing social reconciliation in Cambodian communities over a long period of time?

The author conducted field research between 2018 and 2022, interviewing twenty-six participants. Four of them were former KR cadres and the remaining twenty-two were community members who survived KR rule. Most participated in two rounds of interviews that focused on themes such as the process of relationship building between them, competing narratives on how to deal with KR rule and former KR leaders, and the roles of external actors in community life.

1 Although the party's official name is the Communist Party of Kampuchea, this chapter will use the Khmer Rouge (meaning red Khmer in French), which is most widely used in academic studies.

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The field research sought to identify the distinct features of everyday practice across seven local communities in three regions: Phnom Penh, Svay Rieng Province, and Battambang Province (see Figure 4.1). In the capital city, Phnom Penh, the Khmer Rouge evacuated most of the population to rural areas during KR rule, and people returned to the city only after the regime collapsed in 1979. The anti–Khmer Rouge military group maintained stable control of Svay Rieng Province, located close to the border with Vietnam, throughout the 1980s. During the same period, the Khmer Rouge in Battambang Province often challenged the new regime's authority as the KR had military camps located close by.

This chapter gives an overview of the historical and socio-political situation in post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia, which significantly influenced the formation and maintenance of functional coexistence in the local communities. It then offers a detailed description of the local practices that formed three social conditions relevant to functional coexistence: prevention of revenge killing, non-recognition, and acquiescence/unofficial recognition (Arai 2022, 125). Community members developed most of these local practices based on community events, cultural rituals, and narratives with which they were familiar

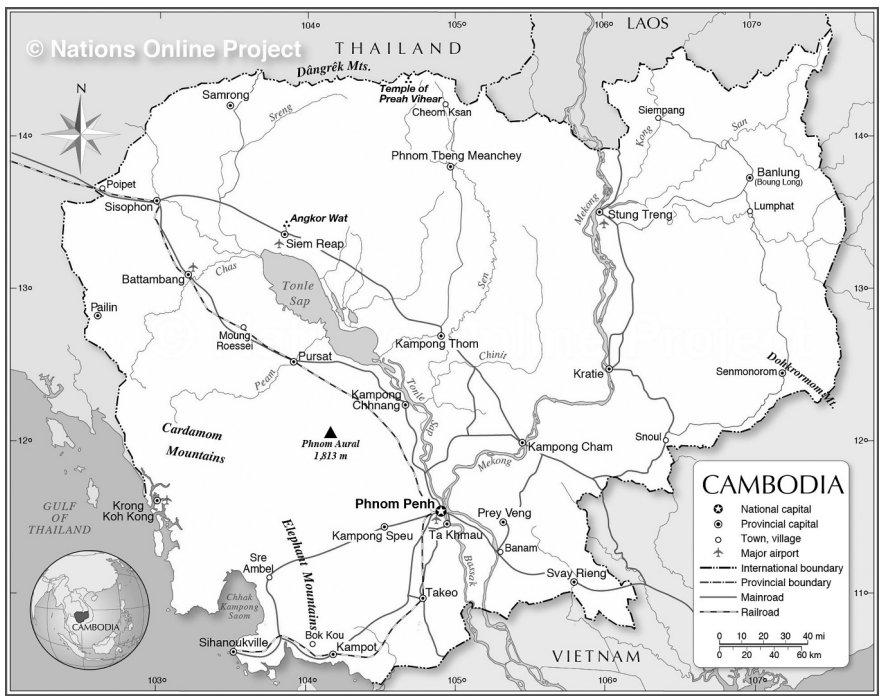

Figure 4.1 Map of Cambodia.

Source: Adopted from One World–Nations Online https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/cambodia-political-map.htm

and at a pace that they were comfortable with. The next section examines how the maintenance of functional coexistence in local communities facilitated social reconciliation, focusing on its positive contribution to the steps community members took to overcome their categorical exclusion of former KR leaders. In the final section, this chapter discusses the theoretical significance of the findings with an emphasis on their implications for the elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition (Arai 2022, 133–140), a key concept in the theory of functional coexistence.

The Historical and Socio-Political Contexts of Functional Coexistence in Cambodia

The rule of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia is widely regarded as "one of the worst mass killings of the 20th Century" (BBC 2018). The party formed in the early 1950s with support from the communist parties in Vietnam, Laos, and China. After Pol Pot became a central leader in the 1970s, the party began to present political propaganda incorporating anti-colonialist ideologies. It increased its prominence as a military and political faction while conducting anti-American military campaigns and succeeded in toppling the US-backed Lon Nol regime in 1975. The KR regime's radical policies eliminated the existing economic system, dismantled the basic family units, relocated people from urban areas, banned all religious practices, and assimilated all ethnic groups into Khmer (Chandler 2008, 177–178). The absence of management skills and poor leadership compounded the devastating effects of these radical policies which in turn caused "an extremely chaotic and mismanaged governance operation" (Lee 2022, 23). Furthermore, the party carried out constant surveillance and brutal executions to implement its radical policies. The Khmer Rouge's rule came to an abrupt end in 1979, only four years after its establishment, following a military campaign by an anti–Khmer Rouge military backed by Vietnam. While the rule of the Khmer Rouge was short, it had a critical impact on every aspect of Cambodian society. In addition to losing 1.5 million lives (Kiernan 2002), Cambodian society suffered from malnutrition, forced labor, extreme fear, and the requirement of complete submission to authority.

Dealing with the Khmer Rouge's governance emerged as a major political issue after the establishment of the new People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) regime in 1979. Since many Cambodians viewed Vietnam as a colonial power, the new regime's heavy reliance on Vietnam's support weakened its legitimacy as the representative of national sovereignty. As a key strategy to consolidate its legitimacy, the regime constantly emphasized the Khmer Rouge's brutality and revealed previously undisclosed evidence of the Khmer Rouge's violence and disruptive behavior (Chandler 2008; Guillou 2012). The PRK regime used these measures to present itself as "the saviors of the nation" (Gidley 2019, 44) that defeated a "draconian, dictatorial and fascist regime" (Phnom Penh Domestic Service 1979, cited in Gidley 2019, 48).

At the same time, the regime urgently needed to ensure security and stability in rural areas (Slocomb 2003). Community members who had suffered under KR rule frequently staged revenge attacks on former KR leaders living in their communities, exacerbating social instability. Moreover, many KR associates were deeply concerned that the new regime might summarily execute them (Lee 2022). Hence, the government carefully managed its narratives to prevent revenge attacks on former KR associates, characterizing the Khmer Rouge's activities as "a magnificent revolution subverted by a small group of evil doers" (Hinton 2008, cited in Gidley 2019, 48). This narrative implied that top leaders used former KR cadres as tools, and that KR cadres should not be held responsible for the Khmer Rouge's violence. It encouraged community members to tolerate a pragmatic and minimalist mode of coexistence with former KR cadres living in their neighborhoods.

Under such circumstances, many local communities promoted functional coexistence between themselves and former KR leaders, which this chapter delves into. In fact, it was not easy for many of the community members to accept and uphold functional coexistence. For many, it meant abandoning the opportunities to punish war criminals and seek justice. For others, it meant having to see former wrongdoers in their everyday lives. In some areas, people feared that former KR cadres might have connections to the KR guerrilla groups who remained engaged in military operations (Interviewee II 2021; Interviewee IV 2020; Interviewee V 2019).

What, then, motivated community members to accept functional coexistence between themselves and former KR cadres? The interviewees highlighted three interrelated reasons. First, almost all interviewees stressed their desire to stop violence, prioritizing pragmatic coexistence over retaliation. They were weary of a resurgence of violence because they had experienced too much killing. Hence, although some local people argued for retaliatory violence to seek justice, the majority of the population chose not to accept revenge killing and instead supported public actions to discourage violence. For instance, one interviewee who joined anti-revenge activities stated, "We went from home to home to ask them [community members], 'Stop killing and hatred' or 'Let bygones be bygones'" (Interviewee I 2020).

Second, community members valued the Buddhist precepts and concepts that discourage violence. Several interviewees cited, *karma*, the combined cumulative effect of positive and negative deeds from the present and past lifetimes, as a reason for staying nonviolent. Moreover, the interviewees stressed the need to observe the precept of non-killing, which they considered as most essential among the five Buddhist virtues (*sila*) as can be seen in the following statement:

> Our culture is based on the belief in good karma and bad karma. We can't live without Buddhist teachings. The five precepts of Buddhism are particularly important. They are: no killing, no lying, no stealing, no misusing sex, and no overuse of intoxicants.
>
> (Interviewee XX 2019)

Hence, as Buddhists, community members expressed the normative commitment to non-killing despite challenges (Interviewee II 2021; Interviewee V 2019; Interviewee XX 2019; Interviewee XXII 2019).

The third reason for community members' preference to stay nonviolent and seek functional coexistence is the PRK government's prohibition of revenge killing and its commitment to maintaining law and order in local communities. Indeed, the government issued strong warnings to discourage revenge killing (Interviewee III 2020; Interviewee IV 2019; Interviewee V 2020; Interviewee VII 2020). One interviewee, who served as a community leader in the 1980s, described the effect of the government's warnings as follows:

> We were aware of the law. The law did not allow any killing. If they had killed people, they would be jailed. I highlighted this point [to other people in his village] many times.
>
> (Interviewee IV 2019)

The majority of the population refrained from physically harming KR cadres. However, they struggled with deep-seated anxiety about living in close proximity to former KR cadres (Interviewee IX 2019; Interviewee XXIII 2021). The following quote illustrates their anxiety well:

> People were particularly angry about the previous period of hunger [under KR rule]. But they didn't know how to express their anger. They didn't know who could solve their anger. So, they just tried to forget. They didn't forgive but they tried to forget.
>
> (Interviewee IX 2019)

Given the widely shared sense of anger toward the Khmer Rouge, any attempt by community members to recognize its legitimacy would have caused a strong and immediate backlash (Christianson 1992; Heuer and Reisberg 1992; Van der Kolk and Fisler 1995). The government-led efforts to prevent revenge attacks and regain "normal" life thus needed to be delicately balanced by another set of measures designed to calm people's acute anxiety over KR cadres' sustained presence in their communities. Consequently, community members were faced with a dilemma of living side by side with former KR associates while coping with their deep anxiety about the inescapable reality of daily interactions with these associates. Functional coexistence materialized as a result of the community members' constant struggle to live with this dilemma.

Local Practices That Formed Functional Coexistence

Throughout the 1980s, local communities in Cambodia made significant efforts to live with former KR associates while continuously expressing their anxiety about the KR associates presence in their neighborhoods. Community members utilized their limited resources to adopt three strategies for self-preservation and

survival, namely, prevention of revenge killing, non-recognition, and acquiescence/unofficial recognition. Making use of familiar local narratives and cultural expressions, these strategies enabled community members and former KR associates to develop different forms of functional coexistence.

Prevention of Revenge Killing

During the earliest phase of Cambodia's transition from the KR era, a large number of community leaders publicly took actions to discourage the revenge killings taking place in their communities. Local communities had almost no material resources because they had barely recovered from the reins of terror and destruction under the Khmer Rouge. Community leaders thus considered local dialogues as an affordable and accessible means they could use to discourage violence. Together with newly appointed local civil servants, community leaders visited the instigators of revenge killing. Their conversations usually started with an affirmation of the government's resolve to punish anybody perpetrating revenge killing.

To make their action more effective, the community leaders explained why revenge killing should be stopped, adopting the narratives that appealed to traditional maxims and familiar Buddhist concepts. These leaders frequently used phrases such as: "Enough is enough. Let's not have any more violence"; "Let bygones be bygones"; "Hatred cannot stop hatred"; and "Beware of the negative karma you are generating" (Interviewee I 2020; Interviewee II 2021; Interviewee V 2019; Interviewee XX 2019; Interviewee XXII 2019). One interviewee recalled the action he took to prevent violence:

> I personally went to meet the village chief and discussed with him the issue of revenge. (…) [In the meetings with the youths who were thinking of revenge killing], I would tell them: "From regime to regime, we always saw killings happening in our society. A killing brings us nothing but bad karma. There is no point in killing. What goes around comes around."
>
> (Interviewee II 2020)

Importantly, community leaders carefully avoided the use of narratives that could have been interpreted as legitimizing the Khmer Rouge or sympathizing with KR cadres. They strove to remain sensitive to their community members' strong resentment to the Khmer Rouge. The narratives these leaders used to prevent revenge killing thus focused narrowly on the condemnation of violence.

Non-Recognition

When revenge killings had by and large disappeared, community members shifted their attention to the need to ensure stable working relationships with former KR associates. While the social practices they adopted to achieve this goal varied greatly from context to context, they shared the quality of being

indirect and subtle in terms of how these practices facilitated relationship building. Some communities, for example, deliberately, yet quietly, distanced themselves from former KR associates, orchestrating a form of "silent shunning" unique to their cultural contexts. Other communities assigned inconsequential roles to former KR associates when organizing religious festivals, incorporating their gestures of bridge building in their routine social activities. The adoption of such subtle actions reflected the prevalent modes of indirect and symbolic communication in Cambodia (Le Baron 2008). It also supported their proponents' wish to avoid potential conflicts with other community members holding different views on how to treat former KR associates (Interviewee I 2020; Interviewee III 2020; Interviewee IX 2019; Interviewee XII 2020; Interviewee XXIII 2020).

Non-recognition was a type of interaction that community members with deep anxiety adopted. They adopted two types of social shunning, a form of non-recognition, in relation to former KR leaders: physical separation and exclusion from social activities. In more extreme cases, social shunning comprised physical separation and exclusion from community activities (Interview VII 2020; Interview XXIII 2020; Interview XXIV 2019; see also McGrew 2011). Many of the former KR cadres who had returned to their home communities built small houses in isolated areas for fear of revenge. Community members refrained from inviting the returnees to any community activities and even avoided talking about their presence. An interviewee illustrates such a state of social shunning and distancing:

> When he [a former KR leader] came back, he was too scared to come to villages. So, he hid himself from people living there. Other people never sought to see him. We rarely saw him, and when he saw us, he behaved as if he lost his confidence. We didn't talk to him.
>
> (Interviewee XXIII 2021)

In other cases, former KR cadres managed to live in local communities that allowed them to carry on basic economic and public activities such as grocery shopping. Some former KR cadres even participated in government-led social events. Nevertheless, members of the local communities excluded them from major community events such as weddings and funerals and avoided any interactions with them. One interviewee remarked:

> The victims did not invite them. We didn't participate in their funerals. Mr Hun [a former KR leader] and his family all died one by one and then the house was left empty. Now the house was removed and the land was given to a monk.
>
> (Interviewee V 2019)

While inconspicuous at times, these practices of social shunning required community members to take deliberate and collective action or non-action.

Community members directly or indirectly communicated their intentions to shun former KR cadres and maintained their tacit rules of minimum interaction in order to hold each other accountable for the stability they yearned for. If such shunning continued over time, community members gradually came to accept it as an established norm. New migrants and young children learned to follow the norm, feeling uncomfortable about the presence of former KR cadres. Over time, the coming generations of community members who had internalized the norm inherited social shunning as their own practice.

Avoidance is another type of action undertaken by individuals who hoped to forget and downplay the traumatizing memory of the past. For many people, thinking of the previous atrocity consumed a lot of energy and triggered an emotional reaction. This had the potential to disrupt community members' daily lives under challenging social and economic conditions (Mollica 2006; Frieson 2011). Hence, they often chose to prioritize the present and avoid recalling difficult experiences of the past, while still harboring anxiety. The following narrative illustrates this widespread practice of avoidance well:

> During the Khmer Rouge period, I lost one of my uncles. But my mother never asked who killed him. She just went on with her life and then worked hard to get rice. Reconciliation that individuals experienced was like that. When they were hungry, it was difficult for them to discuss who killed who.
>
> (Interviewee XXII 2019)

The actions undertaken for avoidance were, in fact, deliberate choices of inaction. Some interviewees who adopted the strategy of avoidance knew that former KR leaders lived nearby, but they did not take any action to either express their discomfort to them or shun them. Instead, they simply remained passive. When former KR leaders sat beside the interviewees in public meetings, the interviewees allowed the KR leaders to just sit. On the surface, the manifest behavior of these interviewees illustrated a degree of tolerance and social reconciliation. A closer examination of the interviewees' feelings through dialogue, however, revealed their deep-seated desire to avoid all forms of interaction with former KR associates, instead of building relationships with them (Interview IX 2019; Interview XIX 2020). To illustrate this tendency of avoidance, one of the interviewees remarked, "They [community members] didn't want to forgive. But they didn't have energy to commit to revenge" (Interviewee IX 2019).

Acquiescence/Unofficial Recognition

There were occasions where community members endeavored to expand social space for coexistence, as well as passive recognition in line with how Arai (2022) conceptualizes a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding. Arai defines acquiescence as "[o]pting unwillingly to

live with the undesirable reality of the opponent's presence and their assertion of legitimacy while choosing not to protest" (Arai 2022, 125). Furthermore, Arai (2022) describes unofficial recognition as a social action which involves "[t]aking affirmative steps to accept the legitimacy of the other though still unwilling or unable to make a formal commitment to acceptance; de facto recognition" (Arai 2022, 125). While acquiescence and unofficial recognition are two distinct forms of social practice, local communities in Cambodia adopted them in varying degrees of overlaps. For instance, community members' decision to stay away from any discussion on a proposal to include a former KR leader in a collective labor project could signal their acquiescence; however, their decision could also signal their tacit acceptance of the proposal depending on their circumstances (Interviewee X 2020; Interviewee VI 2019; Interviewee XI 2020). Hence, the author found it difficult to distinguish between the two conditions during the field research. In a sense, this finding made during the author's field research confirms the interchangeable nature of the different modes of functional coexistence. Community members can adopt a type of action for pursuing different objectives (often at the same time), and they may transform the meaning and significance of the same action over time.

Frequently, the author identified actions that represented acquiescence/unofficial recognition in instances when community members considered particular former KR leaders' actions to be "good." Community members appreciated that these KR leaders had been more sympathetic with them and had tried to help their community; thus, community members wanted to acknowledge these KR leaders' good behavior. However, even in such cases, they felt it was difficult to simply forgive them due to the community's resentment to the lasting effects of KR rule. Moreover, they feared that any gesture they would adopt to sympathize with former KR cadres might make them a target of their community's criticism (Interviewee X 2020; Interviewee XIX 2020; Interviewee XXI 2020).

Hence, community members approached varying contexts of acquiescence and unofficial recognition cautiously yet skillfully. For instance, there were circumstances in which community members shunned former KR leaders by not inviting them to important social events such as weddings and funerals. Some of the community members in these circumstances expressed sympathies toward former KR leaders despite the prevalent community norm of social shunning. While the wedding hosts complied with the norm and refrained from inviting former KR leaders, they discreetly placed wedding food in front of the KR leaders' doors (Interviewee VI 2019; Interviewee XI 2020).

In other cases, community members took steps to include former KR leaders in community activities. Since government-led public meetings and religious events generally encouraged everyone's participation (including that of former KR leaders), these activities were useful opportunities for community leaders to include former KR leaders in a subtle and informal manner. For instance, community leaders would include former KR leaders as if they had forgotten to exclude them or otherwise inform people in their communities that they needed the particular skills that the invited former KR leaders

possessed (Interviewee I 2020; Interviewee X 2020; Interviewee XIX 2020). One former KR leader described how the community justified including him in community activities:

> [When the community chief invited me to local meetings], he said that he was not good at writing. I could write and do calculations very well and fast. My handwriting was pretty good. In the meetings, I took notes very fast.
>
> (Interviewee X 2020)

In terms of religious events, community members were more open to the participation of former KR leaders in *Pchum Ben* festivals, during which people commemorate ancestors. In such religious commemorations, "there was no restriction" (Interview X 2020) on attendance. When former KR cadres and their families attended such religious events, community members often yielded space for them and included them in food distribution (Interview VI 2020; Interview VII 2020; Interview X 2020). On some occasions, food sharing and taking a break in the middle of collective work offered important opportunities for community members to publicly recognize the presence of former KR cadres. The following quote from Ledgerwood captures such a moment:

> [A]t Pchum Ben, the man [a former KR cadre] and his mother attended and made food offerings. When everyone sat to eat after the offerings to the monks, Mrs. Bo caught my eye. She very deliberately walked over to where the food was, took two desserts and served them to the cadre and his mother. It was a purposeful and ritualized act of reconciliation.
>
> (Ledgerwood 2012, 200–201)

In summary, people in many local communities of Cambodia accepted nonviolent coexistence with former KR leaders despite feeling resentful of the brutal KR rule. They adopted social practices to realize nascent forms of coexistence and used familiar local narratives to support the practices. The specific practices adopted in local communities varied depending on the prevailing social conditions. These conditions in turn resulted from the presence or absence of security and stability, local authorities' willingness to deal with issues related to the Khmer Rouge rule, and the availability of material resources.

The aforementioned processes illustrate that community members sought to leverage the social conditions fostered by functional coexistence to promote more harmonious social relations within their local areas. This implies a gradual shift in how community members approach functional coexistence. Functional coexistence in the early stage of the post-KR period was a social routine that emerged as a result of people's pursuit of other objectives such as prevention of revenge killings and avoidance of past atrocities. In the later period, nevertheless, community members intentionally utilized the existing state of functional coexistence to maintain and enhance coexistence, and even to create conditions conducive to reconciliation.

Overcoming the Simplified Image of In-Group and Out-Group Relations

An enduring state of functional coexistence had a significant influence on the formation and transformation of the inter-group relations between community members and former KR leaders. In the earliest phase of the post-KR period, functional coexistence reduced revenge killing and uncontrollable violence. As the majority of community members accepted functional coexistence with former KR cadres, this protected KR cadres from rampant violence. Moreover, former KR cadres could establish access to basic commodities such as food and government rations and participate in many official gatherings and activities organized by the government. The maintenance of nonviolence coexistence was therefore an important achievement in the early 1980s, a period in which people's resentment to the KR regime's legacy was still acute and the security conditions were precarious due to the ongoing civil war in the country.

From a long-term perspective on nation building, functional coexistence contributed to the promotion of a more conciliatory relationship between the two sides of the conflict by offering them time to gradually overcome the divisiveness of in-group/out-group relations characteristic of the post–Khmer Rouge era. In the aftermath of the KR regime, two narratives were prevalent. One narrative, popular among young people, advocated for the punishment of KR cadres as a whole to realize justice. Advocates of this narrative viewed local KR cadres as part of the Khmer Rouge's machinery of brutal killing. The other narrative was championed by the new PRK regime and identified the majority of KR associates as tools of "a small group of evil doers" (Gidley 2019, 48). Using this second narrative as a justification, the PRK regime exempted KR leaders from having primary responsibility for KR crimes (Sirik 2020; Long and Reeves 2008).

However, community members did not fully adopt either of these simplistic narratives. As time went by, the enduring state of functional coexistence enabled community members to process their deep-seated resentment and anxiety and gradually put those negative feelings to rest. Their experiences of psychosocial shifts involved calming their anger and fear, avoiding the KR issues for a while, talking about their experience with other people, reflecting on their everyday lives, and observing former KR leaders' behavior (Interviewee V 2019). Community members undergoing these shifts also took time to recall and assess individual KR leaders' roles, behavior, and attitudes they had observed during the KR era. Their assessment and reflection were often expressed to identify local KR leaders as good leaders and cruel or bad leaders (Interviewee X 2020; Interviewee XIX 2020; Interviewee XXI 2020). These experiences of self-reflection and sense-making made it possible for many of the community members to break down the monolithic image of KR leadership as a category and gradually accept individual KR leaders as distinct human beings. Hence, some communities that shunned former KR cadres immediately after the KR regime ended gradually came to lessen the resolve to exclude them categorically. They instead adopted a broad range of ways to

engage former KR cadres, such as social shunning, avoidance, acknowledgement of their goodwill, tolerance of coexistence, and a joint effort for healing and reconciliation (Lee 2021; Lee 2022).

In fact, in long-standing academic debates, a frequently observed tendency in identity-based conflict whereby an in-group (we) is differentiated from an out-group (they) has been recognized as a critical barrier to social reconciliation. In many cases of identity-based conflict, such a psychological process that magnifies simplistic, binary thinking encourages people to systematically adopt more negative perceptions of the out-group, prevents the in-group from obtaining a holistic understanding of the out-group, and reduces the scope of actions that the in-group can choose for relationship building (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2009). Accordingly, purposeful efforts to overcome the polarized images of an in-group and an out-group and to restore holistic images of individual group members are essential to promote social reconciliation (Wilder 1981 cited in Gaertner and Dovidio, 2009; Miller 2002). Moreover, further research is required to examine how to overcome polarized intercommunal relations in post-conflict societies. While many studies consider the overcoming of polarized in-group/out-group relations as the most challenging process (Andrighetto et al. 2012; Shnabel, Halabi and Noor 2013), some empirical studies have found that local communities can build a more integrative identity within a relatively short period of time (Millar 2012).

In this regard, the above examination of Cambodian communities contributes to the evolving academic debate on the need to decategorize identity groups. It does so by presenting a compelling example of why and how conflict-affected communities gradually uncategorized individual KR leaders from their institutional identity, distinguishing these leaders' previous deeds from the present ones, and fostering their willingness to rejoin their home communities. By tracing these steps toward relationship building, this analysis has also shown how community members established a sustainable foundation for functional coexistence with former KR cadres.

Elastic Boundaries of Functional Coexistence

The previous section has demonstrated that long-term maintenance of functional coexistence enabled community members to explore social reconciliation. It has also articulated how these findings contribute to the ongoing theoretical debates on the need to depolarize in-group/out-group relations.

These distinct characteristics of functional coexistence reflect the intergroup interactions in Cambodian communities. Since community members, former KR leaders, and their families lived in the villages and towns, they interacted daily. They used their daily interactions as opportunities to closely examine the behaviors and attitudes of the people on the other side. Local markets, farmlands, workplaces, playgrounds, and other avenues for daily encounters offered them ample opportunities to examine the trustworthiness of individual characters. Religious festivals and government-led local development projects

provided them with additional opportunities for observation. The following quote illustrates how closely a community member was observing former KR members' actions:

> I observe that they [former KR leaders] did more good deeds than we did to redress their past wrongdoing. They tried to make as much merit as possible. Also, they wanted to socialize with other people in their communities. They were more participative and more active in the communities than we were. Their motivations were clear: They committed bad deeds in the past, so they now want to do good deeds.
>
> (Interviewee VI 2020)

From a theoretical perspective, the case study of Cambodian communities presents a highly unique example of "elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition" (Arai 2022, 135). According to Arai, these boundaries correspond to the dynamic and contested manners in which functional coexistence evolves over time. Arai (2022) further argues that the elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition build on two factors: the degrees of formality or informality in inter-group interaction and the degrees to which interactions are organized collectively or individually. Arai (2022) explains that when interactions are more individual-oriented and informal, individuals have more opportunities to exercise greater freedom in determining their relationship with out-group members.

The case study of Cambodia demonstrates that the boundaries of interpersonal and intergroup interactions that occur in close-knit local communities become highly elastic. Under these circumstances, members of a social group remain actively engaged in individual and informal interactions with members of the other groups. Individuals from the different groups constantly interact and closely observe the behavior and attitude of each other at local markets, schools, places of worship, and government offices, among other places. These avenues for daily interaction also enable community members to perform different roles; they may be merchants or customers in some contexts; they may become members of the same school communities or religious organizations in others. Hence, community members experience types of intergroup relations through everyday encounters and develop a complex, multi-dimensional view of each individual they encounter. Such a dynamic and elastic way of negotiating the limits and boundaries of mutually acceptable behavior in intergroup relations is unique to close-knit local communities. It can rarely be realized at national and international levels, as illustrated by the conflict across the Taiwan Strait and North-South Korea relations.

It is worth noting in this context that the Cambodian government initiated a significant number of programs to promote social cohesion and relationship building. These programs include meetings in which former KR leaders were encouraged to apologize to victims, mass gatherings to condemn the actions of the Khmer Rouge, special funerals and commemorations for victims, and

tribunals for top KR leaders. These government-sponsored programs, however, were as short-lived as the government's attention. Moreover, local communities did not take proactive steps to sustain the programs the government introduced (Lee 2022). Instead, community members preferred their own social practices for relationship building because these practices were deeply rooted in their everyday lives. These lessons from the case study reaffirm the dual requirement of local support and resource availability for effective conflict intervention and peacebuilding under an enduring condition of functional coexistence.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the key features of functional coexistence that emerged between community members and former KR leaders in post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia. After a short period of rampant revenge killing, many communities chose to coexist with former KR associates in the 1980s. To this end, they practiced social shunning, avoidance, subtle gestures of tolerance, indirect forms of social inclusion, and other carefully chosen means of interacting with former KR associates. The processes and methods of social interaction they adopted were rooted in the social and cultural contexts in which they lived. Communities employed these processes and methods in a subtle and inconspicuous way. They skillfully avoided direct, provocative communications with former KR cadres to preserve stability in community life.

The sustained condition of functional coexistence in Cambodia contributed significantly to its security and stability. It enabled Cambodian communities to maintain the absence of violence and killing, the minimum requirement of life for which they had long yearned. Moreover, the enduring state of functional coexistence provided community members with much-needed time and social space to interact with former KR cadres, learn about their personal histories, empathize with their suffering, and recognize them as individuals with diverse and complex backgrounds. It also created space for the former KR cadres to be more actively engaged in the communities in a positive way. These experiences of learning and reflection made it possible for the community members to gradually overcome the previously held image of former KR leaders as a uniform and undifferentiated category of evil people. These shifts in perspective among community members interacting with former KR leaders became an important foundation for social reconciliation.

In addition, the case study of Cambodia expanded the discussion on the elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition, a key feature of enduring functional coexistence. It demonstrated how significantly and adaptively members of a divided community could alter their perceptions of their former adversaries through direct encounters, expanding the scope of day-to-day interactions with them. The paces and degrees of such shifts in perception and behavior varied greatly from community to community and from individual to individual.

None of these findings should be interpreted to suggest that close-knit local communities can easily develop functional coexistence. This cautionary note is

especially important in post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia, where deep-seated emotional challenges could have reversed any progress toward coexistence. A number of the interviewees supported this observation by sharing their own emotional challenges such as fear, anger, abhorrence, and guilt associated with their encounters with former KR leaders. One interviewee described these emotional challenges well: "We had to be very patient. There was no other way but to endure it. I felt exactly what (the popular Khmer expression of) 'swallow the stone' meant" (Interviewee X 2020). Despite the general trends toward coexistence, a large number of community members excluded former KR leaders from community life, signaling their refusal to forgive them (Interviewee II 2021; Interviewee IV 2020; Interviewee V 2019).

While recognizing these lasting challenges, this chapter still conveyed a general sense of what the enduring state of functional coexistence looked like in the local communities of post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia. It also demonstrated how functional coexistence contributed to the communities' stability and security and fostered conditions for social reconciliation.

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5 Functional Coexistence in Cyprus

Negotiating the Seemingly Non-Negotiable Limits of Mutually Acceptable Actions across the Intercommunal Divide

Gül M. Gür

Introduction: Unique Features of Functional Coexistence in Cyprus

Over the last six decades, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, their respective guarantor powers, and international actors have engaged in official and unofficial talks and bicommunal projects. These activities persist despite the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement and sustainable peace in Cyprus. These historical and structural characteristics of Cypriot society make it a suitable case study of enduring functional coexistence, whereby sustained conditions of negative peace and mutual non-recognition converge.

Enduring functional coexistence in Cyprus is supported by the military presence of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces, Turkish troops, and two British military bases. Although these interventions are far from favorable domestically and internationally for most Cypriots, they enable the sustained absence of direct violence and thus support functional coexistence in Cyprus. In the absence of these two factors, the prospect of the two sides' ability to ensure security, stability, and coexistence would be uncertain. The two sides' deep distrust, coupled with energy disputes and increasing militarization in the region, as well as the eruption of conflicts elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Gaza Strip, present significant challenges to the prospect of troop withdrawal. The combined effect of these challenges, along with the sustained presence of troops, maintains both sides of the conflict in an enduring state of functional coexistence.

The enduring state of functional coexistence in Cyprus has emerged under these precarious conditions of controlled stability backed by the international military presence and external political pressure. However, within this externally controlled environment of intercommunal interactions, Cypriots across the two sides of the divide have strived to find voice and agency to sustain and expand the realms of coexistence and cooperation, albeit in a limited scope.

To explain Cypriots' experiences of inter-communal tension and coexistence, this chapter makes five points. First, it presents a brief history of the conflict in Cyprus, setting the stage for the remainder of the analysis. Second, it briefly outlines key efforts in peace negotiations as they help us understand the context in which a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention

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will be explored. Third, it explains contested forms of intercommunal interactions and coexistence in Cyprus. Fourth, it discusses the role of opened border crossings in intercommunal exchange as an example of minimally livable social space (MLSS), a key concept in the theory of functional coexistence. Fifth and finally, it explores how to expand the scope of intercommunal engagement through different adaptations of a functional coexistence approach, drawing upon lessons from the preceding sections.

Brief History of the Conflict in Cyprus

The island of Cyprus, with its geographic location in the Eastern Mediterranean, has always played a strategic role for empires, migrants, and traders. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the island became a conflict hotspot. After more than three centuries of Ottoman rule, Cyprus was leased to the British in 1878 and then colonized by them. This colonization process intensified Greek and Turkish nationalism in Cyprus (Papadakis, Peristianis, and Welz 2006). The Greek Cypriot underground nationalist organization Ethnikí Orgánosis Kipriakoú Agónos (EOKA) emerged to fight for self-determination with the ideological and political goal of union (*enosis*) with Greece, and the Turkish Cypriot resistance organization Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı (TMT), defended the ideological and political goal of partition of the island known as *taksim*. The struggle against British colonialism and the intercommunal conflict between the two communities over differing national visions for the island continued until the end of colonial rule and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) in 1960. ROC's establishment, however, did not put an end to the tensions. Instead, it marked a new phase in the island's conflict history (Figure 5.1).

The 1959 London-Zurich agreement introduced a settlement for the ideological and intercommunal disputes, leading to the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC), comprising of Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. According to this power-sharing agreement, the President of Cyprus was a Greek Cypriot, while the vice president was a Turkish Cypriot, elected by their respective communities for a five-year term. The two communities shared executive authority but maintained veto powers over specific decisions, ensuring that neither community could dominate the other. The legislative branch had a 70–30 ratio in the parliament (35 Greek Cypriots to 15 Turkish Cypriots). The judiciary had an equal number of judges on the Supreme Court. In addition, the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee signed between Cyprus, Greece, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom allowed these external actors to become the guarantors of the two ethnic-religious communities and "prohibited any activity likely to promote, directly or indirectly, either union with any other state or partition of the island" (Treaty of Guarantee 1960).

Not long after the establishment of the Republic, the Greek Cypriot side demanded constitutional amendments on issues ranging from local governance to finance. These amendments were not accepted by Turkish Cypriots,

Figure 5.1 Map of Cyprus.

Source: Adopted from the United Nations https://www.un.org.geospatial/sites/www.un.org.geospatial/files/files/documents/2020/Apr/cyprus_4038_r1_mar19.pdf

and the constitutional crisis resulted in a dysfunctional government. That process eventually resulted in the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots from the government. The main motivation behind the constitutional amendments was that the underlying ideologies of *enosis* and *taksim* continued to dominate political life even after the establishment of the new republic. Given these competing ideologies, the two societies could foster neither intercommunal coexistence nor an aspirational common identity of "Cypriot-ness" (Adams 1966).

By December 1963, a new round of intercommunal violence erupted after the withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriot side from government offices. Different narratives emerged from the two sides about who instigated the violence. Greek Cypriots presented the return to violence as a "Turkish Cypriot insurrection to promote partition" (Hadjipavlou and Kanol 2008, 8), while Turkish Cypriots framed it as a plan devised by Greek Cypriots to achieve "their expulsion from the government and the state apparatus of the Republic of Cyprus" Hadjipavlou and Kanol 2008, 8.

Amid the violence, in 1964, UN Security Council Resolution 186 authorized the deployment of a United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the establishment of the "good offices mission" in Cyprus (UNSC 1966). Despite the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots from the government and public offices of the new Republic, the United Nations recognized the Greek-governed ROC as the legitimate government out of necessity. The deployment of the peacekeeping mission also created the UN Buffer Zone, commonly referred to as the Green Line, which divides the island from east to west. Soon after, Turkish Cypriots began to migrate to and live in enclaves (cantons) scattered all over the island as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and mobilized the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) to ensure their security.

Another round of intercommunal violence occurred from 1967 to 1974. Greek Cypriot leader Glafkos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash engaged in discussions to revive the ROC constitution. Although the two sides were close to achieving an agreement in 1973, President Makarios of the Greek Cypriot-governed ROC rejected the final agreement. Soon thereafter, in July 1974, EOKA-B, a Greek Cypriot paramilitary organization, staged a coup against the government of Cyprus with the support of the Greek junta to achieve *enosis* (union) with Greece. Türkiye, acting as the guarantor power for Turkish Cypriots, considered this a violation of the Treaty of Guarantee and intervened militarily on the island, maintaining a presence in the territory north of the Green Line ever since.

In the aftermath of 1974, Cyprus has settled into a prolonged period of what can be described as negative peace, the absence of intercommunal violence, as well as lack of sustainable intercommunal peace for nearly five decades. While many Cypriots and international stakeholders consider the absence of intercommunal violence as a positive phenomenon, the absence of sustainable peace is far from ideal for the majority of Cypriots. Functional coexistence, a state of affairs that evades war yet falls short of peace, encompasses such distinct characteristics of the enduring state of non-fighting in Cyprus.

Even if this is not an ideal state, it provides at least a minimum condition for individuals who do not subscribe to either the *enosis* or *taksim* ideology to strive for a Cyprus based on a common identity of Cypriot-ness and to fight for a dignified life for all Cypriots as equal citizens. This chapter highlights the efforts of these individuals who stay in the conflict and constructively engage with the other side, taking incremental steps toward a more ideal state of intercommunal coexistence in Cyprus. Supporting these efforts is of critical importance in preventing the return of violence to the island.

Peace Efforts in Cyprus

Since 2010, when Cyprus and Israel started hydrocarbon exploration, long-established geopolitical rivalries in the Eastern Mediterranean have intensified. These developments have led to maritime boundary disputes, a surge in regional militarization, and the involvement of external powers, escalating tension throughout Cyprus and its surrounding areas (International Crisis Group 2023). Recently, there were challenging presidential and parliamentary elections in the ROC, Greece, and Türkiye in 2023. At the end of 2023, the Hamas attack on Israel and the war on Gaza increased the tension in the region. Despite these developments and the stalled peace negotiations in Cyprus, the two sides have maintained some level of intercommunal exchanges.

The framework employed to analyze the bicommunal interactions is John Paul Lederach's (1997) pyramid of peacebuilding actors and interventions (see Chapter 2). According to this model, senior military, political, and religious leaders can organize a formal (Track I) conflict intervention. They may also organize a "Track 1.5 initiative," where Track I leaders participate in peacebuilding activities more informally as private citizens. Cyprus has seen several Track I and Track 1.5 initiatives designed to resolve intercommunal crises, including the 1963 eruption of the intercommunal violence. The initial round of intercommunal talks under the UN Good Offices took place between 1968 and 1974, followed by the formal peace talks in Geneva involving representatives of Greece, Great Britain, Türkiye, and the two sides of Cyprus. Another round of official intercommunal talks started in 1984 but came to a halt in 1986. To revive the momentum, intercommunal proximity talks were held in 1999, paving the way for the direct negotiations between 2002 and 2004. Further direct intercommunal talks took place between 2008 and 2012, resulting in the establishment of six working groups and seven technical committees. The latest round of negotiations was held in the Swiss town of Crans-Montana from 2014 to 2017 but failed to secure a peace deal. Following this failed attempt at formal negotiation, leaders of the two sides have exchanged several proposals on confidence-building measures (CBMs). However, they have not only failed to adopt any of these proposals but also have not generated any meaningful step to return to negotiation.

Despite repeated failures in peace negotiations, there has been a cumulative impact from the sustained interactions and dialogues between the conflict

parties on essential issues that have long divided them. For instance, major documents such as the Ghali Set of Ideas (1992), a UN-proposed framework for settlement; the Annan Plan (2004), a comprehensive proposal for reunification under a federal structure; the Convergences Document (2008–2012), a collection of agreements between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders on how to reunite Cyprus; and the Guterres Framework (2017), the latest UN-sponsored outline of proposed negotiations, have formulated foundational concepts for the future of Cyprus. These concepts include a bizonal, bicommunal federation, political equality, single sovereignty, international personality, and single citizenship. These documents represent the outcome of the two sides' sustained efforts to hold dialogues. These dialogues have provided opportunities for the two sides to hear each other's perspectives on deeply divisive issues. In addition, these dialogues and the resulting documents have been cumulative in nature, building on the foundations of the previous ones. For example, the final version of the Annan Plan took into consideration selected elements of the Framework and Ten Points Agreements, Cuéllar's Proposals, and Boutros-Ghali's Set of Ideas (Direkli 2022). In 2003, the Annan Plan was subjected to a referendum on each of the two sides. While the referendum failed on the Greek Cypriot side, the Turkish Cypriot referendum succeeded in securing a favorable vote for the Annan Plan.

One of the most notable examples of the two sides' sustained interactions that have proven capable of withstanding the repeated failures in political negotiations is the work of bicommunal technical committees. Supported by the United Nations, in 2008, then-Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias and then-Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat worked together to develop bicommunal technical committees. Subsequent leaders developed additional technical committees, resulting in the formation of twelve committees by 2015. The technical committees' purpose is to find solutions to everyday problems impacting the lives of all Cypriots. They aim to achieve this goal by promoting and facilitating increased cooperation and improved understanding between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots (UNDP, n.d.). Although the committees were established through the leadership (top-level or Track I), the scope of these committees' activities potentially encompasses all levels of society. Members of technical committees serve voluntarily and in an unofficial capacity, working on a wide array of technical issues. These include restoring cultural heritage sites, facilitating the exchange of cultural remnants, cooperating on measures designed to tackle crimes, working on education projects, addressing public health concerns (including pandemic-related issues), engaging in gender-related projects, and responding to natural disasters (Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Cyprus 2016). Despite Cyprus's challenging political climate, mutual distrust, and the two sides' reluctance to resume formal negotiations, some of the technical committees continue to meet and address the everyday challenges facing Cypriots (International Crisis Group 2023).

While top-level negotiations have repeatedly stalled, mid-level and grassroots engagements have continued across the intercommunal divide. Mid-level

actors and local peacebuilders collaborate, implementing informal peacebuilding activities to support high-level negotiations (Fisher 2016). Notable Track II workshops, ranging from the pioneering efforts by John Burton in 1966 to the current initiatives by the Geneva Center for Security Policy addressing Eastern Mediterranean energy issues,[1] demonstrate the feasibility of decades-long commitments to bicommunal work. International organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union play a crucial role in sustaining the two sides' coexistence and supporting civil society initiatives within the framework of liberal peacebuilding. The European Union engages strategically with civil society, prioritizing its interests and funding organizations aligned with liberal ideals (Lidén et al. 2016). Together to read "Together, both civil society and international organizations contribute to sustaining functional coexistence in Cyprus.

Grassroots organizations in Cyprus have also long endeavored to facilitate bicommunal initiatives and made significant progress in fostering reconciliation and peace on the island. They have organized a range of bicommunal grassroots initiatives such as clean-up events, cultural and language gatherings for women, youth festivals, and environmental projects (A4P, 2023). Psaltis and Cakal (2016) observe that these bicommunal grassroots activities have decreased prejudice, increased trust, and transformed relationships over time. In addition, in their recent research, Donno, Psaltis, and Zarpli (2021) found that enhanced contact among Cypriots holds the potential to moderate the polarized views of even the most stubborn segments of the population.

Contested Forms of Intercommunal Interactions and Coexistence in Cyprus

As previously discussed, functional coexistence is a sustained adversarial relationship in which parties in an intractable conflict view each other as an existential threat but refrain from resorting to physical violence to eliminate the threat (Arai 2022, 124). This paradoxical relationship draws upon an enduring state of negative peace as a foundation to work on. Furthermore, conflict parties and constituents involved in a state of functional coexistence have varying levels and perceptions of threat. In fact, some of these actors may not perceive any threat at all. It is important to note in this context that different communities and conflict actors engaged in functional coexistence experience various degrees and forms of coexistence. Arai (2022, 125) conceptualizes the different forms of coexistence along a spectrum, ranging from denial to non-recognition, acquiescence, unofficial recognition, official recognition, and cooperation. Arai (2022) also recognizes potential overlaps between these forms and their dynamic, continuous evolution, while rejecting the assumption of linear progression from more adversarial to less adversarial forms of relationships.

1 For more information about the Eastern Mediterranean Initiative, see https://www.gcsp.ch/events/eastern-mediterranean-initiative-building-regional-dialogue.

Functional coexistence in Cyprus is characterized by a combination of denial on one hand, and varying degrees of recognition, non-recognition, and cooperation on the other. An important point to note is that even a state of denial can become a foundation and starting point for fostering coexistence. More specifically, there are circumstances in which conflict parties who denounce their adversaries' legitimacy or even reject their political, social, historical, and cultural identity refrain from using physical force to eliminate them (Arai 2022, 125). Functional coexistence takes shape under these difficult circumstances, as illustrated by Cyprus.

Within each of the two communities in Cyprus, ultranationalists tend to denounce the legitimacy of their opposing community. Moreover, a vast majority of people in the South consider the North as an occupied territory as they link its status to Türkiye's intervention in 1974. They also question the legality of Turkish Cypriots' sustained presence on the island. Moreover, as Ioannou (2020, 50) observes, Greek Cypriots' educational system institutionalizes such identity-based categorical denial of Turkish Cypriots because it omits "the concept of 'Turkish Cypriots'" from school curriculums, the main vehicle for shaping the worldview and identity of the next generation.

The denial of historical adversaries takes place not only at the personal level but also at the collective level. Collective denial deepens with collective traumas, which shape one community's memory of its own history favorably while portraying its adversaries' histories negatively. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot perceptions of conflict history, as well as their chosen traumas and glories (Volkan 2004), differ significantly. For Greek Cypriots, the conflict started in 1974. Their wounds caused by the loss of their family members and homes in the North still hurt them (Volkan 2008). For Turkish Cypriots, the conflict started in 1963, when they lost their homes and family members throughout the island. As a result of the conflict, Turkish Cypriots had been living in enclaves for years before migrating to the North (Volkan 2008). The communities experienced different kinds of collective trauma. While some Cypriots acknowledge the trauma of the other with empathy, others deny it. Those who deny the other side's trauma view their present experience of functional coexistence as inseparable from their own historical trauma and indignation, which in turn justify their denial of the other community's trauma.

Some actors engaged in functional coexistence choose not to interact with their opponents whose social standing they refuse to recognize. Others opt for a less definitive method of rejection, namely, non-recognition or passive denial. According to Arai (2022), non-recognition involves "refusing to acknowledge the opponent's legitimacy while stopping short of taking proactive measures to enforce the refusal" (125). Cyprus provides a clear illustration of the dynamic and fluid nature of mutual non-recognition. At the official level, parties do not recognize each other's legal status. However, in practice, they continuously allow representatives from opposing sides to participate in bicommunal meetings and negotiations, while carefully avoiding the unresolved question of political status and recognition. In July 2023, despite the sustained deadlock in

formal negotiations, the leaders from both sides—Ersin Tatar from the Turkish Cypriot community and Nikos Christodoulides from the Greek Cypriot community—participated in the Committee on Missing Persons together and made constructive comments to the press afterward. This example of joint action illustrates that, despite their official policy of non-recognition, they can still meet to talk about the future of Cyprus and even foster a carefully defined scope of intercommunal collaboration. Still, when these leaders meet in their official capacities, they refrain from using their official titles. They instead use terms such as "the Turkish Cypriot community" and "Greek Cypriot leadership" to refer to each other. Despite these constraints and difficulties, the North-South relations in Cyprus have remained functional for five decades because they have never deteriorated into an extreme, debilitating form of power asymmetry in which the North would lose its agency. The establishment of a controlled mechanism of sustaining negative peace on the island, enabled by the international military presence, has contributed significantly to moderating the degree of power asymmetry. Working within this controlled mechanism and power asymmetry, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which Yael Navaro (2012) describes as the "make-belief-space," has proven to be a resilient, functioning polity. Despite its institutional flaws, TRNC has a constitution, political parties, elections, and a national assembly. It also has an educational system where students go to school every day, a health system where doctors treat patients, and a social security system that enables retirees to receive pensions. In addition, the local and international actors who reject the statehood of TRNC still acknowledge the presence of the Turkish Cypriot community and its social and historical identity. Arai's (2022, 125) continuum of coexistence characterizes such a form of interaction as *acquiescence*, defined as grudging acceptance. In the case of Cyprus, a discernible state of acquiescence has emerged over the years, as a significant part of the Greek Cypriot community and their international allies have come not only to reluctantly acknowledge Turkish Cypriots' sustained presence and their claim of political status but also to remain relatively quiet in their opposition to Turkish Cypriots' claim.

The bicommunal technical committees also illustrate the South's passive recognition of the North. Experts, influential opinion leaders, and members of civil society have participated in these committees since 2008 in an unofficial capacity to help resolve short to long-term problems. When working with these committees, Greek Cypriot representatives abstain from formally recognizing their Turkish Cypriot counterparts. Despite the two sides' skillfulness in making use of the state of passive recognition, the issue of recognition impedes their work from time to time. For example, when Greek Cypriot experts in bicommunal technical committees refuse to recognize the professional credentials of their Turkish Cypriot counterparts who received university degrees in the North, the Greek Cypriots' refusal, in effect, signals their non-recognition of the North's educational system (Interviews with Turkish Cypriot members of bicommunal technical committees, August 21, 2023).

The unrecognized status of the North has made it difficult for civil society actors from inside and outside Cyprus to work in the North because of their inability to bypass the question of TRNC's political status (Interview with civil society member, October 2023). For instance, when two communities decide to carry out bicommunal work, they either come up with politically uncontroversial and mutually acceptable terms to describe their project proposals to prevent the projects from being blocked, or they find civil society organizations recognized by both sides willing to serve as implementing partners. One such example is the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, which was founded in 1958, before the establishment of the Republic in 1960. Both sides consider the Chamber of the North as a mutually acceptable organization to carry out intercommunal activities. This arrangement illustrates how flexibly the two sides negotiate their boundaries of non-recognition, sustaining the functionality of coexistence.

The combined effect of the TRNC's status as an unrecognized yet politically functioning entity on the one hand, and its ability to gain (at least) passive recognition on the other, presents challenges and opportunities for the TRNC's efforts to stay actively engaged in this enduring conflict. The opportunities include Turkish Cypriots' assertion of their agency and legitimacy as a historical community. Their ability to project their agency and legitimacy internationally and across the line of division has helped sustain negative peace between the two sides while preventing their conflict from degenerating into war. However, this precarious situation was unconducive to the political elites on both sides to take risks and depart from the deeply entrenched status quo of negative peace, which they had long sustained under the prevailing condition of passive recognition. Therefore, while the two sides' long-standing practice in the "engagement without recognition" has served to maintain the status quo of negative peace, it has simultaneously limited their ability to foster favorable conditions for conflict resolution and reconciliation (Kyris 2018, 427–428).

The Catalytic Role of Border Crossings in Cypriots' Experiences of Functional Coexistence

In 2003, the two sides of the political divide decided to open their border crossings, enabling citizens on both sides to start interacting with each other across the divide. Prior to this landmark decision, it was only small bicommunal groups of Cypriots who could meet in the UN-monitored buffer zone. As of 2023, however, there are as many as nine border crossings open, expanding the scope of human interaction significantly. These border crossings play a catalytic role in fostering and sustaining functional coexistence across the political divide because they allow for intercommunal interactions in person. The social space for interaction realized by the border crossings in each of the two societies represents a minimal livable social space (MLSS), which Arai (2022) defines as "a geographic and/or relational context in which each party or society has its required minimum access to basic human needs of both material and non-material nature to ensure their survival and sustenance" (Arai 2022, 124).

Since the opening of the crossings, the scope and intensity of intercommunal interactions have expanded significantly (Yucel and Psaltis 2020). For example, in 2022, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, excluding tourists and foreigners, used the crossings approximately two million times and 1.5 million times, respectively (Theodoulou 2023). These are extraordinary numbers given the Greek Cypriot population of 920,000 (European Union 2023) and the Turkish Cypriot population of 380,000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TRNC 2023). These numbers illustrate a powerful role border crossings can play in fostering close-nit everyday interactions across the long-standing political divide.

There are two complementary ways, transactional and relational, in which intercommunal interactions have grown thanks to the opening of the border crossings. Transactional interactions refer to short-term encounters intended to meet the immediate interests of those involved. For example, a transactional interaction occurs when a Northern Cypriot visits the South for a few hours to work in a short-term job, or when a Greek Cypriot crosses the border to the North for shopping or dining out. In contrast, relational interactions involve long-term relationship-building efforts intended to foster lasting friendships, partnerships, and/or collaborations. These interactions may also occur in person, through communication technologies, or a combination of both. Relational interactions occur, for example, when a Northern Cypriot goes to the South to spend time with long-term friends, or when a Greek Cypriot joins a remote team in the North to develop a business partnership. The two types of interactions may intersect and overlap significantly. For instance, intercommunal interactions through everyday encounters may seem transactional and short-lived, yet they have the potential to evolve into long-term friendships or sustained professional collaborations.

Arai (2022, 125) conceptualizes such a dynamic and complex nature of social interactions by examining various forms of coexistence as well as different degrees of recognition among conflicting parties. The conceptual framework he presents aids in understanding how transactional and relational interactions across the island contribute, over time, to a multifaceted system of coexistence, which evolves and varies along the continuum of recognition and non-recognition. As Arai (2022, 125) argues, we may develop a dynamic, multi-dimensional perspective on recognition, as the degrees and nature of conflict parties' refusal to recognize each other change over time. Moreover, as Arai (2022) points out, these differences not only manifest across different levels of analysis (high-level, mid-level, grassroots), but also vary from one domain of interaction to another, for example, from political to economic or socio-cultural.

For Cypriots, border crossings hold different meanings, reflecting both transactional and relational aspects of social life (Dikomitis 2005; Hadjipavlou 2007; Farmaki, Antoniou, and Christou 2019). Some cross to the other side for practical and transactional purposes such as shopping, visiting a pharmacy, attending school, or dining out. Others cross the border for cooperation and collaboration with colleagues from the other side, brainstorming and

developing bicommunal projects, or simply catching up with old friends. For those affected by intercommunal violence or displaced on either side of the divide, an experience of border crossing enables them to bond or grieve with someone important, visit abandoned homes, search for missing loved ones, or simply enjoy the freedom of movement.

During the period of COVID-19 restrictions, the authorities on both sides closed the crossings for a total of fifteen months (Reuters 2021). The closures had adverse social and psychological impacts, especially on the younger generations who had never experienced forced physical isolation. During the border closures, they gained firsthand experience of division for the first time. The closures also re-traumatized the older population, who had experienced total border closures between 1974 and 2003.

Border crossings thus serve as both dividers and connectors between the two communities. While many Cypriots crossed the border at least once since its opening, there are still those who choose not to. This difference in people's readiness and willingness to engage with the other side represents the diverse nature of social experiences regarding functional coexistence among Cypriots. Moreover, despite people-to-people exchanges facilitated by the opening of the crossings, the intercommunal divide persists. This persistence indicates that border crossings play a catalytic role in Cypriots' experiences of functional coexistence, but they are not powerful enough to motivate the two communities to eliminate the line of division.

Expanding the Scope of Intercommunal Engagement through a Functional Coexistence Approach

As demonstrated by the preceding sections, functional coexistence in Cyprus encompasses different forms of intercommunal interactions, from denial to cooperation. These interactions take place across different domains of activities, from economic to political and socio-cultural. And yet, stalled political negotiations severely constrain the scope of individual and community interactions across domains of bicommunal activities. While senior national leaders on both sides, backed by their international stakeholders, have attempted to prematurely return to the negotiating table to break the political deadlock, formal talks, if realized, are likely to prove unproductive under the present circumstances. In this context, it is worth noting that the functional coexistence approach, as outlined by Arai (2022, 144), cautions against a premature push to bring reluctant conflict parties into dialogue. Instead, the functional coexistence approach prioritizes fostering a conducive environment in which the conflicting parties can live with the enduring condition of unresolved conflict while simultaneously exploring practical steps to create conditions that may, over time, make the deeply entrenched reality of non-resolution more amenable to future resolution.

To address the prolonged political stalemate, a functional coexistence approach to the conflict in Cyprus requires confronting and changing the

prevailing assumption of "stuckness." This can be accomplished through two complementary measures: (1) widely publicizing and communicating the cumulative impact of decades-long bicommunal efforts for peace interventions across different domains, and (2) expanding the scope, depth, and impact of intercommunal interactions. Concerning the first measure, it is essential for policymakers and civil society actors to recognize and build on the two communities' existing capacity to mobilize diverse official and unofficial actors and channels to transform the basis of the political deadlock. It is also important for them to apply a multi-layered systemic view of intercommunal interactions, which have, over time, proven resilient to recurring setbacks and failures in formal negotiations. Such a systemic and strategic view of historical change, if accepted widely, can go a long way toward empowering self-conscious conflict actors and peacebuilding leaders to challenge and overcome the prevailing assumption of changelessness and "stuckness" characteristic of stalled peace processes, such as those observed in Cyprus.

With respect to the second measure concerning the enhancement of intercommunal interactions, it is important that the two sides broaden the scope and variety of confidence-building measures (CBMs) aimed at fostering dialogue and mutual trust. It is noteworthy in this context that the leaders of both sides, who discussed the CBM proposals introduced during these negotiations, failed to agree on them due in part to the proposals being linked to the unresolved questions of whether to adopt a federal solution or a two-state solution. To overcome this history of failed negotiation, a recommendation under consideration is to decouple CBMs from the question of political status as much as possible. A more practical and strategic approach informed by the theory of functional coexistence would be to focus on easing existing restrictions on border crossings and gradually increasing the number of additional crossings, while separating these technical issues from the contentious question on political status. Another equally beneficial measure would be to strengthen political support for bicommunal technical committees within each society, outside the scope of formal political negotiations. It is recommended that both sides focus on utilizing bicommunal technical committees to devise practical measures to improve the lives of ordinary citizens within each of the two societies.

Cypriots are experiencing peace fatigue. The repeated failures in peace negotiations, coupled with constant international pressure to resume negotiations, have further deepened their disillusionment. However, amid this peace fatigue, there is still a silver lining in the long history of failed peace processes. Despite the stark differences between the two sides regarding their conditions for resuming negotiations, they keep their communication channels open and engage in nonviolent conflict. They periodically reiterate their respective conditions for returning to negotiations and even exchange new proposals on confidence building. These actions taken by the two sides indicate that they have not abandoned hope for a return to negotiations. The prolonged state of unresolved conflict in Cyprus is, therefore, highly dynamic and elastic, and never static.

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6 Northern Ireland
(Dys)functional Coexistence

Roger Mac Ginty

Introduction

By way of an introduction, it is worth considering two illustrative life scenarios that are perfectly possible in post-peace accord Northern Ireland. They illustrate how Northern Ireland can be classed as a case of (dys)functional functionality. The society is functional in the sense that a fulfilled life is possible for many and that the sustained political violence of what are referred to as "the Troubles" has ended. It is also functional in the sense that public service provision is reasonably good in comparison with other conflict-affected contexts. Moreover, for the most part, members of the two main identity groups have found ways of coexisting and, in some cases, living in high levels of harmony. The society is dysfunctional in that it is largely defined by an identity conflict based around two sets of incompatible nationalism. Catholic-nationalists would prefer that the northern part of Ireland is united with the Republic of Ireland to form a unitary state that is independent of Britain. Protestant-unionists would prefer that Northern Ireland remains part of the United Kingdom and is ultimately ruled by London. This fundamental fissure patterns Northern Ireland in multiple ways with Catholics and Protestants largely living apart, sending their kids to separate schools, and voting for political parties with very different agendas.

Life Scenario One

Aoife lives in a large detached house on the outskirts of Belfast. She has two high-end German cars in the driveway and works as a corporate lawyer for the Belfast branch of a large multinational company. She is a graduate of one of the local universities, and sends her kids to an integrated school in which Catholics and Protestants are educated together. She employs a cleaner and a childminder on a part-time basis. Although Aoife is from a Catholic background she is largely a-political, does not vote, and has a wide circle of friends including Catholics and Protestants. Aoife has a holiday home in Donegal, in the Republic of Ireland, and can travel there easily as there is free movement across the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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In previous decades the border was heavily militarized on its northern side, and crossing it was often an unpleasant experience. Aoife and her family regularly holiday abroad, and occasionally Aoife would eat in one of Belfast's Michelin starred restaurants. In a sense, Aoife has bought herself out of the conflict. Her middle-class status allows her a high standard of living, and she does not have to worry unduly about politics. Even though the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly is often suspended because of a lack of trust between political elites, for Aoife, Northern Ireland is functional. She can access the services she needs, has a fulfilled life, and has prospered professionally.

Life Scenario Two

Lisa lives in a poorly maintained housing estate (public housing project) on the northern outskirts of Belfast with her three kids. She is an unemployed single parent, having left school with few qualifications, and survives on meager state benefits. The area she lives in is heavily influenced by the remnants of a pro-UK militant group that has morphed into a drug dealing gang. Virtually everyone in the housing estate would identify as Protestant-unionist, although few worship regularly and most are so disenchanted with politics that they do not vote. Lisa's kids go to the local all Protestant school, and the family rarely leaves the immediate vicinity of the housing estate and the nearby retail parks. Lisa does not have any friends who would identify as Catholic-nationalist, and she would rarely encounter any in her daily pattern of life. Lisa took out a loan from the drug gang, but when she could not repay it, they forced her to engage in money laundering, and she was given a short prison sentence that was suspended because of her childcare needs. The state provides a basic income, accommodation, schooling, and access to healthcare for Lisa and her kids but Lisa has not experienced upward social mobility in post-accord Northern Ireland. Indeed, the socio-economic gap between Aoife and Lisa means that Lisa is expected to live eleven years less than Aoife (The Health Foundation 2020). Lisa has not experienced anything that could be described as a "peace dividend" arising from the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement.

The two life scenarios sketched above illustrate functionality within dysfunctionality. In both cases, there is no risk to life from political violence, the state provides healthcare and other public services, and, for Aoife at least, there are opportunities for economic advancement. Yet Northern Ireland is deeply dysfunctional. There is a massive chasm in society between Catholic-nationalists and Protestant-unionists. Despite a major peace accord in 1998, there has been no serious attempt at reconciliation or dealing with the past that would seek to move a grudging coexistence closer to something approximating to positive peace and conciliation. The Good Friday Agreement effectively legitimized the two sets of nationalism (one pro-united Ireland and the other pro–United Kingdom) and solidified competition between them (Horowitz 2002). As a result, dysfunction, which was political and culturally entrenched, became hardwired into political institutions.

This chapter seeks to unpack the extent to which Northern Ireland is simultaneously functional and dysfunctional, and thus unpack the concept of functional coexistence (Arai 2022). In particular, the chapter is interested in the functional aspect of functional coexistence. Northern Ireland is functional in the sense that public service provision is generally good compared to many other societies that have suffered conflict; there is a basic level of security for most people, and elections are held on a regular basis. It is, however, also deeply dysfunctional in that a major division exists in society that has real consequences in how society operates and how lives are lived. The vast majority of schoolchildren (93 percent in 2023), for example, attend either Catholic or Protestant schools and thus might have few opportunities to meet with children from the out-group (Devine 2023). Over 80 percent of votes cast are for political parties that are explicitly in favor of a united Ireland or Northern Ireland remaining in the United Kingdom (The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland 2023). To be clear, those who support a united Ireland do not want to live in the state they reside in and want to see fundamental constitutional change. There is also a significant—and largely unaddressed—legacy of the violent conflict whether in terms of a failure to deal with the past, continuing mental health and trauma issues, and everyday sectarianism. On the surface, a visitor to Northern Ireland may travel through Northern Ireland and see a functional (if often rainy) society. But scratch the surface, and it is clear that the society is deeply dysfunctional.

In terms of structure, the chapter begins with a very brief reprise of the functional coexistence concept and particularly some thoughts on the extent to which it can be applied to Northern Ireland. A key contribution of this chapter is its unpacking of the functionality aspect of the notion of functional coexistence. The chapter then outlines how Northern Ireland can be characterized as functional, followed by a section that examines its dysfunction. In its conclusion, the chapter considers how functionality and dysfunctionality can coexist.

The Concept of Functional Coexistence and Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland meets many of the essential criteria for functional coexistence, yet it is a case study that also challenges the concept. The concept can be described as "an enduring state of non-resolution" (Arai 2022, 122) in that the main conflict—between Catholic-nationalists and Protestant-unionists, with the British Government and to a lesser extent the Irish Government also conflict parties—remains unresolved and is essentially intractable given that the two sets of nationalism are mutually incompatible. It is a situation of "sustained negative peace" (Arai 2022, 122), with the 1998 peace accord in place for over a generation and little public appetite for a return to large-scale violence. As will be described in detail in the chapter, many individuals and communities in Northern Ireland have been able to eke out a "minimum liveable social space" (Arai 2022, 124). Indeed, as Aoife's life scenario illustrated, much more than a minimum is possible for much of the population.

Parts of the functional coexistence formulation fit less easily with contemporary Northern Ireland. While it is fair to characterize the conflict as "intractable," it is not the case that the conflict "resists all forms of resolution" (Arai 2022, 123). Northern Ireland has experienced a major peace process resulting in a peace accord. While this did not "solve" the conflict, it brought an end to most violence and ushered in significant social and economic transformation. The consociational nature of the peace accord also challenges the functional coexistence criterion in which parties to a conflict refuse to "recognize one another's social and political legitimacy" (Arai 2022, 123). The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement stipulated that people in Northern Ireland had the right to identify as Irish, British, or both. The Agreement was reached by all of Northern Ireland's main political parties (bar the Democratic Unionist Party) and endorsed by 71 percent of voters in Northern Ireland in a referendum, suggesting that a mutual recognition of "the other" was widespread. The Agreement also included a provision that a referendum on Northern Ireland's constitutional status could be called if the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland believed that the population would support change. In other words, the peace deal not only enshrines mutual legitimacy, but it also includes a mechanism to change the territory's constitutional status if a majority wishes it.

This is not to say that the 1998 peace accord has been an unalloyed success. There have been bad-tempered attempts to renegotiate various parts of it, and some parts of the Agreement have been ignored and other parts implemented in name only.

In the main, this chapter seeks to unpack the functional aspect of the functional coexistence formulation. In its original formulation, "[t]he term functional suggests the utility of coexistence being limited to a minimalist condition of non-fighting" (Arai 2022, 124). This chapter concentrates on a full understanding of the meanings of "functional" so as to include aspects of government and governance, social relations, and economic development. All of these factors—political, social, and economic—are interrelated, and it seems prudent that explorations of the concept of functionality look beyond politics and security. Whether political institutions work, whether the economy delivers for people, and the extent to which individuals and communities can enjoy "the good life" seem relevant. In essence, the chapter takes a sociological view of functionality and considers the extent to which it enables people to get on with their everyday lives (Brewer 2018, 2010). At the political level this means the operation of constitutional and governance mechanisms that facilitate more than bare-life (and often much more than bare life) in everyday contexts. At the level of inter- and intra-group relations, functionality means an environment that allows people to get on with daily life free from violence and the threat of violence. The reverse, or dysfunctionality, refers to conditions that restrict social relations or are freighted with violence or the threat of violence. Functionality, however, may not necessarily extend to pro-social or pro-peace actions and orientations, in other words positive peace. Instead, a more parsed

or minimalist perspective may be placed on functionality. In this view, functionality may operate in the realm of the non-escalation of conflict as opposed to conflict de-escalation. In conflict-affected contexts, like Northern Ireland, inter-group encounters and thus the opportunity to engage in de-escalation may be limited.

Orientating functionality to be mindful of the sociological realm, that is, cognizant of how life is lived, also seems in keeping with notions of local (Björkdahl and Höglund 2013; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013), everyday (Berents 2015; Brewer 2018) and experiential (Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara, and Redhead 2019) approaches to peace. Such approaches are aware that peace, conflict, and all conditions in between are made and remade by people on-the-ground through their everyday actions, stances, and forms of communication. This everyday peacemaking occurs, of course, in conjunction with structural factors, but it is worth pointing out that the lines between structure and agency are very much blurred. The key point is that the concept of functionality can be usefully broadened to encapsulate the quality of peace as constructed, maintained, subverted, narrated, and experienced by people in the area under study.

A Functional Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's functionality can be grouped into three broad and interdependent categories: political, social, and economic. All three categories also appear in the section on dysfunctionality, and so it is clear that the picture is mixed and open to interpretation. As in so many things, a strict binary does a disservice to the complexity of the situation. In terms of political functionality, it is possible to point to a major peace accord (Coulter and Shirlow 2023; Mitchell 2023) and renegotiations of that peace accord (Coakley and Todd 2020). Although the road to the peace accords was rocky, the accord does point to a willingness on the part of the main parties in Northern Ireland (bar one) and the British and Irish governments to lower the costs of the conflict. Peace accord implementation has been difficult, but at least there have been peace accords in the first place. As mentioned, a major force for stability has been a long-term and largely cooperative relationship between the British and Irish governments in seeking to manage Northern Ireland (Birrell 2012). That relationship has been harmed by the British government's imposition of Brexit despite a majority in Northern Ireland voting against it (Hayward 2020; Kelly and Tannam 2023), and by legislation that sought to end any redress that victims of the conflict might have against the British state and others (Quirk 2023). At the level of the permanent bureaucracy, however, relations have remained good.

While the Northern Ireland Assembly, established under the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and with a remit on matters devolved from Westminster, has been in a state of suspension for over 40 percent of its operation (Flannagan 2022), the state has still managed to operate. The London-based civil service

has stepped in when required to keep essential government functions ticking over (Sargeant 2022). This has not been without its problems and public services have suffered (Baraniuk 2024). Yet, by and large, the system functions, albeit in the context of continued UK decline. Local government has functioned throughout the suspensions of the devolved Assembly, with the main nationalist and unionist parties sitting in the same chambers and making decisions on local matters. Other indicators of political functionality come in the form of regular elections, some degree of transparency, freedom from corruption (although spectacular graft is not unheard of (McBride 2019)), and an absence of street politics (most of the time) in most areas of Northern Ireland. Fundamentally, in terms of political stability, most political violence has ended. The main militant groups called ceasefires as part of the 1990s peace process and have largely disarmed. A legacy of violence remains, much of it hidden and manifesting itself in terms of violence against women and girls (McCambridge 2024) and mental health issues. Overall, however, Northern Ireland has been transformed from a heavily militarized region in which the state carried out repeated and systematic human rights abuses in the name of securing the population against violence from pro-united Ireland and pro-UK militant groups.

Economically, Northern Ireland is an advanced post-industrial country located in Western Europe. It has benefited, particularly, in terms of infrastructure investment, from generous European Union priority funding (Buchanan 2016)—a resource with an uncertain future in the post-Brexit era. Major service, creative, and manufacturing corporations operate in Northern Ireland, and many university graduates have benefited from the knowledge economy. Invest Northern Ireland, a government-sponsored body designed to attract foreign direct investment, has had some success (Invest 2022). The Brexit deal also left Northern Ireland in some European Union markets, a factor that some economic sectors have been able to exploit. The tourism sector, in particular, has thrived with new hotels opening in Belfast (Bain 2023), and Northern Ireland benefiting from tourism linked with the creative industries (Carroll 2022).

Much of the population is able to live fulfilled lives in the social and cultural spheres. Northern Ireland hosts many big-name international entertainers, and there is no shortage of social and cultural outlets. The security situation is significantly different from the era of the "Troubles," and so people are able to live much more than a bare life. Indeed, it is possible to drive through most of Northern Ireland and get the impression of a society that is fully functional. The rule of law prevails in most areas, with civil law fully functioning across the full range from property exchange to family law and commercial law. Divisions between nationalists and unionists are not particularly visible in many aspects of life. Fair employment legislation has meant that large workplaces have to employ Catholics and Protestants, and the proportion of each is monitored. Multiple inter-group interactions pass off as normal, with no relation to wider political conflict. Workplaces, universities, the health sector, much retail, and

many other sectors are spaces of functional cooperation between people who differ on constitutional outlook but can "get on with it." Mixed marriages (between Catholics and Protestants) are thought to be on the rise (Butterly 2023), although there are no formal statistics on this, and the integrated schools sector, whereby Catholic and Protestant children are educated together, now accounts for about 8 percent of the school sector (Gallagher 2022). The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, which claims to have no formal position on Northern Ireland's constitutional position, has been on the rise electorally (Tonge 2020), suggesting that the notion of a shared Northern Ireland is possible for some at least. The Party is actually soft unionist but has skillfully created a narrative that subordinates its unionism into a neutral-sounding story of people just getting along. Northern Ireland has also been a site of inward migration, an unusual phenomenon for a society that has traditionally been all white and has seen significant outward migration as people sought to escape violence, division, and poor economic prospects.

In a sense, Northern Ireland is an agonistic space (Strömbom 2019); there is a widely held recognition and acceptance of conflict and division and a resolve to manage it rather than engage in emancipatory and transformative processes that would proactively address the causes of conflict. There is a widespread societal consensus that looking the other way and avoiding the elephant in the room (most of the time) are preferable to the discomfort of either acting out the conflict to the fullest (that is, nationalists and unionists opting for an extreme version of their political choice) or addressing root causes. Although the armed actors have stepped back, and there is little threat of serious political violence, the conflict is stuck in a holding pattern between escalation on the one hand and de-escalation on the other. The upside of this is that it allows life to continue "as normal" for many, yet and as will be explained later, it is a normality tinged with dysfunction.

While the "peace" in Northern Ireland is undergirded by an elite political bargain in the form of a peace accord, the on-the-ground peace relies on so-called ordinary people deploying an array of everyday tactical agencies that allow them to navigate through the awkwardness (and potential exclusion and violence) of a deeply divided society (Mac Ginty 2021). The most significant form of agency comes in the form of avoidance, or avoiding people, places, and situations that might be conflictual (Brett et al. 2024). This avoidance can be structural in the sense of people making a choice to live in an area dominated by their in-group. Most people in Northern Ireland reside in an area in which their identity group constitutes the majority, giving much of the territory the character of a series of enclaves that are safe and convenient spaces for one group but exclusionary to another group (Marijan 2017). Avoidance can also be tactical with individuals and communities avoiding encounters with out-group members (and extreme in-group members) so as to minimize awkwardness or the risk of some sort of escalation. Avoidance can take many forms, pointing to the emotional intelligence and situational awareness that individuals deploy in micro-encounters. For example, an individual may grayscale or

hide their real identity in a public space. Thus, they may give their name as the neutral "John" or "Zoe" to the barista in Starbucks rather than "Séan" or "Elisabeth" that may indicate a Catholic or Protestant background, respectively.

On an everyday basis, people use dissembling (saying one thing but thinking another), pretending not to see offensive vandalism/graffiti, and avoiding language that could be regarded as partisan or even offensive or escalatory. They endure and get on with their lives. Individuals become skillful at compartmentalization. While firmly in the category of negative peace, such compartmentalization allows for the society to function for individuals and communities to avoid conflict escalation. The following life scenario illustrates this compartmentalization:

Life Scenario Three

Jim is an engineer who works for a public body that is jointly funded by the devolved Northern Ireland Executive and the Government of the Republic of Ireland. This institutional cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on thematic policy issues arose from the 1998 peace deal. Jim comes from a Protestant-unionist background but works perfectly well with his Catholic-nationalist colleagues. At the beginning of Jim's career, his unionism meant that he preferred if he did not have to cooperate with colleagues from the Republic of Ireland, but he has gotten used to it. Politics is never spoken about in the workplace. He lives in a mixed (that is, Catholic and Protestant) middle-class neighborhood and has good, if formal and reserved, relations with his neighbors. Jim is married to a fellow Protestant. In the safety of the home he might use language and express opinions that are mildly bigoted. Certainly it is a language that he would not use in a workplace environment. In the small town where Jim lives, there are two butcher shops, one owned by a Catholic family and the other by a Protestant family. Jim shops in the Protestant shop, even though both shops sell largely the same produce, and the Catholic-owned shop is nearer to his home. The picture that emerges is of someone who compartmentalizes the public/professional and private aspects of their life. The public and professional part of their life is assiduously neutral. The private part of their life is lived in a single-community mindset. Jim is not particularly bigoted (compared with some of his co-religionists). Instead, much of Jim's in-group preferences stem from cultural patterning and convenience. There is nothing to stop Jim from shopping at the Catholic butcher shop, but he finds it more convenient and less awkward to shop at the Protestant one.

The key point from this section is that a functional Northern Ireland exists (and, as we will see, a dysfunctional Northern Ireland exists too). Politically, a major peace accord has been reached and it has been successful in that it has facilitated the end to most political violence, allowed for a power-sharing form of representation, and enabled the continued delivery of public goods. Forms of functionality can be found that extend far beyond people living together in a context of the absence of violence. Many people are able to thrive in Northern

Ireland, and living standards far exceed those found in many other conflict-affected contexts. In this interpretation, Northern Ireland is both functional and the site of successful coexistence. The two main identity-based communities coexist in sustained non (direct)-violence. Indeed, some within Northern Ireland have moved beyond coexistence to more advanced forms of conciliation. Although constituting a minority, it is possible for people to live significant parts of their lives in ways that largely avoid being defined as a member of the Catholic-nationalist or Protestant-unionist bloc. This is important as it denotes that the blocs are not hegemonic: dissent is possible, as is a disinterest in politics and non-participation in in-group activities and forms of identification. Not all people who identify as Catholic would support a united Ireland, and not all people who would identify as Protestant are opposed to it.

A Dysfunctional Northern Ireland

The following description of a dysfunctional Northern Ireland follows the above description of a functional Northern Ireland, suggesting that the extent to which the territory can be described as being in a state of "functional coexistence" is open to interpretation. As with the section above, the consideration of Northern Ireland as dysfunctional will be divided into the political, economic, and social categories. Again, it is worth noting that this interpretation of function is shaped by sociological perspectives that look beyond the political realm and the containment of direct violence.

Politically, Northern Ireland is deeply divided with substantial sections of its population disagreeing profoundly about the best constitutional outcome for the society. This basic fault-line patterns much of the society with views on a range of topics becoming binarized. Despite a major peace accord being reached in 1998, the territory is in a permanent state of unsettlement (Bell and Pospisil 2017). The prospect of a border poll (a referendum to be called if the British government appointed Secretary of State believes that there is a prospect of public support for change in Northern Ireland's constitutional status) means that Protestant-unionist versus Catholic-nationalist competition defines politics. The release of census results in 2023 revealed that the number of Catholics in Northern Ireland exceeded the number of Protestants for the first time, sparking anxiety among Protestant-unionists (Cooley 2021).

By recognizing the legitimacy of two sets of nationalism, the Belfast Agreement has solidified the outlines of the conflict and disincentivized attempts to address it. The power-sharing model of the devolved Assembly means that the posts of First Minister and Deputy First Minister are divided between a unionist and a nationalist political leader. The Agreement had relatively little to say about reconciliation, and most political leaders have shown no interest in the topic. Relations between the leaders of the main political parties are a record of toxicity (BBC News 2023), and the collapse of the power-sharing Assembly in 2022 is widely thought to be down to the unwillingness of the pro-UK Democratic Unionist Party to see Sinn Féin hold the First

Minister position for the first time. The Assembly was re-established in February 2024 but only after considerable wrangling and while the First and Deputy First Minister have pledged to work together, recent history shows that the political model is prone to regular collapse. The political dysfunctionality has real-life costs. For example, the health service is the worst performing in the United Kingdom, and political stalemate has prevented reform. The head of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine reflected, "If we don't have a functioning government, we can't move forwards. One of the functions of that government would be to listen to clinical staff who hold the answer to many of the challenges" (cited in Graham 2024, 9).

While most political violence has ended, a low level of violence has continued and militant groups (particularly among pro-UK groups) have morphed into criminal gangs (Northern Ireland Executive 2017). While levels of public disorder have declined, there are still occasional flare-ups, and the symbolic politics of exclusion (mainly flying flags that might be offensive to "the other side") is widespread (Muldoon, Trew, and Devine 2020; Bryan 2018). In large part, this is abetted by the police force who claim that removing offensive flags is likely to provoke an angry public response. The result is that many areas of Northern Ireland are "marked" with symbolic identifiers that denote territorial exclusiveness.

Parts of the 1998 peace accord have been ignored. For example, a civic assembly that would—in theory at least—allow voices from civil society to have a consultative voice was never taken seriously and was not revived after one of the many collapses of the Northern Ireland Assembly. While the British and Irish governments worked well to bring about the 1998 peace deal and also worked to revive it, the British government lost interest in Northern Ireland in the Brexit and post-Brexit era. London-appointed Secretaries of State tended to be of low caliber (Kelly 2019), with one journalist describing Chris Heaton-Harris as having "fused ignorance, weakness, misplaced self-confidence and discreditable behavior to an extent which has undermined the Government's central strategic policy on Northern Ireland" (McBride 2023). The level of attention paid by the government in London to Northern Ireland is important as major political change only occurs when the British government—as the main veto-holder—is engaged.

Economically, the Northern Ireland economy grew, in real terms, by 38 percent in the period between the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and 2023. This is more or less in keeping with the rest of the United Kingdom and does not denote a substantial economic dividend that would have seen higher growth or a peace dividend bounce-back (Northern Ireland Assembly 2024, 2). The economy was deemed to be "stuck in low growth" (Campbell 2024), a factor not unrelated to the wider malaise of the UK economy. Socially, sectarianism is still a major frame of reference for everyday life for many people. Whether in schooling, residential patterns, or cultural consumption, there is a major division at the heart of society. The picture is more complex than a complete Catholic versus Protestant binary, and many people have found ways in to coexist and reconcile with "the other." Yet, as John Nagle notes "sectarianism

in Northern Ireland is not simply a marker of immutable ethnoreligious characteristics, but is instead a form of constant boundary marking in which practically anything can become a signal for difference and contestation" (Nagle 2022). Thus, there is and has been for centuries a constant culture war in which various issues are viewed through a sectarian lens. For example, a Minister from the Democratic Unionist Party claimed that COVID was more prevalent in pro-united Ireland areas than pro-UK areas. It was a claim without foundation, but it illustrates how sectarian or conflict-related logics often operated by default (Halliday 2020).

Concluding Discussion

The picture that emerges is of a society and polity in which a consociational political agreement institutionalizes a structured stand-off between pro-united Ireland nationalists and pro-UK unionists. At the same time, citizens employ multiple micro-strategies to make the society tick along. While armed groups have stepped back and the British government demilitarized its presence in Northern Ireland, the conflict holds shape. The major constitutional fault line remains in place. Significant anticipatory violence remains in that people are fearful of a return to violence, and this anticipation of violence shapes everyday and major life decisions such as the route taken to work or where to buy or rent somewhere to live (Brett et al. 2024).

Northern Ireland conforms to the notion of functional coexistence in that it hits three important markers of the concept. Firstly, there is a sustained negative peace. Well over a generation has passed from the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, and many promises contained therein have not been realized. Secondly, there is—to some extent—mutual denial of "the other." This applies particularly to the constitutional aims of the two main blocs. Unionists utterly oppose a united Ireland and nationalists do not wish to see a continuation of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. This mutual denial is not of the extreme form that might be found in contexts in which one group might have genocidal intentions against the other. Thirdly, there is not an extreme asymmetry between the conflict parties. The groups identifying as Catholic and Protestant in Northern Ireland are roughly of the same size. The 2021 census found that 46 percent of the population identified as Catholic and 43 percent as Protestant (Madden 2022). In the 2022 elections to the power-sharing Assembly, pro-united Ireland parties gained 39.6 percent of the vote and pro-UK parties gained 40.1 percent (or 53.5 percent if the unionist-leaning Alliance Party is added to the tally). The key point is that the main Northern Ireland conflict does not have a minority anymore, or one that can easily be oppressed.

In a sense, Northern Ireland is "stuck." There is no momentum to push the polity toward a new major agreement and move the dial further away from negative peace and toward positive peace. At the same time, there is little public support for a return to violence, and any sustained or major campaign would be impossible in a context in which electronic surveillance and forensics operate at

a high level. Northern Ireland as a whole may be regarded as a minimum livable social space (MLSS) (Arai 2022, 124). Indeed, for many it may be referred to as a MLSS+ in that many people have access to more than the minimum in terms of material resources but also in terms of feelings of security and cultural fulfillment. This comfort (the surplus above the minimum) will very much depend on class and the ability of people to live in areas relatively unscarred by deep divisions. In addition to these territorial or physical Minimum Livable Social Spaces, there are also relational spaces in which individuals and groups find associational spaces that make life livable. Some of these spaces will be intra-group and some inter-group. Again, issues of class and "age and stage" will come into play, presenting a complex picture that confounds simple binarized accounts of Northern Ireland. A dynamic patchwork of relations exists that includes coexistence, conciliation, hostility, function, and dysfunction.

A key equation in relation to Northern Ireland's everyday functionality, or its ability to provide Minimum Livable Social Space, for some is that tolerable conditions enhance conflict longevity. The equation is not one of precise mathematics. Instead, it involves complex societal dynamics and what individuals, communities, and political parties regard as possible, impossible, desirable, and undesirable. In the absence of a mutually hurting stalemate (Zartman 1991) that might push conflict actors to investigate conflict-calming options, they inhabit and co-create conditions of endurance. To a certain degree conflict in Northern Ireland is tolerable. The peace process and peace accord substantially lowered the costs of the conflict allowing people like Aoife and Jim to live "the good life." For them, the conflict, in the form of a divided society, can be compartmentalized and its costs contained. Northern Ireland is functional for Aoife and Jim. For Lisa, there is little prospect of "the good life." Part of that is due to conflict legacies. But part of it is also due to the limitations offered by capitalist societies in which competition is part of life and is structured in such a way that existing power holders usually win (Karlberg 2005, 9). Either way, Northern Ireland is dysfunctional for Lisa.

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7 Agonistic Democracy

The Way Forward to Sustain Functional Coexistence in the Western Balkans?

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Introduction

Functional coexistence is an enduring state of negative peace in which conflict parties who refuse to recognize each other's legitimacy, political status, and/or social identity refrain from using force to settle their seemingly intolerable differences (Arai 2022). This concept serves to illustrate strained state-society relations in post-conflict societies. The extent to which the social contract is upheld depends on the framing of the political structure that governs the principles of inclusion and exclusion, along with the emergent public space and institutions. This chapter investigates the enduring systems of functional coexistence in two Western Balkan countries, Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo. State-society relations are examined through the prism of agonistic democracy. This type of democracy materializes when there is a confrontation between opposing hegemonic projects that can never be reconciled rationally. The antagonistic dimension is therefore always present, but it is enacted through a confrontation, the procedures for which are accepted by the adversaries. Agonistic democracy is an effective analytical instrument, as it captures two basic pillars of enduring systems of functional coexistence: sustained negative peace and mutual non-recognition.

This chapter starts with a theoretical discussion on the congruence of enduring functional coexistence and agonistic democracy. The first section explores the distinct manifestations of functional coexistence in the Western Balkans, whereby a contract signed between the state and the society justifies a political-constitutional framework that concurrently allows and disallows participation in public spaces and determines the nature and roles of the institutions that manage the quality of such participation. Agonistic democracies are generally motivated to pursue the twin objectives of hegemony and competition. In this respect, agonistic democracy offers a very useful model for explaining how functional coexistence reinforces negative peace unless an external disruption takes place. It is a negative contract between state and society that serves the basic functions of coexistence.

The second section provides a comparative perspective on Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. These cases offer perspectives on different manifestations of functional coexistence. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a more ambiguous one between the

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two. The Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) of 1995 marked the end of the three-year-long civil war between Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims). The DPA established a political framework that imposed a power-sharing arrangement between two entities, the Serb Republic, Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH), consisting of Bosniaks and Croats for what many call a cold peace (Cousens 1997; Eralp 2012; Chandler 2013). The DPA also set three constituent nations, Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats, at the expense of a unified Bosnian civic identity. The Office of High Representative remains the arbiter of the consociational framework that is the basis of the country's enduring functional coexistence. However, the irredentist rhetoric from Republika Srpska, a Serb-majority constituent entity within Bosnia-Herzegovina, challenges the state of negative peace and threatens to undo the controlled state of mutual non-recognition between Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. Emboldened by Russia's expansionist foreign policy, Bosnian Serb nationalists have grown increasingly vocal about their intent not to abide by the framework of the DPA. Kosovo is in worse shape. Increasing frequency of inter-communal confrontations and violence between the Albanian majority and the Serb minority threatens the sustainability of functional coexistence in the country. Serbian Special Operation Forces' involvement in a recent deadly confrontation in North Kosovo with the Kosovar police force further threatens regional peace and puts the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission on high alert.

The third and last section of the chapter examines how external actors can transition from functional coexistence by encouraging change in the agonistic democratic culture of these countries. The European Union, the United States, and other partners within the Transatlantic Alliance could play a constructive role in preventing further deterioration of the prevailing condition of functional coexistence while advocating for structural changes.

Connecting Agonistic Democracy to Functional Coexistence

Functional coexistence represents a distinct form of a negative social contract. It is defined by the framing of a political structure that governs the principles of inclusion and exclusion, along with the emergent public space and institutions. This section first analyzes different aspects of agonistic democracy as a conceptual model of political behavior that allows for functional coexistence. It describes the main tenets of enduring functional coexistence as defined by Arai (2022). In enduring functional coexistence, post-conflict societies enjoy a sustained negative peace for at least a generation, roughly corresponding to two to three decades. Secondly, this period of negative peace reinforces an enduring situation of mutual non-recognition and, at times, denial. Thirdly, adversaries pursue mutually exclusive political objectives of value assertion without denying the right of politically weaker adversaries to compete. Lastly, the emergent minimally livable social space (MLSS) allows for a minimal level of agency for groups and individuals to interact across territorial and social boundaries to meet their basic human needs.

Agonistic democracy adopts the premise of adversarial relationships as the centerpiece of political life (Mouffe 2016). According to this perspective, while adversaries agree on the principles of basic freedoms and equality before law, they understand these concepts very differently. In agonistic democracies, adversaries are in constant struggle with each other, as they try to make sure that their interpretation becomes hegemonic. However, this conflict over hegemony allows each opposing party to fight for its desired political state. In this respect, agonistic pluralism serves as a way out for divided societies suffering from the state of enduring functional coexistence.

Deliberation and mutual recognition of needs are frequently regarded as means to achieve reconciliation in post-conflict societies (Björkdahl 2012; Yordan 2009; Mundt 2020). The decade following the end of the Cold War led to a sense of optimism in defining the conditions for managing conflicts in heterogeneous societies, including respect for minority rights, democratic processes, and international intervention (Gurr 2002). Power-sharing, pluralism, and autonomy at the subnational level emerged as common practices for peacebuilding (Sambanis 2023). However, an overwhelming majority of peace processes are operationalized with an end-state of sustainable compromise, while others settle for nonviolent non-resolution or a cold peace (Arnault 2006, 2014). This edited volume explores functional coexistence as a working state of non-resolution where parties do not wish to coexist, yet they do in the absence of a viable alternative.

Enduring states of functional coexistence are supported by a well-defined legal framework that may eventually lead to a liberating form of agonistic pluralism. Agonistic systems of governance practice politics in the form of sustained disagreement (Shinko 2008, 2022). Contested ideas, positions, and interests are deemed vital for agonistic democracies (Mouffe 2005, 2013). In contrast to deliberative models where uninhibited communication between adversaries leads to a rational consensus and functional unity (Habermas 1984; Arendt 1979, 1990), agonistic models emphasize lack of consensus as a basis of rational politics (Mouffe 2005). They are similar to functional coexistence because they do not consider consensus as a realistic goal to strive for. Proponents of agonistic peace recognize that conflicts do not simply end but they continue through other nonviolent means. Conflict is inherent in politics, as is peacebuilding (Shinko 2022). Agonistic peace envisions governance that is "ordered, scripted and disciplined control" (Shinko 2008, 484–485). There are three main pillars of "agonistic peace": first, public and institutional spaces that control conflict dynamics nonviolently; second, inclusionary principles that recognize identity politics as the basis of pluralism (Hirblinger and Landau 2020); and third, the framing of an agreement that accommodates dissensus among former adversaries. Agonistic political systems create public and institutional spaces that serve a symbolic purpose of managing conflict dynamics nonviolently (Mouffe 2005; Weaver 2011). Peace agreements set the ground for providing institutional spaces for agonistic interactions between former adversaries (Strömbom and Bramsen 2022). These spaces are essential

in post-conflict democracies to manage conflicts nonviolently (Westphal 2020, 2022). It requires a fine balancing act between hegemonic actors, dissenters, and adversaries to sustain such institutional spaces (Mouffe 2013).

Echoing Lederach's three-level approach to peacebuilding (1997), which suggests coordination among top, mid-level, and grassroots actors for sustainable peace, the distinct adaptation of functional coexistence in the post-conflict Western Balkans requires *pluralistic institutions* representative of all levels of governance from city councils to national parliaments. Representation of identity groups at all levels of institutions would allow for agonistic political interactions to take hold and keep hegemony in check within the legal framework that guarantees rights to dissent and contest. In this respect, peace agreements serve as legal and political frameworks for ensuring agonistic public spaces and institutions for pluralist governance (Mouffe 2013).

These principles define the dialogical nature of agonistic relationships in peacetime that ought to be sustainable in the long run (Maddison 2015). Furthermore, it is inevitable that agonistic dialogues between former enemies are so intense that they may break down from time to time. Setting a clear institutional framework for peace agreements helps manage expectations within agonistic systems. As Tully (2004) notes, the acceptance of the necessity of dialogue among conflict parties may facilitate mutual recognition, even if they disagree on issues that divide them. What makes functional coexistence a harder nut to crack is, however, the lack of recognition of the other while accepting a nonviolent non-resolution as a basis for relationship building and coexistence. Meanwhile, agonistic systems of governance, in which functional coexistence comes into being and evolves over time, continuously encourage dissensus and contestation (Lehti 2018). Following this logic, this chapter argues that agonistic systems may set the stage for post-conflict societies stuck in enduring functional coexistence, enabling them to finally transition to a more promising state of mutual recognition.

The following sections explore how three indicators of agonistic peace devised by Hirblinger and Landau (2020)—public and institutional spaces, inclusionary principles, and frames of agreements—operate in each of the two cases of enduring functional coexistence, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Following a brief description of each country's recent history, the chapter analyzes the case by highlighting the performance of public and institutional spaces in each country, its compliance with inclusionary principles, and its implementation of peace agreements as components of a three-point framework of analysis.

Enduring Functional Coexistence in Bosnia-Herzegovina: A Case Study of Stagnation

Framework

Bosnia-Herzegovina offers a unique case study where post-conflict identity politics is stuck in enduring functional coexistence while the presence of a well-defined institutional framework enforces agonistic standards for political

Figure 7.1 Map of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Source: Adopted from the United Nations https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/bosnia-and-herzegovina

behavior (Figure 7.1). Since 1995, Bosnia-Herzegovina has upheld a strict framework for post-conflict coexistence. The 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA)—a term used interchangeably hereafter—established two entities within Bosnia-Herzegovina: the predominantly Bosniak and Croat Federation

of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the predominantly Serb Republika Srpska. A tripartite inter-ethnic council of presidents and a bicameral state parliament with equal representation of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs link the two entities. Each entity has their respective executive, legislative, and judiciary branches (Merdzanovic 2015; Hulsey and Keil 2019). The Federation has ten cantons with varying degrees of interethnic functional coexistence, while the Republika Srpska operates a republic under a unitary system (Hayden 2005).

It should be noted here for clarity that the term "state" in the remainder of this chapter refers to Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole, distinguishing it from its two constituent entities: the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). State-level institutions, such as the judiciary, legislature, and executive, are those intended to serve all of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in contrast to the government institutions that operate at the entity level.

Functional coexistence among the three national groups is protected by an international presence. Under the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) is authorized to adjudicate matters of overarching importance to the three national groups. There is also an EU-led stabilization force, Operation Althea, formally known as the European Union Force Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUFOR), which took over the peacekeeping mission from NATO-led SFOR in 2004. Under the mandate of the United Nations Security Council, the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council provides strategic guidance to the High Representative. The Steering Board is composed of officials appointed by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which is represented by Turkey. The High Representative possesses executive powers known as the Bonn Powers. Exercising these powers, the High Representative may make binding decisions and remove elected officials from office who violate the legal commitments made under the Dayton Peace Agreement and/or under the terms of its implementation.

Performance of Public and Institutional Spaces

One of the most significant challenges to sustaining agonistic politics in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina has been the dysfunctionality of state institutions. This dysfunctionality is an unintended consequence of the DPA, which granted political power to the two constituent entities, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS), at the expense of state institutions. Under the DPA, the two entities are authorized to exercise and maintain disproportionate influence on the future direction of Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, entity politicians may run electoral campaigns on post-conflict identity politics trapped in a mindset of enduring functional coexistence, emphasizing the non-recognition of the other. However, the DPA has also laid the foundation for Bosnia-Herzegovina to build stronger state institutions in close coordination with international stakeholders. More specifically, the DPA encourages these state institutions to

develop their political competencies in such a way as to support the country's integration into Euro-Atlantic political and economic structures. The following section further unpacks the complexities of state-entity relations institutionalized by the DPA.

Most politicians in each of the two entities publicly embrace either the European or the Euro-Atlantic integration perspective for the future of the country. Bosnia-Herzegovina is tasked with completing reforms that enhance the competence and political power vested in state institutions to better prepare the country to become a member of both the European Union and NATO. Progress in Bosnia-Herzegovina's Euro-Atlantic integration requires undertaking reforms in its judiciary, rule of law, and defense, all at the state level. These reforms encompass all of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with a view toward enhancing the state's capacity to work with other states as well as international organizations (Eralp 2012). However, paradoxically, Euro-Atlantic integration threatens the existing institutional space for enduring functional coexistence within the Republika Srpska. It also motivates ultra-nationalists in the Republika Srpska, led by President Milorad Dodik, to voice their separatist claims. Dodik argues that the centralization of power required for Euro-Atlantic integration will only accelerate agonistic politics, undermining the current state of enduring functional coexistence and eroding Bosnian Serbs' autonomy (Biermann 2024). Championing the separatist cause, Dodik strongly opposes the international community's demands by hinting at the prospect of the Republika Srpska's unilateral declaration of independence.

Agonistic peace embedded in enduring functional coexistence is built on a delicate tension between hegemony and contestation. The RS authorities contest the Euro-Atlantic integration process as a power grab by the Federation, disguised under the legitimate exercise of power by state institutions. Moreover, the ultra-nationalist RS government, under the leadership of Dodik, sabotages the full implementation of the DPA (Keil 2022). As previously mentioned, the dysfunctionality of the DPA allows RS politicians to frame and justify their appeals to nationalist Bosnian Serb constituencies as a necessary response to the enduring yet precarious state of functional coexistence. However, when the High Representative attempts to enforce reforms for centralization in Banja Luka to implement the DPA, Bosnian Serb political leaders reject such reforms, regarding them as a hegemonic power grab by Bosniak and Croat leaders in the Federation, backed by their Western allies. RS political leadership refers to this push for Euro-Atlantic centralization reforms as an attack on Bosnian Serbs' autonomy and their right to contest the legitimacy of the Bosnian state. As a result, ultra-nationalist politicians in RS frame the undesirable push for Euro-Atlantic integration as legitimate ground for Banja Luka to seek independence from the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In response, the Federation of Bosniaks and Croats views RS's resistance as an acute threat to the existence of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a country, a threat that the High Representative must address immediately and decisively through executive intervention.

Overall, Bosnia-Herzegovina has maintained a fragile state of functional coexistence between its two constituent entities, the Republika Srpska (RS) and

the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH). However, their deeply adversarial relationship is marked by mutual denial. Simultaneously, the Euro-Atlantic integration process requires both entities to embrace greater institutional integration within the broader political framework of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as this is a prerequisite for the country's accession to NATO and the European Union. A key point to note is that this deeper integration of public institutional spaces will inevitably deepen agnostic politics. Such a shift would, over time, end the existing state of functional coexistence within the two entities, as it demands the identity groups comprising each entity to recognize one another's presence and collaborate across lines of division. Faced with the prospect of this significant transformation, ultra-nationalist leaders in RS have intensified their calls for independence from the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Compliance to Inclusionary Principles

Agonistic politics, as framed by the DPA, rests primarily on the goodwill of the three constituent nations and their representatives in the two entities, the Federation and RS, each of which holds executive political power. The two entities can lock themselves into a state of enduring functional coexistence without recognizing each other's legitimacy in carrying out daily governance functions. On rare occasions where both entities need to recognize each other's legitimacy to pass reforms necessary for Euro-Atlantic integration, they can scarcely muster goodwill to make them happen. This is due to the widespread networks of ethno-political patronage interwoven within and across the entities, which disallow such a collective expression of goodwill. To partially remedy the absence of goodwill, the Office of the High Representative (OHR), an organization established to reflect the views of the international community for the implementation of the DPA, is tasked with executive powers to overrule entity politicians and enforce a compromise in state politics. The 1997 Bonn Agreement arms the High Representative with the so-called Bonn Powers, institutional authorities to enforce the implementation of reform agendas with respect to justice, the rule of law, and defense (Banning 2014).

RS rejects the OHR's legitimacy and its executive orders over the National Assembly of Republika Srpska (NARS), which is controlled by ultra-nationalists. Since the mid-2000s, the nationalist RS leadership in Banja Luka, the entity's capital, has effectively blocked reforms that would empower the state institutions of Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to safeguard RS's political autonomy. After blocking the police reform in 2006—which would have allowed for more streamlined and deeper cooperation between the police forces of the two entities and aimed to orchestrate a more effective fight against organized crime networks—Bosnian Serb leaders repeatedly hindered the transfer of former Yugoslav Army properties to the unified Bosnian military (Juncos 2018; Maxwell and Olsen 2015). The national lawmakers elected from Banja Luka to the state legislature further escalated their separatist narrative. Taking matters into RS's hands, the NARS amended the entity law, the Act on the Publication

of Laws and Other Regulations, to relieve itself from the legal responsibility of publishing the High Representative's decisions in its official gazette (ECNL 2024).

The nationalist Serb leadership in Banja Luka has long perceived the state judiciary as a power that undercuts Bosnian Serbs' autonomy and their ability to challenge the notion of a unified Bosnia-Herzegovina. They continue to perceive such unification as an undesirable outcome of enduring functional coexistence. For example, in early June 2023, Bosnian Serbs' parliament passed a law rejecting the composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina's state constitutional court. This court has nine judges: four selected by the Federation, two by the RS parliament, and three appointed by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in consultation with the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency. The NARS, dominated by ultra-nationalists, has long been critical of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Constitutional Court, accusing it of implicit bias against Bosnian Serbs. Ultra-nationalist President Dodik has been particularly critical of the presence of three foreign judges on the country's supreme court bench, asserting that their roles violate Bosnian Serbs' autonomy. The OHR responded by passing an executive decree that annulled the decision of the NARS on grounds of non-compliance with the DPA.

The NARS reciprocated by passing a separate parliamentary resolution that ended the mandate of the High Representative in RS. This move fundamentally challenged the DPA, which obliges RS to abide by the OHR's decisions. The OHR responded by emphasizing that the Dayton framework mandates all entities to comply with the High Representative's decisions as they "have the same status as laws enacted by domestic parliaments and carry the same constitutional necessity for publication, regardless of any subordinate law or regulation" (OHR Statement, 19 June 2023). Bosnia-Herzegovina's state-level Constitutional Court also accused the RS National Assembly of intentionally sabotaging its work. In doing so, the court cited the NARS's failure to nominate a new judge to replace a recently retired judge, while calling for the resignation of the other NARS-appointed judge. The Bosnia-Herzegovina Constitutional Court reacted in kind after introducing a modification to its rules of quorum. This change allowed decisions to be passed by a simple majority of all judges, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. This modification annulled the previous agonistic principle that required the participation of RS-appointed judges for the convention of the High Court (UN Security Council Report 2024).

In late June 2023, the NARS took a further step toward separatism by declaring that the state's constitutional court had neither a mandate in RS nor authority over its institutions. The OHR interpreted the NARS's challenge to the supreme court of the country as a clear secessionist move. Working closely with the EU member states in the Peace Implementation Council, as well as with the United States and Turkey, High Representative Christian Schmidt criticized the NARS's resolution as anti-Dayton. The High Representative thus blocked the NARS's decision and imposed sanctions on four Bosnian Serb officials instrumental in passing the law in the NARS (UN Security Council Report 2023). Furthermore, the High Representative criminalized local

politicians' attempt to obstruct the High Representative's decrees. In September 2023, the state court of Bosnia-Herzegovina indicted President Dodik for failing to implement the High Representative's decisions. President Dodik declared the OHR illegitimate and refused to enter a plea on the grounds that his indictment was not written in Cyrillic script (UN Security Council Report 2023).

This section has evaluated how the compliance with inclusionary principles serves as a basis for building more integrated agonistic politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Euro-Atlantic integration process coupled with the international community's push for stronger state institutions, as laid out in the DPA, increasingly led to more polarized and turbulent politics in the country. The Republika Srpska and the Federation enjoy significant autonomy in their daily governance without being required to acknowledge each other's presence, thereby sustaining an enduring state of functional coexistence between them. Meanwhile, the implementation of the DPA requires Bosnia-Herzegovina's active participation in the Euro-Atlantic framework of international cooperation. This, in turn, necessitates the compliance of its two constituent entities with inclusionary principles aimed at strengthening the state's governing authorities. These reforms, however, challenge RS' persistent efforts to safeguard its autonomy. Furthermore, they conflict with RS's long-standing stance of denying the legitimacy of both the Federation of Bosniaks and Croats and the broader institutional framework of Bosnia-Herzegovina. To address RS's objections to strengthening the state's functions, the international community has further marginalized RS's role in shared governance. In doing so, it has chosen to denounce and contain RS's secessionist demands. At the same time, it has tacitly accepted and reaffirmed the enduring functional coexistence between the two entities as a political reality to be managed.

Bosnia-Herzegovina represents a unique case in which the political status quo supports an enduring state of functional coexistence. Within this arrangement, the two constituent entities operate independently, managing their day-to-day governance activities without direct communication on matters falling within their respective jurisdictions. However, the future direction of the country compels vesting further political competencies at state institutions so that they can negotiate with the European Union, sign agreements with NATO, and be an active member of a broader range of international organizations. Such a push for agnostic politics, however, challenges the entrenched ethno-political dynamics in the country. It also motivates RS to pursue independence from the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as it views independence as a preferred alternative to the enduring state of functional coexistence.

Kosovo in Search of Functional Coexistence: A Case Study of Recurring Interethnic Tensions and International Interventions

Framework

In late 1998, Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic launched a military campaign to repress the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The campaign resulted in the

Figure 7.2 Map of Kosovo.

Source: Adopted from the United Nations https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/kosovo-region-0

forced migration of thousands of Kosovar Albanians amid widespread atrocities against civilians committed by the Yugoslav forces. Milosevic resisted the Rambouillet Accords, a set of provisions drafted by NATO in early 1998, to contain the escalating violence. The Accords called for the removal of Yugoslav forces, as well as the deployment of a NATO protection force and the international civilian administration of Kosovo for a three-year transitional period.

NATO responded militarily to Milosevic's refusal by launching an aerial bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) from March through June 1999. Following Milosevic's capitulation, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 (1999), suspending Belgrade's rule over Kosovo. UNSCR 1244 also established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to exercise administrative control over Kosovo and authorized a NATO peacekeeping force to support the UN mandate (Bieber and Daskalovski 2003). Furthermore, Resolution 1244 envisioned an open-ended political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status. However, the lack of a clear vision of final status frustrated the Kosovar Albanian government and strained the ethnic tensions between the Serb enclave in the north and the Albanian-led government based in Pristina (Eralp 2012).

In 2004, the interethnic violence between Serbs and Albanians led to nineteen deaths in the divided city of Mitrovica in northern Kosovo. This incident prompted the international community to highlight the need to introduce a clear road map for Kosovo's political future. In November 2005, the Contact Group (France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) proposed "Guiding Principles" for the resolution of Kosovo's status. These principles included: no return to the situation prior to 1999, no changes in Kosovo's borders, and neither a partition of Kosovo nor its union with a neighboring state. The Contact Group further stipulated that Kosovo's final status had to be acceptable to the people of Kosovo. While the Kosovar government initiated a number of reforms, they had not yielded any visible progress toward final status. Frustrated by the sustained political impasse, the Kosovar government declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008.

Kosovo's declaration of independence expressed a commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Agreement, drafted by Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari in 2007, in consultation with the conflicting parties. The Kosovar government pledged to implement the stipulations of the Ahtisaari Agreement, which include respecting multiethnicity as a fundamental principle of good governance and accepting international supervision during a transitional period (Perritt 2010). Kosovo's status as an independent state has been recognized by the vast majority of European Union member states, the United States, Japan, Turkey, and many other states worldwide. Following Kosovo's declaration of independence, twenty-five states joined forces to establish an International Steering Group (ISG) for Kosovo, which then appointed Dutch diplomat Pieter Feith as Kosovo's first International Civilian Representative (ICR) (Hannum 2011). In 2012, the ICR ended its supervisory role and left the country. However, the international community remains present in Kosovo. The KFOR peacekeeping mission and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo play an essential role in ensuring international support for Kosovo's political transition (Phillips 2012).

In 2013, Kosovo and Serbia signed the Brussels Agreement, facilitated by the European Union, granting significant autonomy to Serb-majority areas in northern Kosovo. This agreement became an important turning point for the

normalization of Kosovo-Serbia relations. The agreement led to the establishment of the Association of Serbian-majority Municipalities (ZSO). The statute states that ten municipalities are to be governed by Kosovo's Constitutional Law, which may be amended only when a two-thirds majority of lawmakers in Kosovo's national parliament are in favor. Only the member municipalities have the right to dissolve the ZSO. Although established outside Kosovo's legal framework, the ZSO is considered part of its constitutional order (López Domènech 2023).

Over fifteen years after its declaration of independence, Kosovo is undergoing a politically tenuous period. The European Union, along with the United States, urges the Kosovar Albanian leadership in Pristina to provide legal and political guarantees to the Serb minority, who primarily resides in the north, by recognizing the autonomy of the ZSO. Brussels hopes to foster conditions for agonistic politics for the Serb minority, thereby reducing neighboring Serbia's influence over Kosovar Serbs. However, Kosovar Albanians fear that granting extensive autonomy to the ZSO could lead to the creation of a quasi-Republika Srpska in the north, which might enjoy functional coexistence for some time but could eventually decide to secede and join Serbia. The following section assesses the performance of public and inclusionary spaces to determine whether the agonistic framework aligns with the expectations of the international community.

Performance of Public and Inclusionary Spaces

In Kosovo, the appropriate scope and use of public and inclusionary spaces remain highly controversial. The political framework designed to support the emergence of agonistic politics between the Kosovar Albanian majority and the Serbian minority in the north continues to encounter roadblocks during periods of crisis escalation, followed by prolonged political deadlock. Belgrade and the Serb minority in the north disagree with the Kosovar leadership in Pristina about what the governance, taxation, economy, and policing of public spaces in Serb-majority areas should look like (Bieber 2015). The Serb minority demands a high level of autonomy similar to that enjoyed by the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina, hoping to establish a political system in which they can disregard Pristina's authority and maintain an extended period of functional coexistence. Meanwhile, the Albanian leadership in Pristina views the autonomy demands of the Serbs—such as maintaining Serbia-issued license plates, using the Serbian currency in daily transactions, and rejecting the Pristina-led police force—as the first step toward eventual separation from Kosovo and unification with Serbia. Pristina instead uses its police to enforce Kosovo's rule of law in the north to realize integration, a form of agonistic politics where Kosovar Serbs will have no option but to cooperate with Albanians (Rahmani et al. 2023). As a result, the unresolved tension over Kosovar Serbs' demand for autonomy in the north and Pristina's commitment to governing the whole of Kosovo continues to polarize intercommunal

relations. Polarized intercommunal relations have, in turn, given rise to full-scale violence on a number of occasions.

Pristina's view that giving autonomy to the ZSO is a first step toward separation may seem paranoid since the combined population of the municipalities is less than 100,000. However, Kosovar Albanian politicians regard the ZSO's presence as a direct challenge to Kosovo's sovereignty. Pristina hesitates to legally recognize the ZSO's autonomy, citing a decision by Kosovo's Constitutional Court, which identified twenty-four violations of Kosovo's constitution. While the European Union considers the establishment of the ZSO as a step toward normalization and the establishment of a state of enduring functional coexistence for the Serbs – which is arguably a more viable and less violent alternative to secession – Belgrade and Pristina continue to assert their respective claims of sovereignty over the region and its people (ICG Report 2024).

The international community has repeatedly renewed its commitment to mediating the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia, recognizing recurring episodes of intercommunal violence as a threat to its own security. In 2020, for example, US-brokered negotiations led to the Serbia and Kosovo Economic Normalization Agreements, otherwise known as the Washington Agreement, as they were signed at the White House in the presence of President Donald Trump. Meanwhile, the European Union brokered the 2023 Agreement on the Path to Normalization between Kosovo and Serbia, focusing on the political and diplomatic aspects of the conflict. Both the United States and the European Union strove to help the two sides find common ground, allowing Kosovo to move forward in its effort to join the European Union while enabling the Association of Serbian-majority Municipalities (ZSO) to secure autonomy in the north. However, Belgrade and the Serb municipalities remain at odds with the Kosovar Albanian leadership in Pristina over issues of sovereignty and the rule of law governing citizens' participation in public democratic spaces. Pristina views the ZSO's existence as grounds for future Serbian interventions in Kosovo, while Belgrade accuses Pristina of violating Serbs' right to self-rule in the north (UN Security Council Meeting, 22 April 2024).

This section has analyzed how plans to establish self-rule in the Union of Serb Municipalities, primarily in the north, have fueled tensions between Serbia and Kosovo. While enduring functional coexistence may offer a potential way forward, the two parties remain deeply divided over the governance of public spaces in these municipalities.

Compliance to Inclusionary Principles

The Kosovar Albanian leadership and the ZSO are locked in a contest of positional bargaining from which neither side can escape. Compliance with a shared framework of inclusionary principles, most of which has been imposed upon the parties by the international community, is perceived as a sign of weakness. From Albanian leaders' point of view, any concession to the Serbian minority's attempt to secure autonomy would accelerate a demise in Kosovar sovereignty. The Serbian Orthodox Church's attempt to develop its properties

in the Serb-populated areas of Kosovo illustrates such a trend. From the Serb minority's point of view, any move to convince Serbian drivers to accept Kosovar-issued license plates undermines their claim of autonomy as well as their inalienable ties to Serbia. Conversely, Pristina considers the presence of Belgrade-issued license plates in the Kosovar territory as a sign of Serbia's sustained effort to destabilize Kosovo. The Serb minority's decision to boycott the April 2023 municipal elections and Pristina's subsequent recognition of the election results as democratically representative are signs of the two communities' deep-seated mistrust. The international community's interventions to resolve these issues have been inconclusive.

Recognizing the reluctance of both conflict parties to negotiate, the European Union and the United States assumed leadership in fostering Kosovar-Serbian relations. Signed in 2020, the Washington Agreement sought to establish a US-sponsored framework to enable the two sides to benefit from cross-border economic cooperation. Brokered by the Trump Administration, the Agreement outlined several projects designed to improve connections between Kosovo and Serbia. These projects include integrating highway and railway networks, which were set to receive financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM). The Agreement also promoted an innovative vision of Mini Schengen, the Open Balkan initiative for Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia. A version of this initiative had previously been rejected by Pristina out of concern that it would hinder Kosovo's planned accession to the European Union. The Open Balkan initiative envisions the free movement of citizens and capital, as well as the freedom to conduct business across six Balkan countries (Kulo and Novikau 2024). The Washington Agreement also emphasized compliance with religious freedom and the implementation of court decisions related to the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as the restoration of unclaimed Jewish property affected by the Holocaust. Moreover, the Agreement requires the Government of Kosovo to provide substantial measures of legal protection for the Serbian Orthodox Church. However, the implementation of the Constitutional Court decision favoring the Serbian Orthodox Church in a property dispute caused political tensions. The Washington Agreement also calls for a future resolution of the long-standing question on the status of missing people from the Balkan war, as well as on war refugees' return (Muharremi 2021). Finally, the Agreement proposes the establishment of a joint commission to implement its terms. However, neither side has taken any substantive step to implement the Agreement (Kočan et al. 2023).

After Albin Kurti was elected Prime Minister of Kosovo in March 2021, tensions with Serbia and the Serbian minority escalated due to his independent and nationalist stance. In 2022, the Kosovar police and KFOR clashed with Serbian nationalists in the north when the latter publicly protested Pristina's request that residents in Serb-majority areas swap their Serbian-issued car number plates for Kosovar-issued ones. Although Serbian President Alexandar Vučić and Kosovar Prime Minister Kurti have since met on eight occasions to

discuss this issue, they haven't reached any resolution. These high-level meetings included EU-sponsored negotiations that resulted in the Ohrid Agreement in February 2023 on the normalization of bilateral relations. However, both leaders accepted the agreement only verbally. Kosovo subsequently refused to comply with the de-escalation proposals contained in the Ohrid Agreement. In response, the European Union introduced measures to elicit Kosovo's compliance, which have served as economic sanctions in effect. According to Prime Minister Kurti, these measures have resulted in losses totaling 500 million euros to Kosovo's economy in 2023 alone (Rahmani et al. 2023).

The Ohrid Agreement adopted a win-win approach to the long-standing political deadlock. It affirmed the two parties' commitment to developing normal neighborly relations and encouraged the mutual recognition of passports, diplomas, license plates, and national symbols. More importantly, the Agreement established a framework for improved bilateral ties, under which Serbia pledged not to block Kosovo's membership in international organizations, and Kosovo agreed to respect the autonomy of Serb-governed northern municipalities, as well as the Serb Orthodox Church's properties. It further affirmed the two parties' pledge not to block the other side's progress toward EU membership and their shared commitment to dispute resolution through peaceful means. The two leaders' oral agreement also affirmed their hope to have diplomatic representatives in each other's territory. However, these commitments fell through in April 2023, when the Serb minority in northern Kosovo boycotted local elections in four Serb-majority municipalities (Mitrovica, Zubin Potok, Zvečan, and Leposavić). The voter turnout was a mere 3.5 percent, allowing Albanians to be elected as mayors in predominantly Serbian communities. Pristina recognized the election results as legitimate, angering Serbs and fueling intercommunal tensions further.

In late September 2023, intercommunal tensions in Kosovo escalated significantly when thirty armed gunmen from Serbia raided an Orthodox Monastery in the northern town of Banjska and killed a Kosovar Albanian police officer. Subsequent EU shuttle diplomacy in October 2023 led by the Italian, French, and German heads of state emphasized the need for both parties to sign and implement the Ohrid Agreement. These leaders advised Kosovo to recognize the ZSO's autonomy in the north in return for Serbia's phased implementation of the agreed-upon steps toward recognizing Kosovo. The EU mediation efforts to diffuse the escalating conflict in 2023 illustrate a well-established pattern of crisis escalation and international response, whereby international actors are repeatedly called upon to manage recurring episodes of interethnic violence. The deep-seated mistrust between the opposing communities and nations has proven highly resistant to the cumulative efforts of both domestic and international actors to foster mutual trust and cooperation.

Overall, Kosovo's challenges reveal a critical insight into divided societies: agonistic politics work only when adversaries desire to cooperate with one another, and enduring functional coexistence is viable only when secession is not an option. In Kosovo, neither form of coexistence appears feasible, as both Pristina and Belgrade do not hesitate to use force to achieve their respective

goals. The efforts of the European Union and the United States to facilitate a compromise between the parties fall on deaf ears as long as both parties see violence as a viable alternative to agonistic politics and an enduring state of functional coexistence.

Conclusion

Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo offer two distinct experiences of agonistic politics and enduring functional coexistence. Bosnia-Herzegovina's political system is stagnant and resistant to change, while Kosovo's system is yet to be established. Agonistic politics require mutual agreement among constituents on the legitimacy and capacity of their system to manage their differences.

Bosnia's enduring functional coexistence hangs in the balance as the international community remains engaged in managing the country's day-to-day politics. The separatist rhetoric of the Republica Srpska is countered by a coalition of Western countries in the Peace Implementation Council and Bosnian politicians from the Federation. The Dayton Peace Agreement continues to serve as a framework for managing agonistic politics within the state, as it prescribes a path to Euro-Atlantic integration. This institutional framework, however, also binds the Republika Srpska and the Federation, the two constituent entities of the state, within the confines of enduring functional coexistence from which neither of them can escape. Ethno-politics within and across the two entities disincentivizes mutual recognition and cooperation. Dayton created a consociational system that is notoriously detailed at four levels of governance, which are designed to foster enduring functional coexistence among three ethnic groups, Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, across two entities. Paradoxically, as the performance of public and inclusionary spaces stalls amid periodic political crises, the international community steps in to diffuse tensions. However, the Office of High Representative's interventions, though mandated by the Dayton Framework, further erode the willingness of these identity groups and political entities to adhere to inclusionary principles, perpetuating a dormant security dilemma. Periodic swings to a dormant security dilemma expose Bosnia's political and economic vulnerabilities to exploitation by malign external influences.

Enduring functional coexistence in Kosovo is neither supported by an imposed framework nor managed by a mutually agreed one. Efforts to mediate agreements designed to reconcile Kosovo's statehood and sovereignty with the autonomy demands of the Kosovar Serbs in the north—under the patronage of Belgrade—typically result in initial goodwill but are later rebuffed and shelved due to domestic political concerns. In the absence of a structured framework, the performance of public and inclusionary spaces depends on ad hoc functional arrangements between Serb localities in the north and the Kosovar central government in Pristina. Social practices such as the use of Serbia-issued license plates, granting building permits for properties owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church, and daily business activities conducted in Serbian dinars are tolerated or ignored until the next periodic flare-up of political tensions between

Belgrade and Pristina. These inclusionary spaces and practices lack the guarantees of an internationally recognized final agreement.

Efforts by the transatlantic alliance – beginning with the 2013 Brussels followed by the 2020 Washington Agreement, and most recently, the 2023 Ohrid Agreement – have been well-intentioned. Both the United States and its allies in the European Union deliberately downplayed the intractability of the mutually exclusive ethno-nationalist narratives on both sides to promote a forward-looking arrangement with NATO and the European Union. Nevertheless, this intentionally blind optimism is bound to fail as both Pristina and Belgrade continue to escalate tensions to de-escalate them as their most trusted negotiation strategy. When both parties resort to such destructive tactics in international negotiations, third parties must remain exceptionally vigilant to prevent attempts to derail the peace process. Given the growing scope and intensity of polarization at the global level, however, such vigilance is hard to maintain for both Brussels and Washington. In the foreseeable future, Kosovo's precarious functional coexistence model will continue to erode unless the international community musters the political will and diplomatic acumen to reclaim control over the process.

This chapter has evaluated two cases of enduring functional coexistence in two divided Western Balkan societies: Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Of the two, Bosnia has an established consociational system recognized and managed by the international community, while Kosovo lacks a political framework to manage its internal differences. Both societies face a dissonance between the extent of state authority and ethno-political autonomy. Enduring functional coexistence in Bosnia-Herzegovina manifests through systemic rigidity, while in Kosovo, it is maintained through periodic international interventions. However, the two societies have not yet managed to generate a mutually agreed-upon peace process capable of fostering inclusive public spaces and practices without constant international intervention or periodic flare-ups.

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Part III

Cases of Emerging and/or Transitional States of Coexistence

Introduction

Part III presents three case studies designed to further develop the theory of functional coexistence and showcase how a functional coexistence approach can be applied in conflict contexts that either have or can potentially develop the necessary conditions for functional coexistence: Armenia-Turkey relations, Arab-Jewish relations within the State of Israel, and Armenia-Azerbaijan relations. As discussed in Chapter 1, these cases illustrate two additional types of coexistence, namely, *transitional* and *emergent*.

Transitional contexts of coexistence, exemplified by Armenia-Turkey relations, have experienced a sustained period of negative peace for at least ten years, along with other enabling conditions for transitioning to a well-established state of functional coexistence. These conditions include the emergence of a minimally livable social space (MLSS), deepening patterns of social interaction characterized by non-resolution and negative peace, and shared tacit expectations of non-escalation.

The case analysis of the possible transition to functional coexistence addresses several themes. Firstly, it examines the historical and social context of the conflict, including the major conflict parties, key issues at stake, and significant events and milestones relevant to functional coexistence. Secondly, it explores the emergence and/or evolution of the distinct qualities of functional coexistence in the given context. Thirdly, it assesses the feasibility, necessity, and desirability of developing functional coexistence within the context of conflict non-resolution. Fourthly, it discusses whether and how the emergence of functional coexistence can contribute to conflict intervention and/or peacebuilding efforts. Finally, it addresses the challenges, lessons, and implications of the case analysis for theory, practice, and policy.

Unlike the case studies of enduring functional coexistence presented in Part II or the case study of a possible transition to functional coexistence described above, case studies of the potential emergence of coexistence focus on *ongoing* intractable conflicts, including those that have not yet achieved negative peace. This section examines two examples of potential emergence: Arab-Jewish relations in Israel and Armenia-Azerbaijan relations. These cases of potential

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emergence, like the other two types of case studies, involve a persistent state of mutual non-recognition or denial. The primary objective of these case studies of potential emergence is to explore whether and how a purposeful effort to develop functional coexistence can contribute to conflict intervention and peacebuilding from a long-term strategic perspective. The strategic aspect of these case studies involves seeking concrete and pragmatic ways to create enabling conditions to foster functional coexistence and purposefully utilizing these conditions to initiate effective conflict intervention. Analyzing potential emergence also requires a forward-looking and imaginative approach grounded in a rigorous empirical analysis of the enduring conflict, as well as the identification of realistic and achievable objectives.

The suggested outline for case studies of potential emergence, similar to that of transitional cases, consists of an analysis of the historical and social context of the conflict, the major parties involved, the key issues at stake, and significant events and milestones in the conflict's history. It also explores the plausibility, necessity, and rationale for the potential application of functional coexistence in conflict intervention. However, case studies of potential emergence, which are highly exploratory in nature, differ from transitional contexts because the former place a greater emphasis on comparing the possible advantages of the proposed functional coexistence approach with more conventional methods such as dispute settlement, conflict resolution, and reconciliation. Additionally, the case studies of potential emergence require developing peacebuilding scenarios and pathways proactively, along with identifying lessons learned, challenges encountered, and their implications for theory, practice, and policy.

8 Toward Functional Coexistence in Armenia-Turkey Relations

A Critical Analysis of the Normalization Process

Margarita Tadevosyan

Introduction

The second Karabakh war in September 2020 and the subsequent political developments in the region paradoxically resulted not only in significant human suffering but also in an opportunity for the normalization of historically strained relations between Armenia and Turkey. For more than a century, the two countries have lacked diplomatic relations, and their interactions have been characterized by accusations, blame, and resentment. The ongoing normalization process, initiated in 2021, is not their first attempt to seek avenues for reconciliation.

The initial endeavor, referred to as "Soccer Diplomacy," emerged in 2008 but failed to yield concrete outcomes despite initial promise. During 2008–2009, Armenia and Turkey engaged in diplomatic efforts to improve their relations and address long-standing issues. Facilitated discussions took place under Swiss mediation,[1] focusing on creating a roadmap to normalization. Notably, the two presidents attended joint soccer matches between their national teams as part of the World Cup qualifiers, leading to the term "Soccer Diplomacy." However, the normalization protocols signed by both sides under Swiss mediation and with EU support in 2009 were never ratified and eventually canceled.

Political analysts and experts argue that the ongoing process of normalization, often referred to as "Normalization Round 2," differs qualitatively from the previous attempt and incorporates lessons learned. However, the current process faces significant pressure to demonstrate breakthroughs and positive changes, particularly in countering Russia's influence in the region. Russia has historically played a prominent role in the South Caucasus, maintaining political and economic ties with the countries in the region and possessing a military presence in Armenia through the 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, the second-largest city in Armenia near the Turkish border. Russia's dominance in the energy sector, controlling major oil and gas pipelines like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the South Caucasus Pipeline, grants it additional

1 This was another departure from the long-standing trend in the region where major processes were facilitated by or vocally or silently approved by Russia. On the Russian role or non-involvement, see for example Tobrakov (2010).

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leverage and influence over the South Caucasus nations. From the perspective of the United States and its Western allies, countering Russia's influence in the region is seen as a means to promote democratic governance, protect human rights, and ensure the sovereignty of the South Caucasus countries. The West is interested in diversifying energy routes, developing infrastructure, and forging closer political and economic ties with the region (Neset et al. 2023). Resolving existing conflicts and reopening sealed borders in the area align with the interests of the West.

In this context, there is political pressure to achieve positive outcomes and reach a formal agreement, potentially repeating the fate of the previous normalization attempt. However, this chapter proposes an alternative approach based on the concept of "functional coexistence" developed by Tatsushi Arai (2022). It argues that sustainable and constructive Armenian-Turkish relations would benefit from sustained negative peace rather than rushed political settlement. Arai defines functional coexistence as "a sustained negative peace which enables conflict parties and intermediaries to resist premature settlement and stay constructively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution" (Arai 2022, 118). Applying the concept of functional coexistence to Armenia-Turkey relations, this chapter examines shifts in the boundaries of mutually acceptable conflict behavior, the evolving nature of sustained negative peace, and the role of short-term incremental actions. It traces the changes in conflict behavior between the 2008 and 2021 normalization processes and argues that the current normalization process possesses the necessary conditions to transition to the functional coexistence approach, which would facilitate constructive engagement in this long-standing conflict. Employing these pillars offered by functional coexistence theory would allow for a more cautious and sustainable approach to addressing the underlying historical conflict between the two parties.

Historical Background

Armenia and Turkey are two neighboring countries situated at a crucial crossroads between Europe and Asia. These nations not only share a land border spanning over 300 kilometers but also have complex, contentious, and deeply rooted histories. Armenia's history can be traced back to the seventh century BC. Over the course of centuries, Armenia has witnessed various periods of political and territorial transformations. At its zenith, between 95 and 66 BC, under the reign of Tigranes II the Great, Greater Armenia thrived, encompassing territories extending from the Caucasus to eastern Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon. Its reach spanned from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean, earning it titles such as "the Kingdom of the Three Seas" or "Sea to Sea Armenia." However, present-day Armenia is a small, landlocked country occupying an area of only 29,000 square kilometers. Turkey traces its origins to the migration of Seljuk Turks to Anatolia in the eleventh century AD, followed by the establishment of the Ottoman Empire in the thirteenth

century. Although the Ottoman Empire disintegrated in the early twentieth century and relinquished a significant portion of its territories, modern-day Turkey ranks as the thirty-sixth largest country globally, boasting a developed economy and a military force as a member of NATO.

The ongoing conflict between Armenia and Turkey has its roots in the experiences of the Armenian minority within the Ottoman Empire, which absorbed Armenia in the fifteenth century. Throughout history, Armenia has been divided and controlled by various empires including the Roman, Persian, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires (Cooper and Akçam 2005). While the millet system under the Ottoman rule provided non-territorial autonomy to minority populations, including Armenians, the autonomy was defined as religious autonomy and did not allow for comprehensive political participation (Barkey and Gavrilis 2016). Within the Ottoman Empire, as a Christian minority, Armenians faced varying degrees of discrimination. Examples include restrictions on speaking their native language in certain areas like Kütahya, bans on bearing weapons, and limitations on giving legal testimony (Kalayjian and Weisberg 2002; Hovhannisian 1985; Mangassarian 2016).

The oppression and discrimination against Armenians and other Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire reached its peak with the organization and execution of targeted, systematic killings and the deportation of 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923. The Armenian Genocide is widely recognized as the first genocide of the twentieth century. As of the time of writing this chapter, governments and parliaments of thirty-two countries, including Germany, Belgium, and the United States, have officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. However, Turkey continues to deny the occurrence of genocide, despite the overwhelming consensus among historians, scholars, experts, and policymakers worldwide. Turkey disputes the circumstances surrounding the deportations, the number of casualties, and, most importantly, the systematic nature of these actions, insisting that the deaths should be understood within the context of the turbulent First World War era and were not part of a deliberate orchestration. Turkey also claims that the killings took place alongside other massacres targeting Ottoman Muslims (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt 2015).

It is crucial to note that Turkey's current long-standing position on the Armenian Genocide issue was shaped after Turkey's War of Independence in 1920. In the aftermath of the First World War and under international pressure, Turkey established a military tribunal to prosecute those involved in the deportation and mass killings of Ottoman Armenians (Bass 2002; Kramer 2006). However, as the newly independent Turkish state emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, the nationalist movement and narrative underwent a major shift. Instead of attempting to prosecute the perpetrators of the genocide, there was a complete denial of responsibility for the mass killings and the fact of the genocide itself (Akçam 2004).

The recognition of the Armenian Genocide was not always at the forefront of Armenia's political agenda. With the establishment of the Soviet Socialist

Republic of Armenia, the issue of the genocide was suppressed within the Soviet Union, "as Soviet leaders did not want to aggravate the already tenuous relationship with Turkey" (Manukyan 2022, para. 3). It was only after Stalin's death and the relaxation of policies in the years that followed, combined with the transformation of the Armenian Diaspora into more organized and integrated communities across the globe, that a new era emerged in the Armenian struggle against genocide denial (Dekmejian 1968; Manukyan 2022).

The first significant step in this new trajectory was the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide on April 24, 1965. Despite the friendly official relations with Turkey, for the first time Moscow allowed Soviet Armenians to hold a remembrance ceremony for the tragic events of 1915 and "refer to them officially as an act of genocide" (Souleimanov 2015, para. 4). A hundred thousand people participated in the rally held in Yerevan on April 24, 1965. Two years later, on November 29, 1967, the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial was inaugurated, "becoming the central place for honoring the memory of the genocide victims" (Manukyan 2022, para. 12). Armenian history textbooks started making references to the Armenian Genocide, and public discourse regarding the history and experiences of the genocide became more open and widespread. However, Moscow did not actively pursue international recognition of the Armenian massacres as genocide (Souleimanov 2015). Despite some relaxation of the repressive, and especially ethno-repressive, regime that characterized the Stalin era, the social-political structure of Soviet Armenia limited interdependent activities. It was the Armenian Diaspora that took the lead in advocating for international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Political action and activism became the preferred approaches of Armenian Diaspora groups, including rallies in front of Turkish embassies and consulates in various countries, lobbying efforts, and awareness campaigns. Parallel to these peaceful endeavors, a smaller faction within the Diaspora resorted to terrorism and militant actions, targeting Turkish diplomats and officials to draw attention to the Armenian Genocide and exert pressure on Turkey to acknowledge it (Manukyan 2022; Dixon 2010). Nevertheless, until the late 1980s, the Armenian Genocide issue remained largely apolitical in Soviet Armenia and was primarily associated with annual commemoration events held on April 24.

The current social and political discourse surrounding the Armenian Genocide and the politicization of the issue are directly linked to the final years of the Soviet Union. During Gorbachev's era of glasnost and perestroika, the predominantly Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast within Soviet Azerbaijan appealed to the Moscow Supreme Soviet to be placed under the jurisdiction of Soviet Armenia. The Armenian Genocide became a central focus of the growing Karabakh Movement. Escalating tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan further solidified the genocide narrative, as "Azerbaijanis [became] increasingly and overtly associated with the (Ottoman) Turks, particularly following the pogroms against Armenians in Sumgait (1988) and Baku (1990)" (Souleimanov 2015, para. 6).

Despite the ongoing conflict, Turkey officially recognized the independence of all former Soviet states in late 1991. However, Armenia and Turkey failed to establish bilateral diplomatic relations. The current state of mutual non-recognition between the two countries partly stems from Armenia's refusal to accept what Turkey considers to be the recognized border between the two nations. Turkey insists on Armenia's recognition of the border as stipulated in the 1921 treaties of Kars and Alexandrapol as a prerequisite for the normalization of diplomatic ties between the two countries. On the other hand, the Armenian authorities have not formally recognized the border, arguing that since Armenia had never denounced the treaties, there is no need for an additional formal statement (Görgülü 2009). Mutual non-recognition between Armenia and Turkey was further deepened by the closure of the Armenia-Turkey border in 1993. Tocci et al. (2007) describes the multi-dimensional nature of the conflict concisely:

> The closure and the ensuing refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia took place in view of the escalating conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Armenia's ambivalence over the recognition of its common border with Turkey. The gravity of this ambivalence is magnified by the dispute over the recognition of the Armenian genocide, which Turkey fears could feed Armenian territorial claims over eastern Turkey.
>
> (p. 3)

Armenia's foreign policy toward Turkey has been consistently shaped by historical, political, and security considerations. However, it is important to note that each of the four administrations since the country's independence has prioritized these factors differently. Despite Article 11 of the Declaration of Independence explicitly endorsing international recognition for the 1915 genocide, the first president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, did not prioritize this issue in his foreign policy. His decision stemmed from personal beliefs that it was not politically or diplomatically suitable, particularly considering the ongoing war between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Manukyan 2022; Terzyan 2016). The issue of international recognition of the Armenian Genocide came to the forefront of Armenian foreign policy during the presidency of Robert Kocharyan, the second president of Armenia. Kocharyan emphasized that the development of Armenia-Turkey relations should not come at the expense of Armenian identity and historical memory. To demonstrate his commitment to pursuing international recognition of the genocide, President Kocharyan made it a key focus of Armenia's foreign policy agenda when addressing the UN General Assembly during the fiftieth anniversary of the UN Genocide Convention in September 1998 (Terzyan 2016). This renewed foreign policy trajectory from 1998 onward led to increased international discussions on the issue of the Armenian Genocide. Notable countries that recognized the genocide during Kocharyan's presidency include France (2001), Canada (2004), Argentina (2004), Switzerland (2003), and Lebanon (2000).

This foreign policy trajectory continued during the administration of President Serzh Sargsyan, with a brief period of prioritizing the rekindling of Armenia-Turkey relations in 2008–2010 (discussed in more detail in the next section). Since 2018, Armenia's new leadership has not placed significant emphasis on the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and Armenia-Turkey relations have followed the inertia of previous years. However, Armenia's foreign policy toward Turkey underwent significant changes after the renewed war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh region in September 2020 (Manukyan 2022). The new track of Armenia-Turkey normalization efforts, which began in late 2021, offers prospects for overcoming the mutual denial and non-recognition that has persisted for over a century.[2]

To fully understand the extent of mutual denial, it is necessary to acknowledge Turkey's narrative of denial. Turkey's official narrative regarding the Armenian Genocide, commonly referred to as the "Armenian question" (*Ermeni sorunu*) within the public-political discourse, is greatly shaped by the enduring legacies and constraints inherited from the early days of the Republic's establishment (Akçam 2004; Göçek 2011). In order to counter any alternative narrative about the Armenian Genocide, Turkey developed a "multi-pronged strategy that involved a variety of government agencies and focused on domestic and international audiences" (Dixon 2010, 468). Internally, the Turkish government controls the official narrative of the Armenian Genocide and supports the publication of academic and public documents endorsing this narrative. The official narrative is also solidified through curricula in public schools and other educational institutions. Internationally, the Turkish establishment devotes significant time and effort to gain support for its official narrative. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey currently maintains a web page titled "The Events of 1915 and the Turkish-Armenian Controversy over History," which presents key elements of the Turkish narrative. Key elements of the Turkish narrative on the website are: claims of genocide are false propaganda mainly by radical groups in the Armenian diaspora; Armenians were relocated from supply routes and army transport lines; Armenians from other regions that were suspected in collaboration with the Russian army were included in the mandatory transfer; a greater number of Turks were killed or died in the years prior to the First World War; and Armenians have used a terror campaign against Turkish citizens and diplomats (Dixon 2010; Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2023).

Turkish authorities have also created legislative barriers to the domestic discussion of the Armenian Genocide. Article 301, introduced on June 1, 2005, was part of a series of legal reforms aimed at aligning Turkey with European

2 While the Armenia-Turkey conflict is interconnected with the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, this chapter focuses exclusively on the first one. Please see Ann Phillips' chapter in this volume for a more in-depth analysis of the potential application of functional coexistence theory and approach to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

Union standards. The article encompasses various provisions, including the criminalization of denigrating Turkishness, the Republic, the Grand National Assembly, the Government, judicial institutions, and security organizations. The penalty for such offenses ranges from imprisonment of six months to three years. This article replaced a previous law, Article 159, which shared similarities and had been influenced by Italian Fascism. Furthermore, Turkey had previously addressed related issues through laws like Articles 141, 142, and 163, which were eventually replaced by Article 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Law in the 1980s. While Article 301 is not the sole provision criticized for its restrictions on freedom of expression and political criticism within the Turkish Penal Code, it became the basis for a surge of charges against intellectuals and journalists (White 2012).

However, it should be acknowledged that while the Turkish official discourse on the Armenian Genocide remains largely unchanged, there have been increasing critical voices emerging within the Turkish intellectual elite who openly engage in the discussion and challenge the official narrative. The stronger and more active engagement of Turkish scholarship in the public debate surrounding relations with Armenia and the Armenian Genocide has slowly moved the question out of the taboo zone and into the public sphere for more open discussion (Dixon 2010). Additionally, while Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code is still in effect, legal prosecutions under this article have significantly declined, allowing for more open public discussions to take place (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt 2015).

Armenia-Turkey Normalization 2008—Failed Football Diplomacy

Despite a century-long animosity and conflict between Armenia and Turkey, an unexpected opportunity for a thaw in relations emerged when Armenia and Turkey found themselves in the same group for the 2010 World Cup qualifiers. Taking inspiration from the US-Chinese "ping-pong diplomacy," then-president of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, extended an invitation to his Turkish counterpart, Abdullah Gül, to watch the football match together at the Hrazdan Stadium in Yerevan. Sargsyan emphasized that, "[d]espite our differences, there are certain cultural, humanitarian, and sports links that our peoples share, even with a closed border" (Sargsyan 2008, para. 9). The kickoff on September 6, 2008, symbolically marked the beginning of a new era in Armenia-Turkey relations. Approximately 5,000 Turkish fans arrived in Yerevan after the Armenian government "waived normal visa controls for the match as a goodwill gesture" (Tait 2008, para. 3). The reasons behind the timing of the normalization process are not extensively discussed. However, some experts argue that the 2008 Russian-Georgian war demonstrated that frozen conflicts in the region might not remain frozen forever, potentially serving as a stimulus toward the normalization process (Duffner and Kempe 2014).

The first phase of the official normalization process, which began with the football match in September 2008, was mediated by Switzerland. It is

important to note that the Swiss initiative to facilitate renewed contacts between Armenia and Turkey predates the historic football game and was initiated a year earlier "when the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers had an initial exchange on the margins of the UNGA about Switzerland's involvement" (Phillips 2012, 28). In the subsequent months following the presidential visit to Armenia, intensive shuttle diplomacy by Switzerland led to the announcement of a jointly agreed roadmap for normalization in April 2009. Draft versions of two documents, namely the "Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations" and the "Protocol on the Development of Mutual Relations," were presented to the Armenian and Turkish public, sparking heated debates at both societal and political levels. Despite the intense discussions and debates over a period of six weeks, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Turkey signed these historic documents in Zurich on October 10, 2009, in the presence of key stakeholders, including the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner, and the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (Göksel 2012; Phillips 2012).

Despite the swift progression from the initial contacts and conversations to the signing of these groundbreaking documents, subsequent domestic political processes posed significant challenges that ultimately upended the normalization process. What started as a process without "preconditions" soon accumulated numerous seemingly insurmountable requirements. On one hand, while the Armenian constitutional court affirmed the constitutionality of the documents and their alignment with the constitution, it also emphasized that any future processes within the framework of these protocols should not "contradict the provisions of the Preamble to the RoA Constitution and the requirements of Paragraph 11 of the Declaration on Independence of Armenia, which confirm the republic's support for the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide" (Göksel 2012, 5). On the other hand, Turkey explicitly stated that the ratification of the protocols would depend on progress in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, openly supporting Azerbaijan's position and interests (Kardas 2010). The strong political and military ties shared between Azerbaijan and Turkey made Azerbaijan increasingly uncomfortable and disappointed with the normalization process between Armenia and Turkey. Azerbaijan closely monitored the developments surrounding the rapprochement in 2009, fearing that the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations and the subsequent opening of the border would allow Armenia to gain economic advantages, thereby bolstering its military position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Mehtiyev 2010). In order to prevent this outcome, Azerbaijan utilized all available political mechanisms to pressure the Turkish government into deviating from the agreements signed in Zurich. Through "well-financed direct lobbying, public relations, and media efforts in 2009–2010 against the Protocols" (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt 2015, 132), Azerbaijan sought to emphasize the deep societal ties between the two countries and their "shared political and security commitments" (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt 2015, 132). Despite the fact

that the normalization Protocols did not establish any preconditions and did not mention either the Armenian Genocide or the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, internal political challenges swiftly introduced a strong language of preconditions into the interactions of both sides. While Azerbaijan found satisfaction in the fact that the Nagorno-Karabakh issue became a topic of internal political discussions in Turkey for the first time (Mehtiyev 2010), and Turkish officials at various levels made statements directly linking the prospects of Protocol ratification to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, "Armenian experts and politicians insist[ed] that Armenia require recognition of the Genocide as a precondition to negotiations with Turkey" (Minasyan 2010, 28). Each side accused the other of political manipulation and a lack of genuine political commitment to negotiations. Finally, in February 2015, after seven years of delays and stagnation, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan issued an executive decision to withdraw the Armenia-Turkey Protocols from the parliament (Davtyan 2015). Simultaneously, the President emphasized that Armenia remained committed to the normalization process and was ready to restart it when there was a similar political will on the part of Ankara (The Armenian Weekly 2010).

Armenia-Turkey Normalization 2021—the Second Karabakh War and a New Window of Opportunity

The geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus underwent a dramatic transformation on September 27, 2020. While this chapter does not aim to provide a comprehensive history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it seeks to highlight some of the factors and consequences relevant to the ongoing Armenia-Turkey normalization process.

Facilitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the conflict between Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan escalated into a brutal war, claiming the lives of approximately 30,000 people and displacing over one million people, who became refugees or internally displaced persons. The initial military phase of the conflict in the early 1990s ended with a ceasefire agreement, widely perceived as an Armenian victory (Tadevosyan 2023). The May 1994 ceasefire agreement solidified territorial gains for the Armenian side. Armenian forces were able to gain control over the majority of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, as well as seize seven adjacent territories, establishing a direct land link between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and creating a buffer zone in the East. Despite years of mediation efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group, numerous Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogue initiatives, and bilateral endeavors by US and Russian presidents, no tangible or sustainable progress toward peace was achieved. While the peace process remained stagnant, the region experienced a steady increase in arms race, with Armenia and Azerbaijan ranking among the top ten most militarized countries in the world in 2020 (Mutschler and Bales 2020). The change of political leadership in Armenia in 2018 incited hope for a qualitatively different peace process. Nikol Pashinyan's leadership marked a significant change, as he was the first

Armenian leader in twenty years not from Karabakh, which was seen as a possibility for shift in the peace process and the dynamics of the ongoing negotiations (Broers 2018). Despite the initial enthusiasm, regrettably, decades of animosity and isolation, the militarization of the region and public discourse, a lack of political will to prepare local populations for peace and compromise, ongoing military and political provocations, COVID-19 restrictions, and international disengagement from the region created a fertile ground for a resumption of violence. "Previous small-scale clashes and provocations had accumulated significant tensions that eventually erupted into a devastating full-scale war on September 27, 2020" (Tadevosyan 2023, para. 8). With Turkey's military support, Azerbaijan emerged victorious in the 44-day war, completely shifting the balance of power (see Figure 8.1). A truce agreement brokered by Russia was signed on November 9, 2020.

The second Karabakh war, along with Turkey's direct and active involvement in it, in contrast to the first war in the 1990s, had a significant impact on the Armenia-Turkey conflict and relations after 2020. From a social-emotional

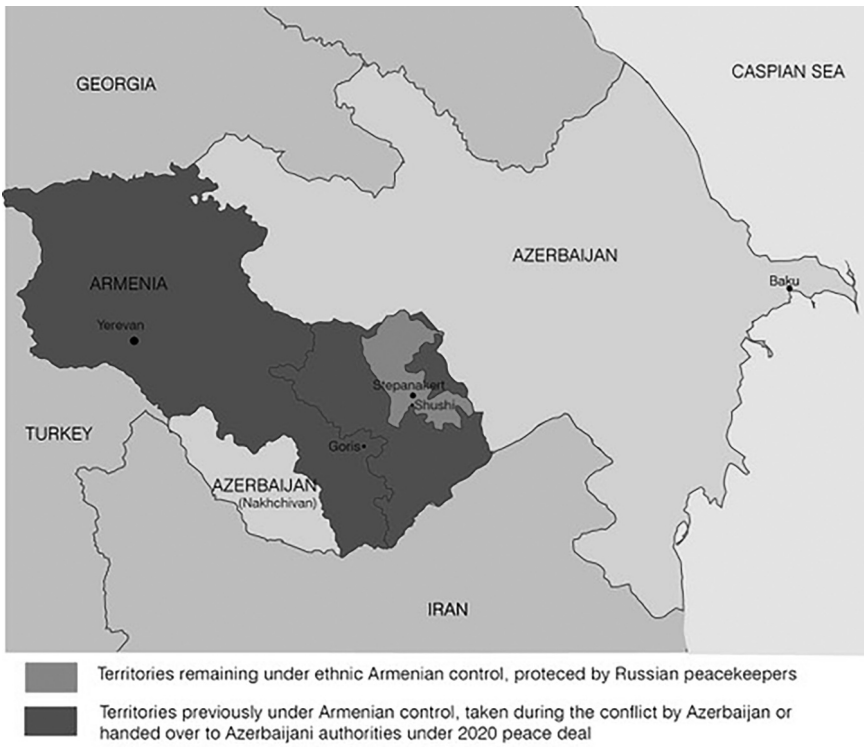

Figure 8.1 Map of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding regions after the November 2020 truce agreement.

Source: Adopted with permission from Marianna Karamyan

perspective, the war completely shifted Armenian perceptions of Armenia-Turkey relations. Papazian (2023) argues that if previously relations were "focused on history, memory, and retrospection, the war abruptly brought them into the present, shaping expectations about an imminent future" (p. 16). The war also altered the geographical imagination of the region, transforming Turkey from a distant historical enemy to an immediate threat in the Armenian public consciousness (Papazian 2023). On a political level, Armenia's crushing military defeat, resulting in significant human and territorial losses,[3] not only redefined the geopolitical map of the region but also opened a space for the return of diplomacy and reinvigorated the attempt to reset Armenian-Turkish relations.

One year after the signing of the truce agreement on November 9, 2020, both countries implemented several confidence-building measures to foster public support for the subsequent phase of Armenia-Turkey normalization. Opening the Armenian airspace to Turkish and Azerbaijani flights to establish more direct and cost-effective travel routes between Turkey and Azerbaijan was one of the initial steps taken (Mejlumyan 2021). This was followed by the introduction of direct charter flights between Istanbul and Yerevan, provided by an Armenian national carrier and low-cost Turkish airlines (Reuters 2022). At the political level, Turkey and Armenia appointed high-level special envoys for bilateral talks. Since December 2021, these envoys have met four times to discuss various issues related to the normalization process. Central topics of discussion included the exploration of direct trade, the facilitation of travel, and the eventual opening of the land border (Vartanyan 2022). The meetings of envoys are augmented with direct conversations between the ministers of foreign affairs of both countries. Unlike the previous normalization process, this renewed effort does not rely solely on meetings in third countries organized by international actors. For instance, the Armenian Foreign Minister attended the 2022 Antalya Diplomacy Forum, despite the significant political risk associated with visiting a country seen by Armenians as responsible for their military losses in the 2020 war (Aydıntaşbaş and Giragosian 2022). In May 2023, the Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly, Alen Simonyan, visited Ankara to participate in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Summit and the 61st PABSEC Plenary Meeting. During his visit, the Armenian speaker met with his Turkish counterpart, Mustafa Şentop, expressing hopes for the development of parliamentary dialogue between the two countries (Jam News 2023). It is worth noting that

3 As a result of the 2020 war, the Armenian side lost 8,280 km2 of territory out of the 11,548 km2 it previously controlled before September 2020. Of this, 3,716 km2 came under Azerbaijani control through military operations, while 4,564 km2 were subsequently handed over to Azerbaijan based on the terms of the ceasefire agreement signed on November 9, 2020. The loss of these territories has had significant implications for the demography, security, and future status of Nagorno-Karabakh. The conflict, as of March 2022, has resulted in the loss of 3,822 lives, including both soldiers and civilians within the Armenian population. Additionally, there are 208 individuals who remain missing (Karlinsky and Torrisi 2023).

this meeting took place shortly after Turkey's decision on April 29 to close its airspace for all flights between Armenia and third countries, citing the unveiling of the Nemesis monument on April 25 as a provocative step. The Nemesis monument was erected in memory of those involved in Operation Nemesis.[4]

In a similar vein to how the devastating war in 2020 provided an unforeseen opportunity for the revitalization of the normalization process, another regional tragedy created an unexpected opening to advance these efforts. On February 6, 2023, Turkey was struck by a devastating earthquake, resulting in immense destruction and the loss of nearly sixty thousand lives. However, this humanitarian catastrophe presented a chance for additional diplomatic engagement between Armenia and Turkey. Notably, the Armenian leadership expressed condolences to their Turkish counterparts, and, for the first time in modern bilateral relations, Armenia sent humanitarian aid and a search and rescue team to assist in the international relief efforts in February 2022. Furthermore, after thirty-five years, the crossing point between Armenia and Turkey in the northern part of Armenia was opened to allow Armenian trucks carrying humanitarian aid to enter Turkey (Reuters 2023). Shortly after the delivery of Armenian aid, the Armenian Foreign Minister visited Ankara, during which the Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers made preliminary agreements to open the land border to "third-country nationals and diplomatic passport holders ahead of the 2023 tourist season" (Mgdesyan 2023, para. 3).

The previous normalization process in 2009 failed, partly due to Turkey's insistence on Armenia's withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the outcome of the second Karabakh war rendered this demand obsolete, as Azerbaijan regained control over most of the territory it had lost in 1993 (Aydıntaşbaş and Giragosian 2022). The ongoing normalization process takes a pragmatic approach, emphasizing significant transactional aspects without attempting to force reconciliation prematurely, as was the case in the previous process. Despite Azerbaijan's potential to disrupt the process and the prevailing negative sentiment among the Armenian public toward normalization (48 percent "negative" and 11 percent "somewhat negative" in 2022 (CISR 2022)), it remains valuable and important to explore functional coexistence between Armenia and Turkey as a means of engaging with this protracted and intricate conflict.

Functional Coexistence: A New Avenue for Armenia-Turkey Engagement

According to Arai (2022), functional coexistence can be described as a paradoxical relationship where historical adversaries perceive each other as an existential threat but refrain from resorting to physical force to resolve their

4 Operation Nemesis was a clandestine operation carried out by members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) party in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. It took place between 1920 and 1922 and involved targeted assassinations of individuals who were directly involved in the planning and execution of the Armenian Genocide, as well as other crimes against the Armenian population.

irreconcilable differences (p. 124). One crucial aspect of functional coexistence is the presence of a minimum livable social space (MLSS), which refers to a geographic and/or relational context where parties can meet their basic material and non-material needs. Arai recognizes that a MLSS may unfold in the midst of either symmetric or asymmetric power dynamics. However, he emphasizes that for the MLSS to be functional and somewhat sustainable, the power dynamics should not be excessively asymmetrical, leading to the domination or subjugation of the lower-power party by the more powerful one (Arai 2022). Therefore, functional coexistence exists at the intersection of sustained negative peace and mutual denial/non-recognition, warranting a generational perspective in understanding and addressing this intersection.

Tracing the Four Pillars of Functional Coexistence in Armenia-Turkey Conflict

The conflict between Armenia and Turkey has persisted across generations. With the exception of the genocide of 1915 and Turkey's military support to Azerbaijan during the 2020 war, Armenia and Turkey have maintained varying levels of coexistence without resorting to interstate violence. Nevertheless, their relationship exhibits enduring features of denial and non-recognition. On the one hand, Turkey operates through denial, rejecting the legitimacy of Armenia's "political-legal, historical-cultural and social identity while refraining from using force to deny [its] right to exist" (Arai 2022, 125). On the other hand, Armenia operates through non-recognition by maintaining ambiguity regarding the recognition of the land border with Turkey. More specifically, Armenia has stayed steadfast in its refusal to "acknowledge [Turkey's] legitimacy while stopping short for proactive measures to enforce the refusal; passive denial" (Arai 2022, 125). These different levels of coexistence, Turkish denial and Armenian non-recognition, have contributed to a power asymmetry that characterizes the distinct nature of the MLSS in Armenian-Turkish relations. Turkey wields considerably more power in actively denying Armenian historical claims, owing to its larger size, developed economy, military capabilities, and international significance as a vital partner in trade, energy transit through multiple oil and natural gas pipelines connecting energy resources from Far and Middle East to Europe, and military alliances. Turkey not only takes a more proactive stance but also possesses significantly greater resources to actively and openly deny the Armenian historical identity. Conversely, as a landlocked country with closed borders on its eastern and western sides, Armenia's passive non-recognition is largely confined to symbolic statements and disengagement, rather than active denial. This power asymmetry creates a substantial disparity in maneuvering space within the MLSS between Armenia and Turkey, favoring Turkey's greater freedom of action.

In his article, Arai identifies implications of functional coexistence for applied peacemaking practice and reconceptualizes ways of working in an enduring condition of negative peace. First, he highlights the need to build historical awareness of the shifting boundaries of mutually acceptable conflict

behavior. For a protracted conflict such as the Armenia-Turkey conflict, understanding how and why conflict behavior has evolved can provide a solid foundation for constructing sustainable engagement mechanisms aimed at advancing the conflict containment and resolution process. Taking a long-term perspective on mutually acceptable conflict behaviors reveals several significant positive shifts that have occurred at the political, civil society, and people-to-people levels. At the political level, a major perceptual shift took place when President Sargsyan invited President Abdullah Gül to a historic soccer match in Yerevan in 2009. It became the first bilateral visit since 1993, when the first president of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosian led the Armenian delegation to participate in the funeral ceremony of President Turgut Ozal in Istanbul (Radar.am 2022). Despite the failure of the first round of the normalization process, there has been a continuous expansion and evolution of the acceptable boundaries of conflict behavior. On April 24, 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was then the Turkish Prime Minister, made a public acknowledgment of the significance of April 24 for Armenians worldwide. In his statement, Erdogan referred to the "historic events as 'inhumane' and offered condolences to the grandchildren of the victims" (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt 2015, 128). Although this fell short of a formal apology or recognition of the genocide, it marked a notable shift in Turkey's perception of the acceptable boundaries of interaction. Furthermore, in 2019, President Erdogan took to his Twitter account to express condolences in Armenian upon the passing of Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan of Constantinople, which was a first in modern bilateral history (Maza 2019). This further contributed to the evolving landscape of acceptable conflict behavior. In 2021–2022, high-level Armenian officials made a series of visits to Turkey, deviating from the established tradition of meeting only on the sidelines of international events or at the invitation of third parties. Lastly, Armenia's provision of humanitarian aid and deployment of a search and rescue team to Turkey's earthquake-stricken areas following Turkey's direct involvement in the second Karabakh war against Armenian interests also indicate a significant shift in the boundaries of mutually acceptable interactions from the Armenian point of view.

Over the course of recent decades, there also after there has been a notable transformation in terms of the boundaries of acceptable behavior in Armenian-Turkish civil society exchanges. The Turkish intelligentsia and civil society, in particular, have increasingly recognized the necessity of revisiting the past as a means of moving forward. Regional expert Tom de Waal (2015), renowned for his works on the Caucasus, describes this process as a "Turkish thaw," led by Turkey's expert and civil society communities. Its objective is to reexamine "some of the dark pages of [Turkey's] past, including the oppression of the non-Turkish populations of the late Ottoman Empire" (de Waal 2015, 136). Cengiz Aktar, a Turkish expert, emphasizes the crucial role of Turkish civil society and intellectuals in establishing a new realm of discourse beyond the confines of political elites (Aktar 2014). This new space allows Turkish civil society to address matters of memory and culture.

The assassination of prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007, known for his outspoken stance on the Armenian Genocide, sparked a public debate on exclusive nationalism and the absence of freedom of speech in Turkey. In a show of solidarity, hundreds of thousands of individuals marched in Istanbul, holding signs that read "We are all Armenians" (Harvey 2007). Later, in late 2008, Turkish intellectuals and civil society members launched an online campaign called "I apologize" (*Özür Diliyorum*), aimed at "reject[ing] the official denial of the massacres and offer[ing] an apology" (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt 2015, 130). The campaign swiftly garnered over 30,000 signatures. Although the campaign refrained from using the term "genocide" and instead referred to it as the "Great Catastrophe[5]," it elicited a highly negative response from Turkish leaders and nationalists. Nevertheless, it marked a significant development within Turkey, a nation historically reluctant to embrace self-critical perspectives of its history.

Since 2010, both public and informal annual commemorations of the Armenian Genocide have become more commonplace in Turkey. Over the past decade, an increasing number of Turkish scholars and experts have independently conducted research on the Armenian Genocide, straying from the official Turkish narrative. Notably, figures such as Taner Akçam have publicly acknowledged and recognized the events as constituting a genocide (Özyürek 2009). Equally significant are the smaller, yet noteworthy, steps taken by Armenian civil society over the past fifteen years. Alongside various foreign-funded projects aimed at fostering mutual contact, dialogue, and understanding, Armenian civil society has made efforts to introduce diverse perspectives on the role of Turkish citizens in the Armenian Genocide. For instance, an NGO called "European Integration," based in Yerevan, published a collection of personal stories recounting how ordinary Turks assisted in rescuing Armenians during the genocide. According to Karen Bekaryan,[6] the chairman of the NGO, these stories present a different perspective of Turkish society, differentiating Turkish individuals from the Turkish state and offering a more nuanced understanding of this tragic event in the shared history of the Armenian and Turkish people.

There have been significant shifts in people-to-people interaction between Armenia and Turkey over the past two decades. Since 2002 visas are easily obtainable, allowing citizens from both countries to travel in both directions. Tourist visits have become increasingly common, with over 50,000 Armenians visiting Turkey in 2022, and the number is expected to rise (Armenian News 2023). While the reverse traffic is lower, over a hundred thousand Turkish citizens visited Armenia between 2011 and 2020 (Ghazaryan 2021). Informal

5 The phrase "Great Catastrophe" serves as the English translation of the Armenian term "Medz Yeghern" (Մեծ Եղեռն), commonly used within Armenian discourse. While this expression captures the enormity of the human casualties and suffering, it does not carry the legal connotation associated with the term "genocide.".

6 Author's personal communication, summer 2015.

trade and indirect import through Georgia are also prevalent, flooding the Armenian local market with Turkish goods and providing livelihoods for many Armenians. Turkish investments in Armenia are growing as businesses open stores and offices in Yerevan (Ghazaryan 2021).

These significant shifts in behavior demonstrate that the boundaries of mutually acceptable conflict behavior have shifted over time, and this trend is likely to continue. Developing a long-term historical awareness of these changes is crucial when creating engagement mechanisms in the context of Armenian-Turkish relations. The theory of functional coexistence offers a valuable framework for understanding these shifting boundaries. It allows for intervention strategies that draw from past experiences and ensure continued engagement with the conflict, even in the absence of a resolution. By operating within these boundaries and exploring their elasticity, it becomes possible to design interventions that adapt to the evolving dynamics of the situation.

Secondly, the framework of functional coexistence emphasizes the importance of staying constructively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution and resisting a premature push for resolution. The dynamics of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution process and Azerbaijan's interests are expected to continuously hinder the Armenia-Turkey normalization process. Previous attempts at normalization illustrated how parties can disengage from the resolution process when mutual denial and non-recognition persist. Arai argues that "functional coexistence requires not only resisting a premature push for resolution but also making a continuous effort to find concrete, practical actions to engage the reality of non-resolution" (Arai 2022, 142). The ongoing normalization efforts between Armenia and Turkey can center around practical steps, despite the parties' still strongly irreconcilable interests. These practical steps encompass various measures such as the establishment of direct trade, the opening of the shared border for third-country passport holders, and the resolution of residency and registration issues for migrant workers and investors. The pragmatic steps taken in the normalization efforts between Armenia and Turkey highlight the potential for constructive engagement despite political disagreements and significant concerns. It is worth emphasizing that functional coexistence requires not only continued pragmatic engagement at the government level but also involvement from civil society actors through civil society dialogues and bilateral expert discussions. These pragmatic engagements, which resist premature resolution, contribute to expanding the minimal livable social space (MLSS) for both parties and stretching the boundaries of acceptable conflict behavior.

Lastly, adopting a functional coexistence approach empowers actors from different levels engaged in a protracted and intractable conflict. It offers the potential to transform short-term actions into long-term systemic change (Arai 2022). Civil societies in Armenia and Turkey have been involved in numerous short-term projects over the past two decades. However, viewing these projects through the lens of functional coexistence allows for engagement with a long-term perspective on systemic change. Given the volatile social and

political context of the Armenian-Turkish conflict, the normalization process can be easily derailed. Functional coexistence proposes staying constructively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution as a realistic and attainable goal. This conceptual framework supports steps toward the resolution of the conflict and safeguards the normalization process by providing a useful way of thinking about the linkages between short-term actions and the long-term vision of coexistence. Importantly, the functional coexistence approach should not be misconstrued as lowering the bar or advocating for inertia in the conflict resolution process. On the contrary, it requires active, purposeful, and strategic engagement. Constant monitoring and evaluation are necessary to capitalize on the gains from each short-term action and be prepared to address setbacks and reversals of the gains (Arai 2022).

Conclusion

Armenia and Turkey have been locked in an intractable conflict for more than a century. Generations on both sides grew up with dramatically different understandings of history. Citizens of each society have internalized a historical identity and worldview whose validity rests on the categorical denial of the identity, culture, and legitimacy of the other side. The political normalization process between the two countries has been characterized by setbacks, making progress challenging. After the failure of the high-profile normalization process in 2009, civil society actors on both sides have sustained their engagement without a well-defined long-term vision of systemic change. The 2020 Karabakh war dramatically changed the social, political, and geographic context of the conflict. The confluence of new and persistent realities of insecurity and existential threats to Armenian society spurred a fresh round of high-level normalization efforts. These efforts have embraced a more pragmatic approach compared to the previous 2009 process.

This chapter has advocated for the application of the functional coexistence theory and framework to the Armenia-Turkey conflict. Functional coexistence emphasizes sustained engagement through deliberate and strategic short-term actions, linking them to long-term systemic change. By adopting a long-term perspective, this approach enables both government and civil society actors in Armenia and Turkey to navigate the evolving boundaries of acceptable conflict behavior and leverage their heightened historical awareness to drive conflict intervention and systemic social change.

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9 Coexistence and Domination

Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

Introduction

Since the 1950s, many Israeli Jewish academics, including current and former policymakers, advocated for both pragmatic and minimal forms of coexistence (the accommodationist model) as a result of studying Arab-Jewish relations in Israel extensively. After the 1967 war, and especially in the 1970s, Palestinian and Jewish scholars with Israeli citizenship began researching and publishing studies that advocated for a more genuine and equal partnership between Arabs and Jews in Israel (the transformational model). Obviously, the types and nature of coexistence models articulated by these scholars reflected their views of Palestinian-Jewish relations in Israel.

Most of these scholars acknowledge the need of Arabs and Jews living together within the state boundaries Israel had as of 1948. However, they based their analysis on two divergent frameworks, whereby one group situated Arab-Jewish relations in Israel as a Democratic Jewish Zionist State while the other group considered Israel as a state of all its citizens. This included the idea that Arabs and Jews can live side by side without the ethnic or national domination of either one (Sa'di Ahmad and Masalha Nur 2023).

A similar divide existed among nongovernmental and governmental organizations that advocated for and promoted dialogue between Arabs and Jews in Israel. The term Arab-Jewish coexistence in Israel dominated the discourse of many of these organizations in the early 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s (Abu-Nimer 2012). The Palestinian nationalist camp rejected such terminology, accusing those supportive of such an approach as traitors and calling for a boycott of such activities. On the other hand, the Israeli Ministry of Education and other government agencies rewarded the Arabs who participated in such coexistence programs.

This chapter analyzes three phases of development in Arab-Jewish relations in Israel regarding the concept of coexistence. The first phase, between 1948 and 1966, is caracterized as coexistence between the colonizer and colonized; the second phase is accommodationist and normalizing coexistence between 1967 and the 1980s; the third is transformational coexistence since the 1980s to

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the present. This analysis of the coexistence models of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel should and can be understood only within the larger and shifting context of Israeli-Palestinian conflict dynamics.

This chapter will also discuss the effects and roles of these approaches to the term "coexistence" focusing primarily on the last two decades of this conflict. Questions explored include: To what extent did these organizations shift their coexistence message to accommodate the expansion of settlements in the West Bank as well as many other repressive Israeli occupation policies in the Occupied Territories?; How did these organizations frame their coexistence message during the waves of community protests? Examples of these community protests include the Second intifada protest in 2000, the Prawer Plan protest in 2013, the Return Protests in 2018, and the Karama (dignity) protest in May 2021.

Functional Coexistence

Tatsushi Arai has offered functional coexistence as a framework that will allow communities and leaders in deep-rooted conflicts to build a foundation of a relationship, which will in turn make it possible for them to adopt a more sustainable and transformational approach to their conflicts in the future. While highlighting the pragmatic nature of functional coexistence as a framework of conflict intervention, Tadevosyan and Arai (2025) argue:

> The implications of functional coexistence for research, practice, and policy are significant and far-reaching. The acceptance of the functional coexistence approach in public and policy discourse would encourage conflict-affected societies to embrace a longer-term perspective when transitioning towards new, nonviolent relationships. It would also prepare them to work with their conflict dynamics more self-consciously and strategically, remaining resilient in the face of setbacks. Moreover, it would deter conflict entrepreneurs from capitalizing on unmet expectations for a positive peace.
>
> (pp. 4–5)

One of the key assumptions of functional coexistence is that a sustained effort to build pragmatic yet essential relationships can pave the way for more substantive steps toward conflict resolution when the conflict parties are ready. The theory suggests that implementing purposeful, incremental steps and creating conditions for future change are indicators of success in and of themselves. By implication, the theory of functional coexistence challenges yet complements the prevailing mode of conflict resolution practice, which tends to favor a discernible pattern of phased, linear progress—or at least some form of directionality—toward resolution. While accepting resolution as an ideal goal to strive for, the proposed theory and practice of functional coexistence aim to address the unmet need of conflict parties and practitioners searching for a more realistic, attainable goal of constructive, purposeful engagement.

Functional coexistence fulfills this unmet need. In addition, it should be noted that the *functional coexistence approach* to conflict intervention reflects future-oriented and prescriptive thinking. As such, it builds on, yet is distinguished from, functional coexistence, which describes a distinct form of empirical reality. The former is both an application and extension of the latter.

The following discussion of the two models of coexistence between Arabs and Jews in Israel—the accommodationist and transformational approaches—illustrates the challenges of applying the functional coexistence theory to such a difficult and complex context as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite the efforts of some Arabs and Jews in Israel to apply a gradual approach to functional coexistence, there are internal and external factors that obstruct the sustainability of such an approach.

From a Dominant Majority to a Dominated Minority

Palestinians in Israel have experienced traumatic shifts in their status and their relationship with Jews in Israel. Before May 1948, they were members of the Palestinian majority in historic Palestine.[1] In 1948, however, they lost their majority status within a few months and became a small minority dominated by their enemies within their newly established state.

After the creation of Israel as a Jewish state in 1948, only 156,000 Palestinians survived and remained under Israeli government control. The government placed these Palestinians under its military's administrative rules and regulations, which limited the Palestinians' mobility within the state of Israel as well as their ability to interact with the outside world. While building a "Jewish democratic state," the Arab minority under its control was subjected to severely discriminatory policies. The two primary aims of these policies were to eliminate security threats from the Arab minority and use the minority's submission to Israel as evidence to claim that the Arabs accepted Israel. This would then imply that Arabs were willing to collaborate with the newly formed Israeli regime.

The government introduced many repressive policies to accomplish these two objectives. These include a massive confiscation of Arab-owned land and the imposition of educational curricula aimed at indoctrinating Arab students with the Jewish Zionist narrative. These steps were an attempt to justify the Jewish return to the biblical homeland to claim their national rights and to prohibit any expression of Palestinian or Arab national identity or solidarity. For example, thousands of Arabs were either jailed or fined for violating the military administrative rules. Many individuals, including novelists, poets, and artists, participated in political activities to support the Palestinian national movement to express their national identity and solidarity. This is documented

1 The author has chosen to use the term Palestinians in Israel instead of various other terms used to refer to this community, such as Arabs in Israel, Israeli Arabs, Palestinians citizens of Israel, and Arabs of 1948.

by Mahmoud Darweish's biography and the works of many other Palestinian political activists such as Emil Habibi and Mohamed Taha.

The Israeli policies of fragmentation and division encouraged certain traditional Arab leaders to publicly and actively collaborate with the government, thereby successfully coopting many of them. Such leaders received various benefits and privileges from the state. Seminars encouraging Arab citizens' acceptance of Jews' dominant status were conducted by the Israeli Jewish Labor Union (Histadrut) and its political affiliates such as the Mapam and Mapai parties, which led successive governments between 1948 and the early 1970s. During this period, the concept of coexistence was introduced and practiced, ensuring the full and unquestionable domination of Israeli Jewish security forces and governmental agencies over Palestinians in Israel.

From Military Administration to Civic Identity

In 1966, the Israeli government removed its restrictive rule of military administration over Palestinians in Israel and allowed for their free movement within its territory. The system of control, as described by Ian Lustik, remained in place, and state security continued to be the primary consideration for the treatment of Arab citizens in Israel.

In June 1967, Israeli forces occupied the West Bank, Gaza, and the Syrian Golan Heights. As a result, new territories came under Israeli occupation, and the Palestinian residents in these territories were subjected to severe Israeli security control. This new reality opened a new window of opportunity for Palestinians in Israel to interact with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. For twenty years, Palestinians from the two territories could not communicate because it was extremely difficult and illegal for Arabs in Israel to meet or contact Palestinians outside of Israel.

Members of the Palestinian minority in Israel long faced difficult questions regarding their national identity and loyalty. They have been accused of being "Israelized" because they learned Hebrew, became familiar with Jewish and Zionist ideologies, participated in Israeli elections, served in Israeli-Jewish government agencies, attended Israeli-Jewish universities, and collaborated with Israeli-Jewish organizations. These distinct characteristics of Arab citizens in Israel afforded them a degree of familiarity with Israeli-Jewish culture, economic mobility, access to Israeli governmental services, and benefits from Israeli government agencies. This, in turn, helped them share Israeli civic identity. Over time, for many Palestinians in Israel, this identity of Arab citizens within the state of Israel became stronger and more visible than the national identity of Palestinians under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza (Ghanem and Mustafa 2018; Rouhana 2017).

The distinctiveness of Israeli civic identity among Palestinians in Israel was manifested in their ability to speak Hebrew fluently, study at Israeli universities, participate and compete in Israeli national sports, vote in local and parliamentary elections, hold positions in certain governmental agencies, and more.

None of the above roles or opportunities were desired or possible for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza.

This shift toward accepting certain aspects of Israeli civic identity, both in practice and in perspective, was clearly visible among the generation of Arabs born around the establishment of Israel in 1948, as well as those who were in their teens at that time. Utilizing this divide between Palestinians in Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, Israeli governmental and non-governmental organizations invested in strengthening the Israelization of Arab citizens, while negating their national expression as Palestinians. Concretely, these organizations used Israel's educational systems, workplaces, and public spheres to enforce the application of the passive coexistence model. This model encouraged Arab citizens to accept Israel as a democratic Jewish state. The Israeli government viewed the participation of Arab citizens in activities promoting the passive coexistence model as a gesture and indicator of their loyalty to the state of Israel and rewarded them in many ways, such as offering higher positions in governmental agencies, permitting them to open certain businesses, and facilitating their travel abroad (Cohen 2010).

Givaat Haviva, for example, is a center for Israeli labor parties that endorsed Israel's status as a "Jewish democratic state" with an Arab minority and promoted the passive coexistence model. Histadrut, a broad-based national federation of Israeli workers, rewarded its Arab members for participation and for endorsing the Israelization discourse. Most government agencies followed the same policy as Histadrut.

Despite the Israeli policies aimed at delegitimizing and prohibiting the Palestinian national discourse, Arab citizens of Israel remained resilient. Their Palestinian identity could not be fully suppressed, and it continuously manifested itself on many fronts.

On March 30, 1976, Land Day, the Israeli security forces attempted to suppress Arab protesters against the government's land expropriation policy by killing six, injuring dozens, and arresting hundreds of them. The large-scale confrontation that took place between the Israeli security forces and Arab citizens was the first of its kind since 1948. This event was significant because it involved the generation of Arab citizens who grew up under Israeli-Jewish and Zionist policies designed to control and Israelize them. Such policies of control were clearly described in Ian Lustick's 1982 book and reviewed by Nakhleh (1983):

> The main components in this system of control are "segmentation," "dependence," and "cooptation." Through segmentation, Israel succeeded in chopping up the Arab population into clans, religious sects, villagers, Bedouins, and so on. "The function of the segmentation component … has been to deprive Palestinians in Israel of facilities for united political action, whether involving alliances among Arabs on a country-wide basis or between groups of Arabs and politically significant groups of Jews."
>
> (Nakhleh 1983)

Land Day became a national day not only for Palestinians in the territories occupied in 1967 but also for all Palestinians in the Arab countries and around the world. In this way, Land Day enabled Palestinians in Israel to regain their Palestinian national identity within the Palestinian national movement after thirty years of isolation and repression. Like many other indigenous peoples, Palestinians rejected all forms of political and economic discrimination and confiscation, and other colonial policies typically used against indigenous peoples. Parallel examples include Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and former overseas territories of France (Sa'di and Masalha 2023).

The growth of Palestinization inside and outside Israel during the 1980s challenged the model of passive, accommodationist coexistence endorsed by Israeli government agencies. Palestinization rejected the notion of a Jewish state and began presenting a vision of one state for all its citizens. In 1995, Arab political activists, formerly associated with the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, aligned with smaller political groups and formed the first political party, the National Democratic Assembly (Balad), which formally and publicly endorsed a state for all its citizens and rejected the Zionist goal of building a "Jewish democracy." Surprisingly, in 1996, they succeeded in securing representation in the Israeli national parliament under Azmi Beshara's leadership (Bechara, Scalenghe, Rothman, and Beinin 1996).

The Palestinian nationalist discourse, which often rejected the accommodationist model, experienced another major crisis in 1993 when the Oslo Agreement came into effect. Under this agreement, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), representing Palestinians in the negotiations, recognized Israel, denounced terrorism, and accepted a two-state solution within the 1967 borders. The Palestinian Authority was created to represent Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. One of the major implications of this historic agreement was the shared understanding between Israel and the PLO that Palestinians in Israel would not become part of their political solution. Thus, the agreement signaled a clear message that the Arab minority in Israel would be on its own and would not be part of the negotiation or settlement. The exclusion of the Arab minority in Israel from the Oslo process deepened the division between those who supported Israelization under the Zionist goal of Jewish statehood and others who supported one state for all its citizens.

Nevertheless, by 1993, the intellectual and public processes that rejected the accommodationist model and its notion of an exclusive Jewish ethnic state (Rouhana 2017) were in full motion, thus forming a transformational model. This model was mainly articulated and led by a new political coalition called al Tajammu, which included former members and supporters of the Communist Party, the Covenant of Equality (an Arab-Jewish movement founded in 1991), the Progressive Movement (including Muhammad Mi'ari, a former Member of the Knesset of the Progressive List for Peace), and Abna' al-Balad (Sons of the Village) (Bechara, Scalenghe, Rothman, and Beinin 1996).

The Tension between the Two Models of Coexistence: The Fight Continues

Over the past decades, many Palestinians in Israel have been swinging between the two ends of the spectrum: pragmatic and passive coexistence versus transformational coexistence. Different researchers have labeled these dynamics as the Israelization versus Palestinization of Arab identity in Israel (Smooha 2019; Ghanem and Mustafa 2018).

In addition to military and political escalation in the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict (including the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen), major internal policies implemented by the right-wing government led by Benjamin Netanyahu since 1996 have affected the tension between these two camps. One of the most controversial laws passed by the Knesset in July 2018 is the Basic Law, which defines Israel as "the Nation-State of the Jewish People." This was a clear step by the right-wing political government to revert to the full submission policies introduced between 1948 and 1966.

The accommodationist model of coexistence between Arabs and Jews in Israel has faced several major challenges over the past two decades. These challenges raise questions on the sustainability of the pragmatic form of Jewish-Arab relations that the accommodationist model prescribes. Four of the major challenges are described below.

Al Aqsa Intifada

In October 2000, Israeli Likud leader Ariel Sharon led 400 Israeli security forces to enter the Al Aqsa Mosque. This event triggered the second Palestinian intifada, which marked the collapse of the Oslo agreement and upended the prospect of its implementation. Despite the intense nonviolent campaign led by many Palestinians in the early stage of this Intifada (Hallward 2011), the Israeli government and security forces employed repressive military tactics. This forceful entry into the mosque resulted in five years of violent clashes, which left thousands of casualties and destroyed thousands of houses.

Within the Israeli state, Israeli forces killed thirteen Arab citizens and injured or arrested many more. This marked the second wide-scale clash between Israeli security forces and Arab citizens of Israel after Land Day in 1976, challenging the viability of the accommodationist model of coexistence. Exacerbating this challenge, right-wing Jewish policymakers publicly called for harsher measures against Palestinians in Israel, doubting their loyalty to the state, while Arab community leaders raised serious doubts about the possibility of peaceful coexistence with such a regime that killed its own citizens. As Aaron Boxerman wrote in May 2021 reflecting on the impact of the Second Intifada on Palestinians in Israel, "Police killings of 13 Arabs in riots on the eve of the Second Intifada shaped the community's ties with the state for a generation" (Boxerman 2021).

The brutality of the Israeli police against Arab citizens and the failure of the Or Commission—established by the Israeli government in October 2000,

with its report released in 2003—to identify the police forces and/or policies responsible for the excessive use of force during the Second Intifada undermined the viability of the accommodationist model. These events further emboldened the nationalist camp of Palestinians in Israel to challenge the accommodationist model.[2]

Communal Clashes in May 2021

During the ten-day period between May 2 and May 12, 2021, when right-wing Israelis and police forces waged a war in Gaza and attacked the Al Aqsa Mosque, Arab youth and Jewish mobs in Israel clashed, especially in mixed cities. As captured by Milshtein (2021):

> The violence was particularly prominent in mixed-society cities, such as Lod, Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, and Ramleh (mostly Arab violence against Jews), but was also seen among Bedouin localities in the Negev (mainly the blocking of central traffic ways and the damaging of civil infrastructure), the so-called "Triangle" comprising of eleven towns near the Green Line in Israel's center and towns and villages in the Galilee.

Although there were fewer casualties during this period than in October 2000, the violence in May 2021 had an important impact on Arab citizens of Israel because it made them realize the existential threat they were facing. Most of the Arab citizens retreated to their villages and hid behind their doors waiting for this wave of communal violence to pass. The combination of the lack of security forces to protect people across the conflict-affected communities and the informal Israeli government support for the Jewish Israeli mobs who attacked Arab residential areas sent Arabs and Jews a clear message about the fragility of the accommodationist model of coexistence.

Israeli Jewish analyst Michael Milshtein (2021), the Head of the Palestinian Studies Forum at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, stated:

> Without genuine, serious introspection, any resolution to the current tensions between Arabs and Jews in Israel will likely be superficial…. The rioting that broke out in Israeli Arab society during Operation "Guardian of the Walls," an armed conflict between Israel and Hamas lasting from May 10 to May 21, 2021, was one of the lowest points in relations between Jewish citizens and Arabs in Israel.

The event of May 2021 generated among Arab and Jewish communities in Israel a sense of serious rift between Arab and Jewish communities as opposed

2 See the Adalah report dated November 8, 2020 for more information on these events.

to confrontation between Arab protestors and security forces. This was captured by Michael Milshtein (2021):

> Unlike previous crises like "Land Day" in 1976 or the incidents in October 2000, which consisted of clashes between Arab citizens and the security services in Israel, most of the recent confrontations were between citizens from the two sides of Israeli society. This recent outbreak saw extreme violence, including violence towards symbols of governance and random vandalism, in all parts of Arab society in Israel.

The use of the term "superficial" in describing Arab-Jewish relations in Israel indicates Milshtein's serious doubt about the possibility of peaceful coexistence, suggesting the need to rethink the nature of these relations. Yet, Milshtein was appealing primarily to Arab leaders in Israel to critically reflect on these events, learn lessons, reiterate their loyalty to the Jewish state, and accept the accommodationist model. In so doing, Milshtein neglected to point out the failure of the police to handle Arab protests in Israel in a civil and responsible manner. Criticizing the one-sidedness of the Jewish-centered response illustrated by that of Milshtein, Arab journalist Rami Younis (2021) describes the accommodationist model of coexistence as an illusion in the minds of the dominant agencies representing the Jewish establishment. Younis (2021) states, "After weeks of racist incitement, the Israeli media is suddenly talking about 'bringing back coexistence'—a paradise that was never even here."

The two mass protests described above mobilized thousands of Arab citizens in the streets and led to violent clashes with Israeli police forces, straining Arab-Jewish relations. A great deal of the media coverage on these protests as well as the public discourse propagated by political parties and other opinion leaders stressed a growing rupture in Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Some even argued that Israeli Arabs should reject all forms of peaceful intercommunal coexistence with Jews in Israel (Al Sanah and Soheir 2023). Their refusal of coexistence paralleled the existing movement to boycott any dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to resist the normalization of the occupation.

The October 7th Attack and the War on Gaza

The recent Israeli war on Gaza started after the attack of Hamas on Israeli Jewish border towns in the south and the killing of 1,200 Israeli military personnel and civilians. This triggered a massive Israeli military campaign against Hamas and the people of Gaza, as well as towns and villages in the West Bank. As of March 2024, the military campaign has had devastating consequences for Palestinians in Gaza, with over 32,000 people killed (two-thirds women and children), over 110,000 people injured, two-thirds of houses destroyed or damaged, over 1,150 mosques destroyed, severe cases of starvation because of the siege, and Israel preventing sufficient aid from entering Gaza. Additionally, all hospitals have been attacked, with only four of them partially operating. As a

result of the massive scale of destruction and public statements of Israeli politicians and military leaders, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has decided to examine the legality of the Israeli war on Gaza. The ICJ has subsequently come to declare that there is a plausible case of genocide. Moreover, the Israeli war on Gaza and the military and settlers' aggression in the West Bank are viewed by Palestinians, as well as millions of people who have protested weekly since October 8, 2023, as acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

In reaction to the threats and security situation along the southern and northern borders of Israel, where Hezbollah fired rockets daily into Israeli towns and cities, over 120,000 Israeli Jews were evacuated to the center of the country. As a result, emergency Israeli security measures were imposed on Palestinians in Israel, prohibiting any form of solidarity, sympathy, resistance, or even discussion of the war in Gaza. The enforcement of these measures resulted in hundreds of arrests and investigations, as well as the dismissal of hundreds of Palestinians in Israel from their jobs, with some students expelled from their colleges and universities.[3]

The legal prohibition of any protest among Palestinians in Israel, along with the Israeli police's brutal treatment of the small group of Arab protestors in Um al-Fahem during the first week after the October 7th attack, forced total silence on this Palestinian Arab community of 1.7 million. The Israeli Police Minister Ben Gvir and other right-wing leaders threatened Palestinians in Israel with severe consequences if they dared to break the emergency rules or express any form of sympathy. Meanwhile, Israeli Jewish protestors continued to march in support of the war and to demand the return of the hostages, sending a clear message to this minority that they are outside the Israeli Jewish national consensus on war and revenge.[4]

Although the war has not ended yet, the divide between Arabs and Jews in Israel continues to widen and deepen. As with previous Israeli wars, military operations, and Palestinian uprisings, Arab citizens of Israel retreated to their villages and towns and sought security within their own group. Avoiding direct encounters and confrontations with the Israeli Jewish community became the norm in such repeated crises. However, in this round, due to the scale of destruction and loss among Palestinians and Israelis, it seems that the little trust and hope for peaceful coexistence between these communities are being tested and questioned by many on both sides.[5] It is too early to predict or even provide an in-depth analysis of the consequences of the war on Gaza on Arab-Jewish

3 See the Adalah report dated October 24, 2023 and the Mosawa Center's report, "100 Days."

4 See the Adalah report dated October 24, 2023 and the Mosawa Center's report, n.d., "100 days."

5 The analysis and arguments presented in this section are based on the informal and private consultations the author conducted with leaders of the Arab community in Israel between October 8, 2023 and March 15, 2024. In addition, the author organized two webinars between October 2023 and March 2024 with Arab members of the Knesset and well-known journalists and media experts to discuss the reactions and consequences of the war on Gaza on Arabs in Israel. These webinars were attended by forty-three people living outside Israel. Their testimonies and reflections form the basis of this analysis.

relations in Israel. However, it is already clear to many on both sides that their relations will not be the same after this war. The emergency measures and public dehumanizing statements by certain Israeli leaders against Palestinians sent a message of disconnect between the majority of Arabs and state agencies.

So far, the dynamics of this war on Gaza have contributed to the questioning of the accommodationist model. Palestinians in Israel are living in fear of a second Nakba and have been threatened by state officials with facing the same fate as Gaza if they dare to express any form of resistance or show disloyalty to the war. Elders in this community have repeatedly described their feelings of alienation and displacement that they had experienced in 1948 and afterward in Israel.

Organized Crimes in the Arab Community

In addition to the three major confrontations between security forces and Palestinians in Israel that fundamentally challenged the accommodationist model of coexistence, there is the tragic and deeply rooted problem of internal community crime. Since 2010, there has been a steady increase in crime rates within the Arab community in Israel. In 2023 alone, 244 Palestinians were killed, a number primarily attributed to organized crimes involving money laundering, turf protection, and family disputes. Over time, the terror of random killings has paralyzed the Arab community in Israel. Arab leaders in Israel and an overwhelming majority of Israeli Arabs agree that the Israeli security forces are not taking the issue seriously. On the contrary, several reports have implicated the Israel Security Agency (ISA), also known as Shein Beit, and other security forces in deliberate acts linked to organized crime. Suha Arraf's 2020 article in *+972 Magazine* captures Arabs' fear and frustration over the Israeli government, its security forces, and its policy of neglect and even manipulation of organized crimes. Arraf (2020) writes:

> Organized criminal syndicates have created a "state within a state" in Palestinian villages, towns, and cities across Israel, employing hundreds of foot soldiers who engage in "conventional" crimes such as arms and drug trafficking, with over 400,000 illegal firearms at their disposal.… Those syndicates have also gone after businesses and Arab local councils, leaving hundreds of thousands of citizens living in fear in their own communities. Above all, Israeli police have exhibited weakness and indifference to these problems and, even more disturbingly, an intimacy with the Arab crime families. The opening of new police stations in Arab localities has brought no relief: in fact, most of these communities have experienced an increase in homicides.

Statistics reported by Abraham Initiatives (2023) confirm the rapid and steady increase in homicides in Arab localities Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Numbers of homicides in Arab localities in Israel

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
People Killed	61	58	64	67	71	89	96	126	116	244

In 2019, for example, the homicide rate in Israeli Arab society was five times that of Israeli Jewish society. Israeli authorities publicly state that Israeli Arabs possess hundreds of thousands of arms and use them for organized crimes. Journalist Suha Arraf, while investigating organized crime in the Arab community, conducted several interviews with Israeli security experts and officers who acknowledged the responsibility and role of the Israeli police forces in perpetuating the problem. One particularly concerning issue is the proliferation of firearms. According to Public Security Minister Gilard Erdan, hundreds of thousands of illegal firearms, at least seventy percent of which originate from IDF bases, end up in Palestinian villages, towns, and neighborhoods (Arraf 2020). Furthermore, when interviewed by Arraf, retired police superintendent Nabil Dahar, who served in various command positions in the Israeli Police Investigations Unit ("Mahash") in the north, stated:

> The minister knows that most of the firearms are smuggled out of Israeli army bases, and what does he do with this information?… The police and the media are busy with Sara Netanyahu [who was convicted of misusing state funds], engaging hundreds of police officers, yet there are places where they have not even solved a single murder case. The police command presents erroneous data. Confiscating a weapon and saying, 'we found it in this or that village' does not solve the problem.
>
> (Arraf 2020)

An overwhelming majority of Arab community members and leaders recognize that the Israeli security forces exercise a double standard when dealing with crimes in the Arab community compared to those in Israeli Jewish society. A 2019 survey by the Galilee Society (n.d.), also known as the Arab National Society for Health Research and Services, found that eighty-seven percent of respondents from central Israel and seventy-one percent from the north believed that the police were not serious about addressing crime in the Arab sector. The most common question raised by Arabs is: How is it that Israeli authorities can solve crimes committed against Israeli Jews within hours, yet fail to solve murders in the Arab sector?

According to police statistics published by *Yedioth Ahronoth*, an Israeli daily, seventy-five percent of suspected murders committed in the Jewish community between January 2022 and April 2023 were solved, compared to only nineteen percent of murders in the Arab community during the same period (Goldstein 2023). Arab citizens' frustration and anger towards the Israeli authorities are rising because of the latter's failure to put an end to organized

crimes. The constant experience of living in terror and worrying about children's safety has driven many Arabs to seek refuge in Jewish towns.

The response of Arab leadership in Israel to the lack of resolution regarding organized crime has primarily been limited to organizing protests and advocacy through various governmental agencies. There are many grassroots actions and protests to pressure the Israeli government and police to intensify their efforts to combat organized crime. Leaders of the High Follow-Up Committee (HFC) have launched several campaigns to communicate this demand to the authorities.[6] The Arab political parties have failed to influence or pressure various governmental agencies to allocate sufficient resources and enforce new policies to effectively reduce organized crime in Arab society in Israel. Even the United Arab List led by Mansour Abbas, who signed a historic agreement with Jewish right-wing coalition parties to form the Naftali Bennet government (June 2021 to June 2022), faced significant challenges defending the Israeli authorities' policies on organized crime.

The United Arab List is a new political coalition formed to facilitate cooperation between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel. This coalition was established with the understanding that if Palestinians in Israel united as one party, they could influence Israeli politics as a key player in forming future coalition governments. Representing the accommodationist camp, this coalition includes Arab political leaders and constituents who support a pragmatic approach, arguing that Arab citizens should accept their status as a minority in a Jewish state (Robinson 2023).

Since its inception, this political party led by the Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel reflected the accommodationist model of coexistence and has managed to gain five parliamentary seats in the 2023 elections. In contrast, the nationalists failed to reach the electoral threshold for the first time since 1996. Moreover, the United Arab List has chosen to engage with any Israeli government that could help secure Arab rights and improve living conditions.[7]

The Israeli government's inability and unwillingness to seriously handle crime in the Arab community weakened Arab trust in the government and eroded their sense of belonging to Israeli society. Many Arabs increasingly feel abandoned by the government and opt to seek refuge and safety on their own. Consequently, Arabs' rejection of the accommodationist model has steadily grown. The fragility of the accommodationist model became evident during repeated violent confrontations over the past decades. Each confrontation has been marked by widespread distrust, animosity, and the negation of fundamental rights, which dominate both formal and informal discourse.

The rise of an ultra-nationalist Israeli government following the 2023 elections, coupled with the absence of left-wing Zionist representation, suggests

6 The High Follow-Up Committee is the highest council that represents Arabs in Israel. It includes Arab members of the Knesset, heads of local councils, city mayors, and traditional leaders (Mapping Palestinian Politics n.d.).

7 Interview with Mansour Abbas in Galilee, Israel on July 23, 2023.

that further polarization between Arabs and Jews in Israel is inevitable. The ultra-nationalist policies adopted under the influence of Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich to further marginalize Palestinians in Israel have raised serious fears and concerns among both Israeli Jews and Arabs committed to the accommodationist model of coexistence. Recognizing these challenges, Arab political leaders willing to collaborate with Jewish parties adopt a pragmatic path and discourse to protect themselves from a more radical and dangerous discourse calling for the expulsion of Arabs from Israel.

The Need for a Transformational Model of Coexistence

The limitations and adverse cumulative impacts of the widespread application of the accommodationist model of coexistence over the past seventy-five years justify the introduction of the transformational model of dialogue as an alternative and remedy to the former. This model consists of a systematic analysis of the root causes of the conflict as well as the genuine recognition and acceptance of former adversaries.

The transformational model and its processes align with several principles of the conflict transformation framework (Lederach 1997). These principles include the need to explore the root causes of the conflict, emphasis on possible multi-level changes (interpersonal, structural, and cultural), and the need to transform perceptions and behaviors through processes that build deep intergroup and interpersonal relationships across the divides. By adopting this approach to coexistence, Arabs and Jews in Israel can begin to develop more peaceful and sustainable relationships, breaking the cycles of communal violence illustrated by events such as those of May 2021.

The accommodationist model, by contrast, asserts that a division of Palestinians in Israel into four religious and cultural communities—Muslim, Christian, Druze, and Bedouin—will dilute their Palestinian national identity. It also maintains that the improvement of Arabs' economic status in Israel will ensure their loyalty to the Jewish state over time. However, as stated above, Arab-Jewish relations in Israel have deteriorated continuously and led to a growing number of communal clashes including those in May 2021. As these clashes have intensified, Arab-Jewish dialogue groups have suffered significantly, ceasing operations during periods of heightened conflict, such as the Second Intifada (2000–2005) and the most recent Gaza War (October 7, 2023–present). Over time, the accommodationist approach supported by the government and joint Arab-Jewish peace organizations lost its momentum and credibility because of the cumulative adverse effects of growing structural violence against Palestinians in Israel, as well as the apartheid and occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. A number of studies have documented this growing disconnect between Arabs and Jews in Israel and the diminishing effectiveness of coexistence organizations following periods of military and political escalation (See Abu-Nimer 2012; Maoz 2004; Halabi and Sonnenschein 2004; Lazarus 2011).

Contrary to the accommodationist model of coexistence promoted by certain Arab and Jewish organizations which the Israeli government actively funds and endorses, the transformational model requires creating a space for Arab citizens in Israel to explore and express their Palestinian identity. It encourages questioning the legitimacy of the Jewish state and linking Arab-Jewish dialogue groups with anti-occupation political and social movements in both Israel and Palestine. Proponents of the transformational model distinguish themselves from supporters of the accommodationist model, which focuses primarily on cultural commonalities, avoids political debates, and disregards the structural violence inherent in Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Advocates of the accommodationist model also accept the Jewish character of the state, refrain from linking intercommunal dialogues to historical events in the occupied Palestinian territories since 1967, and avoid public calls for political action that may arise from intercommunal dialogues.

The transformational model of coexistence requires observing the principles of equal recognition of the rights of Palestinians and Jews in Israel. It also requires them to live in the same territories and revoke all the laws and policies responsible for structural violence and strained Arab-Jewish relations. A fundamental change in the relationships between the two communities requires a shift in mindset, moving from the predominant view of security as a mutually exclusive condition to an alternative perspective that regards security as a mutually beneficial condition. The current mindset, based on a win-lose formula, assumes that one side's security diminishes the other's. In contrast, a win-win formula promotes mutual security, enabling people on both sides to build a shared civic identity as equal citizens and contribute to state-building regardless of ethnicity, religion, culture, or other markers of social identity. However, achieving this shift comes with significant challenges. Israeli Jews must relinquish automatic privileges, while Palestinians must acknowledge the right of Israeli Jews to live in the land.

Today, there are only a few Arab and Jewish organizations using the transformational approach to convene Arab-Jewish dialogues in Israel. An illustrative example is the Oasis of Peace, known as Wahat al-Salam ("waaḥat as-salaam") in Arabic and Neve Shalom ("nevei shalom") in Hebrew. This village, home to both Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel, is dedicated to fostering justice, peace, and equality within the country and the broader region.

Situated equidistant from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-Jaffa, the community was established in 1970 by Fr. Bruno Hussar on land belonging to the Latrun Monastery. It serves as a model of equality, mutual respect, and partnership, challenging patterns of racism, discrimination, and conflict. The community has established educational institutions based on its ideals and conducts activities focused on social and political change. Many residents work on projects related to peace, justice, and reconciliation. The village currently has seventy families, with plans to expand to 150 families (Oasis of Peace n.d.).

The Oasis of Peace illustrates how Arabs and Jews in Israel can aspire to live by the principle of full equality. The villagers have organized their own

governance, education, and cultural exchange initiatives, embodying their visions of mutual security and transformational coexistence. The School for Peace, an educational center in this village, trains Arab and Jewish dialogue facilitators to promote genuine intercommunal coexistence in Israel through encounter groups. Despite the enormous challenges and obstructions faced by this joint Palestinian-Jewish community, they managed to sustain their shared vision of a free, dignified, and equal way of living in the same village.

Conclusion

In light of the editors' description of the third type of case studies that qualify as emergent forms of coexistence, Arab-Jewish relations in Israel do not serve as a prototype of functional coexistence due in part to the recurring episodes of physical violence, as illustrated by Al Aqsa Intifada, May 2021, and the war on Gaza which broke out in October 2023. Whether Arab communities, organizations, and political parties have upheld their agency (Arai 2022, 124) is another question that needs to be answered in relation to the defining qualities of functional coexistence. Additionally, Arab-Jewish relations in Israel may not be characterized as a state of active mutual denial or non-recognition (Arai 2022, 126), while ultra-nationalist Jewish leaders' rejection of Arabs' right to live alongside them indeed promotes the denial and non-recognition of Arabs (Marton 2007). Considering all these factors, one may argue that there is ground for applying only *selected* aspects of functional coexistence theory to Arab-Jewish relations in Israel.

In addition, unlike the accommodationist approach, the functional coexistence approach does not suggest that incremental steps can necessarily lead to resolution. The functional coexistence approach stresses the need to identify and seize pragmatic opportunities to take meaningful actions, however small and short-term they may appear, under the seemingly impossible conditions of conflict non-resolution, mutual denial, and enduring negative peace. Such actions, if taken, may not always lead to resolution. However, proponents of these actions inspired by the functional coexistence approach consider them as their best fighting chances available to potentially increase the likelihood, if not certainty, of creating more promising conditions for possible future change.

The functional coexistence approach reflects the efforts made in Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Changemakers from both communities face different conditions that hinder meaningful progress. Only a few, such as the Oasis of Peace, managed to introduce initiatives aimed at promoting the equality and dignity of all participants. Despite many obstacles, these initiatives illustrate a key principle of the functional coexistence approach, which, as mentioned earlier, rejects the impractical idea of a straightforward path to resolution. Instead, like the functional coexistence approach, they employ strategic thinking and seize emerging opportunities that may increase the likelihood of resolution, without assuming that a resolution is inevitable. This means that Arabs and Jews in Israel who support any intervention during

these difficult circumstances have to be strategic in their choice of what activities they will implement and be prepared to accept the possibility that such activities might not produce a lasting effect.

Unlike the accommodationist approach, the functional coexistence approach rejects the inertia of hegemonic stability and submissive inaction. The functional coexistence approach, which is prescriptive and forward-looking in nature, differs from functional coexistence, a concept used to describe an existing empirical reality. It considers the agency of each party, including that of a low-power party, as a prerequisite. Proponents of the functional coexistence approach may therefore adopt nonviolent action once the agency of low-power parties is lost.

Certainly, the gradual perspective on conflict intervention inherent in the functional coexistence approach is useful and it can be applied to a social setting that allows such changes to be consistently implemented, with a view toward fostering mutual trust between conflict parties. However, in the case of Palestinians in Israel, as stated above, there is no such steady application of the gradual functional coexistence approach by the Israeli governments. Additionally, regional conflicts obstruct such implementation. The ongoing Israeli Palestinian confrontations undermine the effects of the gradual functional coexistence approach. The process of building trust between Arabs and Jews in Israel has constantly been interrupted by the continuous state of war between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

The accommodationist model has been severely shaken by the various discriminatory policies and violent confrontations since the Oslo Agreement in 1993. For the past two decades, Israel's ultra-nationalist right-wing government has continued to push harder to reassert the Jewish majority's control over the occupied territories, economic resources, and national discourse (Rosemberg 2022). Hamas's attack on October 7th, the war on Gaza, and the ways in which the Israeli government treats Arab citizens have only exacerbated the tension between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

Thus, Palestinians in Israel are feeling existentially threatened by these policies. Such a distressing reality, combined with the terror of organized crime and the rise in the number of victims, can lead to further escalation and an imminent massive Arab-Jewish communal confrontation. Such developments provide a pretext for those who do not believe in the possibility of coexistence to drag Jews and Arabs into another round of massive violence (Arab Center Washington DC 2023).

Since the events of Land Day on March 30 and throughout subsequent confrontations between Arab protestors and Israeli security forces, analysts, local authorities, and supporters of the accommodationist model of coexistence warned Arabs and Jews to contain their reactions. They advised against exaggerating the effects of these confrontations, thereby challenging the Palestinian nationalists' interpretation of their impact. Instead, they called for the continued use of the same model of dialogue and coexistence. They often attribute the tension to a lack of a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict and ignore the structures and policies of the Jewish state towards its Arab citizens.

The way forward is to advocate for the transformational model, which calls for a full reexamination of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel and a renewed emphasis on adopting a new narrative for dialogue and joint actions. The transformational model is based on the assumption that Arabs and Jews in Israel should be equal partners in all spheres of interaction. Consequently, it rejects the definition of Israel as an exclusive state for Jewish people and embraces the vision of a democratic state for all its Arab and Jewish citizens.

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10 Time for a New Approach to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict

Prospects for Functional Coexistence

Ann L. Phillips

Introduction

The second Karabakh war in 2020 upended a twenty-six-year stalemate in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. Baku regained most of its territory lost to Armenian occupation in the first Karabakh war, 1992–1994. The status of Karabakh remained at the heart of the decades-long conflict creating an irreconcilable security dilemma for Yerevan and Baku, which pitted the right to self-determination of Karabakh Armenians against Baku's right to territorial integrity and monopoly on the use of force.

The landscape changed again when Baku established control over Karabakh in September 2023, and virtually all Armenians departed from the territory. In September 2024, a peace agreement remains elusive as tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan remain high.

Given the failure of twenty-six years of diplomatic efforts, dialogues, and workshops between the first and second Karabakh wars (1994–2020) to prevent renewed conflict and the lack of progress implementing components of a truce agreement signed in November 2020, fundamental rethinking of objectives and approaches to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is overdue.

Toward that end, this chapter explores the potential for a functional coexistence approach to the reconfigured Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. Its primary contribution for conflict parties and external actors alike is the realistic assumption that the conflict may not be resolved for decades or generations, but that avoiding the recurrence of violence is possible. Functional coexistence is defined as "a sustained negative peace which enables conflict parties and intermediaries to resist premature settlement and stay constructively engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution" (Arai 2022, 118). However, it is not a recipe for stasis. Conflict parties retain agency, that is, the ability to make decisions and pursue their own interests. Attention to factors such as power imbalance and social structures, which sustain conflict, provides the point of departure to prevent the resumption of violence and conflict transformation over the long term (Arai 2022). As such, the approach marks a valuable alternative to prevailing conflict resolution and reconciliation objectives by recognizing that "non-resolution" and negative peace are reasonable objectives under certain circumstances.

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The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict case is in the potential or emergent category of this volume because the conditions conducive to a functional coexistence approach are only partially met. Nonetheless, functional coexistence is worthy of exploration as a realistic alternative to the approaches pursued heretofore.

This case analysis is structured around core functional coexistence features:

- Enduring state of non-resolution and mutual denial
- Sustained negative peace
- Agency of conflict parties
- Potential to create minimally livable social spaces (MLSS)

No theoretical concept applies perfectly to any given situation. Functional coexistence and the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is no exception. Nonetheless, the core elements of functional coexistence offer a promising perspective from which to approach the Armenia-Azerbaijan case. The signature features of a functional coexistence approach are examined in turn.

Enduring State of Non-resolution

Competing territorial claims to the Nagorno Karabakh region began at the end of the First World War when Armenia and Azerbaijan gained independence from the Russian Empire. The territory was officially under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction but was inhabited predominantly by Armenians. Independence was short-lived, however. The Soviet Union incorporated both countries in 1920 and established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in 1923 as part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan. Home to a multi-ethnic population of Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Kurds, and Russians, it was granted a degree of self-government within Azerbaijan. Figure 10.1 illustrates the political geography of the South Caucasus and the contested territory of Nagorno Karabakh.

During the 1980s, the reform policies of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev expanded space for civic engagement and conflict mobilizers in many parts of the Soviet Union. Existent and prospective political leaders throughout the country, as well as in Central-Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, defaulted to nationalism to mobilize popular support in an uncertain political landscape.

The violence in Nagorno-Karabakh began in 1988 after its governing council voted to join Armenia. A full-scale war erupted in 1992 following the implosion of the USSR. Thousands of Azerbaijanis had to flee the NKAO (Falco 2018). By the time a Russian-brokered ceasefire (the Bishkek Protocol) was reached in 1994 some 30,000 Armenians and Azerbaijanis had been killed; Nagorno-Karabakh and seven contiguous Azerbaijani districts had been brought under Armenian control. Armenians took over Azerbaijani villages in the occupied territories. Estimates of displaced Azerbaijanis from the territories adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh as well as from Nagorno-Karabakh itself vary from roughly half a million to over 700,000 (International Crisis Group 2019). Multi-ethnic spaces beyond those territories were largely cleansed of

Figure 10.1 Map of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Source: Adopted from United States Congressional Research Service https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/RL33453.pdf

minorities. Armenians who had lived in Azerbaijan, as well as Azerbaijanis who had lived in Armenia for generations, were forced to flee (International Crisis Group 2019). Although both sides suffered, Azerbaijanis bore the brunt of the losses. The shock and humiliation of defeat by Armenia—a third the size of Azerbaijan—added to Azerbaijan's national trauma.

Large-scale killings, displacement, and change in territorial control created a security dilemma nurtured by fear. This resulted in a decades-long stand-off punctuated by occasional violent eruptions. Selective historical narratives on both sides emphasized national identity, grievances, mistrust, competing victimhood, enemy images, and demonization of the other. All these narratives in turn reinforced the security dilemma. Times when Armenians and Azerbaijanis lived as neighbors and friends and/or shared experiences and cultural similarities were omitted from mainstreamed narratives. Although the default to nationalism was politically expedient for leaders in both countries when the laws, rules, norms, institutions, and incentive structures that shaped interactions in the Soviet Union disintegrated, national appeals bolstered by selective narratives shackled their ability to reach a negotiated solution for the occupied territories and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has been in a state of non-resolution since the end of the first Karabakh war in 1994 and continues into 2024. This has not been for lack of diplomatic and peacebuilding efforts to reach a durable

solution. In 1994, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) established the Minsk Group to assist the parties in solving the conflict.[1]

Core principles of the Helsinki Final Act[2] provided the foundation for the Minsk Group's diplomatic efforts. However, two of the principles, preserving territorial integrity and protecting the equal rights/self-determination of peoples, proved to be fundamentally at odds in the Armenian-Azerbaijani case. The third principle, refraining from the use of force, implicitly favored Armenia's continued occupation of Azerbaijani land. Combined, they formed the security dilemma that negotiations were unable to ameliorate.

The Minsk Group added six objectives for discussion to the negotiation framework in 2007: Creating an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh that provides guarantees for security and self-determination;[3] returning the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control; building a corridor linking Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh; determining the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will[4]; upholding the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence; and granting the parties international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation (OSCE Minsk Group, July 10, 2009; ANI Armenian Research Center, April 11, 2016). Details were to be worked out by Yerevan and Baku in negotiations facilitated by the co-chairs.

Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders came close to an agreement on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and return of Azerbaijani territories in Key West, Florida in 2001 and later in Kazan, Russia in 2011. These efforts were thwarted by the publics long schooled in enemy images and competing victimhood. Zero-sum politics had become deeply entrenched particularly in younger generations who had virtually no positive experiences with people from the "other side" following the first Karabakh war.

Hope for a fresh start in 2018–2019 began with a series of meetings between newly elected Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. A number of confidence-building measures and the newly appointed foreign ministers spoke of "preparing their populations for peace" (Kucera 2019). Alas, the overriding security dilemma and domestic opposition to compromise derailed initial progress.

Parallel to official diplomatic efforts, Track II workshops and dialogue initiatives brought academics, journalists, and civil society organizations from both

1 Minsk Group members included Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, and Turkey, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Group was co-chaired by officials from the Russian Federation, France, and the United States.

2 The Helsinki Final Act, also known as the Helsinki Accords, signed in 1975 by thirty-five countries marked the formal end of the Second World War. It concluded the Conference on Security and Co-operations in Europe. The Organization for Security and Co-operations in Europe (OSCE) was established to carry on the agreement on principles reached in 1975.

3 No country, including Armenia, has ever recognized Nagorno-Karabakh's independence or its leaders.

4 This objective was as problematic as it was vague. It neither specified whose will would count (those remaining in N-K, those who lived there before the first Karabakh war) nor how a legally binding expression of will would be determined.

countries together after 1994 to develop public support for peace. The EU's European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK), a multifaceted, multi-year engagement (2010–2019), was the most ambitious. EU4Peace and EU4Dialogue were launched to carry on the work when the EPNK program ended. Other non-governmental organizations, such as German Marshall Fund's Black Sea Trust, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Berghof Foundation, contributed to the array of peacebuilding initiatives. However, the efforts did not scale up sufficiently to create popular momentum either to push the leaders to compromise or to support tentative overtures by their governments to resolve the conflict peacefully.

In fact, twenty-six years of diplomatic and peacebuilding efforts failed to achieve even modest progress. Not one meter of territory was returned to Azerbaijan, nor did any internally displaced person (IDP) return home. Aliyev's consideration of a certain degree of autonomy for Karabakh Armenians waned over time. Selective national narratives had been cultivated over thirty years and therefore entrenched by the lack of day-to-day contacts between most Armenian and Azerbaijanis since 1994. As a result, zero-sum calculations over the status of Karabakh Armenians and Armenian occupied Azerbaijani territory persisted. Convinced of the futility of more talks and the buildup of its military, Baku resorted to military force to achieve its objectives in 2020.

Since the end of the second Karabakh war in 2020, Yerevan and Baku have exchanged multiple drafts of a peace agreement. In early 2024, however, peace talks stalled despite initial agreement on three core principles:

- Mutual recognition of territorial integrity—29,800 square kilometers for Armenia and 86,600 square kilometers for Azerbaijan. Armenia's recognition of Karabakh as Azerbaijan territory is implicit in these territorial dimensions.
- Delimitation of borders based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration.
- Opening communication and transport links under the sovereignty and authority of the parties involved (Avetisyan, 2023).

Disagreements over specifics on all three have characterized the on-again off-again negotiations. In October 2023, Baku insisted that the parties renounce any territorial claims against each other now and in the future and commit to not jeopardize each other's security in international relations in a final agreement (JAM News, 30 October 2023).

Baku's additions show that the security dilemma centered on the status of Karabakh was transformed but not eliminated by Baku's establishment of control and the exodus of Karabakh Armenians in September 2023. These points are directed against future Armenian claims to Karabakh. At the same time, they could assuage Yerevan's concern that Azerbaijan may have its sights on Armenian territory in the south.

Differences on border demarcation and opening communication and transport links also persist (Avetisyan, 2024b). Which maps to use and whether to include border security in delimitation/demarcation talks has been a point of contention (JAM News, 2024b). Baku's proposal to separate the border issue

altogether from the peace agreement created another obstacle in the negotiations (JAM News, December 22, 2023b).

When a peace agreement is finally signed, it will not mark the end of the conflict. However, it would be a catalyst for the first step toward non-violent relations. Implementation will be key to progress. Given its comparative weakness, Armenia wants an international presence to monitor and enforce implementation. Azerbaijan, by contrast, rejects any involvement of external, especially Western, actors.

In addition to the obstacles noted above, Armenian prisoners of war remain in Azerbaijani custody. Adding to this, roughly 200 square kilometers of Armenian territory is occupied by Azerbaijan, and the unsettled issue of exclaves and ongoing border violence created an inhospitable environment for progress in early 2024.

Mutual Denial

Two layers of mutual denial or non-recognition characterize the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Most obvious is the absence of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Both before and after the second Karabakh war, leading officials of both countries met in a neutral country with third party facilitation present. In a departure from that pattern, bilateral negotiations began in early December 2023. The first produced an exchange of military service personnel and Yerevan's support for Azerbaijan's bid to host the United Nations Climate Change conference in November 2024 (COP 29)—confidence building steps welcomed by Russia, the European Union, and the United States (Isayev, 2023). Subsequent meetings continued between the national security advisors for both governments (de Waal, 2024). However, debates over mediators and platforms continue. Although peace negotiators speak of normalization of relations, as of September 2024 diplomatic relations have not been established.

The second layer of non-recognition changed when Baku took control of Karabakh and almost all Armenians left in September 2023. For twenty-nine years, Karabakh Armenians refused to recognize Azerbaijan's authority and Baku did not recognize them as a distinct population with special rights and protections. The few Armenians remaining in Karabakh must accept Azerbaijani citizenship and governance. Despite this, Armenia-Karabakh unification remains an aspiration for many. To remove that as a point of contention between Baku and Yerevan, Prime Minister Pashinyan proposed a new constitution that would rescind any claim to Karabakh in early February 2024. However, strong opposition makes its prospects uncertain (Mgdesyan, 2024).

Sustained Negative Peace

"Functional coexistence is a paradoxical relationship in which historical adversaries view each other as an existential threat but refrain from using physical force to settle their intolerable differences" (Arai 2022, 124). A sustained

negative peace has yet to be established between Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite the November 2020 truce agreement.

Azerbaijan's military incursion into Armenia in September 2022 was not checked by Russian border guards deployed to enforce the truce terms. Intermittent border clashes continue as recently as February 12–13, 2024.

A months-long blockade of the Lachin Corridor connecting Karabakh to Armenia began in early 2023 and was subsequently followed by Azerbaijan's military action to establish authority over all of Karabakh. From Yerevan's perspective, Russian border guards failed to meet their responsibilities to protect the corridor and Karabakh Armenians.

The events demonstrate Azerbaijan's willingness to use force to achieve its objectives and Russia's failure to ensure peace. Therefore, the noticeable absence of a sustained negative peace in early 2024 reminds us that one core element of the functional coexistence approach is not present. Nonetheless, recognition of its importance can help the conflict parties and external actors engage constructively to create the foundation for a negative peace.

Agency of the Conflict Parties

In a functional coexistence approach, conflict parties must retain agency, that is, the ability to make decisions and pursue their interests. This would mean the opportunity to implement interests even if a significant power asymmetry exists (Arai 2022, 124). Two elements of agency characterize the capabilities of Azerbaijan and Armenia in early 2024. Azerbaijan enjoys primary control over the conflict environment while Armenia, although weakened by the 2020 Karabakh war, retains agency to control its *responses* to the environment.

Azerbaijan established control over the conflict environment in the 2020 Karabakh war while maintaining working relations with all the neighbors including the United States and the European Union. Azerbaijan's ability to end the twenty-six-year stalemate was due to a buildup of its military advantage over Armenia and bolstered by its claim to territorial integrity grounded in international law. Military relations with Turkey and Israel remain secure. Relations with the West began to sour, however, when Baku extended its authority over Karabakh in September 2023 and have deteriorated since (Eurasianet 2024a, 2024b). Whether that will diminish Baku's agency over time is unclear.

In 2020, Armenia lost control over the environment it had dominated since 1994 when it was defeated in the Second Karabakh war. The growing rift with Russia, Armenia's prime security guarantor since the breakup of the Soviet Union, exacerbates the disparity in agency and power with Azerbaijan. Moreover, the influx of Karabakh Armenians, distraught over the loss of their ancestral homes, may have a destabilizing domestic impact on Armenia. Nonetheless, Armenia has launched several initiatives to respond to the new environment. Prime Minister Pashinyan introduced the "Crossroads of Peace" project at the Silk Road conference on October 26, 2023. This project

aims to contribute to and help establish communication between Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Iran. The goal being to utilize infrastructure development to increase the chance of sustainable communication (Minoyan 2023). Reactivating them could establish efficient routes connecting the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean. Critical to Armenia's interest is the stipulation that all infrastructures operate under the sovereignty of the countries through which they pass, with border and customs control ensured by each country (Minoyan 2023).

On the security front, Armenia has taken steps to diversify its relations. Yerevan is expanding cooperation with the European Union and the United States. Yerevan has also negotiated arms deals with France and the United Kingdom to bolster its military. As it should also be mentioned, the United States and Armenia held small-scale exercises in the fall of 2023. Discussions with India about security cooperation are also underway. These overtures and new security partnerships dilute Armenia's dependence on Russia. However, a complete break from Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which had balanced Armenia's power asymmetry with Azerbaijan until 2020, seems unrealistic. Armenian ties to Russia are embedded in multilateral and bilateral agreements. A bilateral security pact signed in 2010 extended the presence of Russia's military base in Armenia until 2044 in exchange for security guarantees (O'Rourke, 2010).

Moreover, multifaceted economic ties with Russia from Soviet days have continued bilaterally and through the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Russian companies own or manage Armenia's most important infrastructure. Armenia signed a contract with a Russian company to modernize its only nuclear power plant in December 2023. Expats working in Russia make an important contribution to Armenia's GDP, and Armenian trade with Russia only increased after Russia's invasion of Ukraine (Mgdesyan, 2023b; Shahverdyan, 2023a). Efforts to diversify its economic partners with a primary focus on the EU expand Yerevan's options but cannot supplant its economic dependency on Russia (Mgdesyan, 2023c; Boy, 2023). In sum, these fundamental changes in the geopolitical landscape since 2020 have increased Azerbaijan's agency. To compensate, Armenia has strengthened or established new security, economic, and political partners. Yerevan also launched the "Crossroads of Peace" to promote its interests—a clear demonstration of continued, if diminished agency.

Changing interests and influence of regional/international actors also affect the agency of both conflict parties. Clear alignments with the conflict parties have dissipated. In a return to what is being called "foreign policy a la carte," cooperation or opposition depends upon the issue (Ash et al. 2023). Related thinking refers to transactional politics (Ash, 2023).

As noted above, Yerevan initiated security cooperation with the West and others when Russia failed to stop Azerbaijan's incursions into Armenia proper in 2022 and accelerated efforts when Russia failed to protect Karabakh Armenians in 2023 in accordance with the terms of the truce agreement. The United States and the European Union, which had pursued an even-handed

approach to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, became focused on diluting Russia's influence in the region when cooperation in the Minsk Group began to decline in 2015. The West shifted slightly toward favoring Armenia after the second Karabakh war. Relations with Azerbaijan cooled noticeably when Baku established control over Karabakh in September 2023. However, the West's interest in weakening Russian influence in the region in part by expanding security cooperation with Armenia is tempered by its economic interests in Azerbaijan's energy sector. At the same time, United States and European Union sanctions on Tehran are problematic for Armenia, which benefits politically and economically from Iran's support.

Meanwhile, the close knit and multifaceted Azerbaijan-Turkish partnership has been strained by Azerbaijan-Israeli military and intelligence ties which deepened substantially in 2018 (Muradov and Guliyev 2023). Azerbaijan's quid-pro-quo relations with Israel informs its refusal to criticize Israel in the Israeli-Hamas war—a sore point with Ankara which, together with Russia and Iran, is a strong supporter of the Palestinians (Mammadli, 2023a). Meanwhile, Iran, an adversary of Azerbaijan, has partnered with Baku to build a transit link between Azerbaijan and its exclave Nakhchivan through Iranian territory (Aghayev 2023). This unexpected cooperation may be in line with Iran's support for Armenia's territorial integrity and to reduce pressure on Yerevan to accede to Baku's terms for an Azerbaijan-Nakhchivan transit route through Armenian territory.

Both the Georgian government and publics' indecisive choices over relations with Russia and the West lead to unpredictable policies. The public favors closer cooperation with West while the government tries to straddle relations between the two. This is despite the conflict with Russia over Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In terms of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, Georgia's interests are complicated. Tbilisi proffers its good offices to mediate between the parties but could become a potential spoiler, given the risk that open economic and transit corridors pose to its lucrative position as a transit hub.

Turkey, Russia, and Iran manage their complex relations with each other, the conflict parties, and the West. A kaleidoscope of overlapping and competitive interests obviates predictable alignments and divisions. The result is a mesh of interlocking relations and cross-cutting cleavages, which, in the best-case scenario, may stabilize the region.

At a minimum, the complex net of changing relationships in the region and beyond helps both conflict parties retain agency, albeit not to the same degree. They may check Azerbaijan's ability to dictate peace terms while helping Armenia protect and further its interests in a challenging environment.

Minimally Livable Social Spaces (MLSS)

Minimally livable social spaces are an attribute of functional coexistence. "Everyday peace and MLSS both highlight the informal human dimension of social life kept intact in deeply conflict-affected societies" (Arai 2022, 130).

The potential to create minimally livable social spaces (MLSS) in the Armenian-Azerbaijan context begins with a restoration of the confidence-building measures (CBMs) agreed to by Prime Minister Pashinyan and President Aliyev before the 2020 war (Kucera, 2018). The CBMs included a ceasefire control mechanism with direct communication between security forces along the border and between leaders in Yerevan and Baku. These measures are credited with significantly reducing incidents along the Line of Contact (International Crisis Group 2019, 6). The provisional goals and objectives are to develop humanitarian projects near the front lines, relatives' ability to visit with detainees held in opposing capitals, and visits to grave sites on the other's territory.

Border clashes underscore the urgency of action. The CBMs that were agreed to by Pashinyan and Aliyev in 2018 proved effective for a time and have become useful advantages. Reviving them would contribute to building MLSS by enabling those living in border communities to farm their fields, take goods to market, go to school, and collect animals that stray without fear. Restoring direct communications would increase security and predictability necessary to build trust that could open the door to increased cooperation on a broader range of issues between border communities.

The southern transit route to link Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan agreed to in the November 2020 truce agreement illustrates the point. Progress has stalled because the designated route passes through Armenian territory, pitting Yerevan's claim to control the route against Baku's demands for unimpeded transit. Armenians no longer trust Russian border guards designated in the truce agreement to secure safe transit and protect Armenian territory. The construction of a corridor to Nakhchivan through Iran began on October 6, 2023 and may obviate the need for a southern corridor through Armenia (Aghayev 2023). However, Baku revived its demand for a corridor through Armenia in early 2024, leaving a resolution in doubt (Avetisyan, 2024a). In any case, the practice of direct communication will be useful in opening other transit and trade routes agreed to in principle in November 2020 and elaborated in Prime Minister Pashinyan's Crossroads for Peace project announced in October 2023.

Opening economic and transit corridors is part of the peace negotiations. Presented as a "win-win" for both sides, this provision avoids the zero-sum calculation intrinsic to the conflict. However, to create MLSS conducive to positive economic interactions, effective and purposeful short-term actions are necessary to ensure the long-term objective of mutual benefit. Opening or expanding markets inevitably create winners and losers, as likely to be found *within* each country as between the two. The painful dislocations in Central-East Europe and the former Soviet Union bereft of adequate assistance when thrust abruptly into open markets after 1989 and 1991 respectively provide ample evidence of the challenges presented by a radically changed economic landscape.

Although in early 2024 Armenia and Azerbaijan have yet to reach an agreement on terms for opening economic and transit links, Yerevan and Baku can prepare by identifying vulnerable as well as promising sectors in new market conditions and develop scenarios for both. Businesses and traders that did well when borders were closed in 1994 may not have a ready market when transit routes

create new competition. Other businesses could scale up if a market niche is identified. Both will require adjustments. From probable scenarios effective assistance programs should flow. Various instruments of financial support, from capital for expansion to subsidies for businesses at risk, coupled with technical and retraining programs could be part of the mix. Specific programs would have to be tailored to actual conditions as they evolve. However, anticipatory action addressed to sectors and businesses at risk and those likely to prosper will not only strengthen the positive impact of opening the routes, but it will also reduce the potential for resentment between the two and preempt mobilization of potential losers to oppose improving relations between Armenian and Azerbaijan.[5]

Targeted assistance programs for sectors and businesses that will be affected by opening trade and transit routes across borders would contribute to a sense of physical and economic security in both countries in the near term. They would minimize the threat of unemployment, the prospect of economic decline, social unrest for individuals, and support businesses that have an opportunity to prosper. Combined with the security CBMs, the initiatives should increase peaceful, mutually beneficial, and regular interactions among Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The evolving dynamics can create a safety net and new opportunities that preclude or at least make less likely the resumption of violent conflict. Other obstacles remain but the proposed actions offer a starting point to establish a degree of security, predictability, as well as hope for many directly affected by the conflict. Armenians and Azerbaijanis must have the lead on what and how practical measures can be taken.

Conclusion

The value of theory and new concepts offer a fresh lens through which to analyze a seemingly intractable situation. After decades of diplomatic and Track II efforts failed to establish an enduring peace, functional coexistence brings a new perspective to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. At its heart is the acceptance of non-resolution as a realistic starting point and basis for fostering a sustained negative peace.

In 2024, tensions between the two countries are high and the situation remains fluid.

The contribution of a functional coexistence approach to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict will be affected by key developments that bear watching:

- Whether the cross-cutting relations among regional and international actors engaged in the conflict is stabilizing or increases the risk of resumed conflict.
- Whether Azerbaijan will be emboldened by its military success in regaining its territory and establishing full authority over Karabakh to advance additional territorial claims or be satisfied by its success.

5 Similar contingency planning should be done in advance of opening the Armenia-Turkey border as well as to help Georgia adjust when open trade and transit routes reduce its advantage as a regional transit hub.

- Whether Armenia will find sufficient external support to mitigate its relative weakness and sustain its agency vis-à-vis Azerbaijan or confront peace terms with implementation arrangements imposed by Baku.
- Whether the influx of Karabakh Armenians will destabilize Armenia as a whole, or lead to a more hawkish government with irredentist claims to Karabakh or integrate well and contribute to social and economic cohesion over time.

The environment and social dynamics will evolve, and therefore, inaction is not an acceptable option. Although a sustained negative peace is absent in early 2024, non-resolution, mutual denial, and the conflict parties' agency are in place, which invite domestic and external actors to adopt a functional coexistence approach. Focusing energy and attention on preventing renewed violent conflict while accepting long-term non-resolution of the conflict provides a realistic objective for all who want to engage constructively.

Concrete steps suggested above to create positive interactions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, beginning with basic security, will support minimally livable social spaces. This in turn could reduce the likelihood of a return to violent conflict. In September 2024, a sustained negative peace has yet to be established. Achieving this cornerstone of functional coexistence will be a major accomplishment upon which gradual steps toward cooperation for mutual benefit may be taken.

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Part IV

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Policymaking

11 A Broader Landscape of Functional Coexistence

Lessons Learned from the Cases and Implications for Future Inquiry

Jeffrey W. Helsing

Introduction

The case studies presented in this book are very rich and very different from each other, which is particularly important in that each provides interesting and instructive lessons for understanding functional coexistence and applying a functional coexistence approach. One of the most important conclusions that emerges from the cases is that functional coexistence is both a condition and a context within which a conflict continues to unfold, either positively or negatively. As described in each of the case study chapters, there are patterns of action and inaction, opportunities and setbacks for conflict resolution and sustainable peace. In laying out the case for functional coexistence, Tatsushi Arai, in Chapter 3, makes it clear that functional coexistence is applicable to enduring conflicts that have continued for decades and generations and will not, nor cannot, "substitute for a peace process" nor replace post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction, or reconciliation. That said, functional coexistence is not simply a descriptive label to characterize a precarious period of negative peace. As the cases demonstrate, functional coexistence also helps shape the prospects for peace in certain ways, requiring, at its most effective, active, purposeful, and strategic engagement. To acknowledge an ongoing state of functional coexistence is to understand what makes a particular conflict intractable while also enabling the practitioner or the policymaker to be better prepared over time to develop an approach that responds to the specific nature of a conflict and the needs of all the parties.

Negative peace is a precondition to functional coexistence. And, at its core, and in light of the violent alternatives, that is not a bad thing. But some of the cases demonstrate that functional coexistence can mask underlying dynamics that over time can worsen the situation or hasten a relapse into violence. The functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention may be viewed as a means of conflict prevention, or perhaps more accurately, violence prevention. Ensuring that violence remains at bay can only last for so long without some progress in conflict resolution or an improved sense of peace among many of those affected by the conflict. What the case studies demonstrate most effectively is that without perceived value and benefits to enough people on all sides

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of the conflict, there is only stalemate and inertia. The "functional" component of coexistence succeeds because there is a perceived payoff for this state of affairs—from the absence of violence to a marked improvement in daily life, including economic and social welfare, often safeguarded by the sustained presence of minimally livable social space (MLSS) within and across conflict-affected societies. In a number of the cases, there is a marked absence of political progress but improvements economically or socially are sufficient for a continued commitment to retaining the status quo of negative peace. As Roger Mac Ginty noted about Northern Ireland, functional coexistence requires tending to—one cannot just let functional coexistence take its course. Only then can sustained engagement through a functional coexistence approach of deliberate and strategic short-term actions lead to long-term systemic change. These cases help show that the policies and broader political actions are tied to and depend upon what happens at the community level, even among those who have internalized a historical identity and worldview in which its validity rests on the categorical denial of the identity and legitimacy of the other side.

Functional coexistence as such is not new. After the 1967 war in which Israel occupied the West Bank, the two bridges over the Jordan River symbolized a "functional interaction" since 1967. A (mostly) consistent movement of goods, people, and capital from Israel and the West Bank to Jordan and vice versa was established, with only periodic (and short) interruptions during the decades that followed. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan believed "functional cooperation" with Jordan in the West Bank was the best temporary policy until a permanent one was found. Peaceful coexistence could result from Palestinians in the West Bank having some measure of autonomy. The Israeli Governor of the Palestinian Territories in the West Bank noted later that Israel's policy was to break down the psychological wall that had separated Israel and its neighbors since 1948. "By breaking down the barriers between Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan through trade, transfer of capital, and free movement of people and goods, mutual interests in maintaining a modicum of functional coexistence might develop" (Lukacs 1999, 25). If daily lives stabilized or even improved, is that an achievement to build on? Or is it simply ignoring the key cleavages in the relations? The problem in this case, which is also instructive for this book, is that in the long-term, functional coexistence may well have worked with the two parties that had power and agency—Israel and Jordan—but did not pay off for the third, far weaker party—the Palestinians living under military occupation who had almost no power or agency. The "modicum" of functional coexistence that emerged between Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan, may well have paid off with the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, but one could argue that nothing comparable emerged between Israel and the West Bank because in many ways, the Oslo Agreement codified many of the most negative and asymmetrical consequences of functional existence.

The cases in this book, along with a few additional cases such as the Israel-Jordan case above, affirm that functional coexistence has emerged in different ways in conflict-affected societies, and functional coexistence is both

multidimensional and impactful across various contexts. The primary objective of this chapter is to broaden the reader's understanding of functional coexistence conditions, practices, and strategies as derived from actual cases that are either lived examples of functional coexistence over time (Cambodia, Cyprus, Western Balkans, Northern Ireland), a failed example (Israeli Arabs and Jews), or aspirational such that functional coexistence could be successful if key conditions align (Armenia-Turkey; Armenia-Azerbaijan). These cases are not intended as definitive examples of functional coexistence but starting points for further research and engagement on the topic. This chapter puts forth a few key characteristics of successful functional coexistence for the discernible trends and patterns the cases reveal.

The following key themes have emerged from the cases:

- Economic well-being helps create strong incentives for continued and evolving engagement.
- The stronger the disincentives for violence, the greater the possibility (although by no means an inevitability) of attitudinal and behavioral changes. Functional coexistence can provide the space for trust building and potential negotiations because the expectation of violence may be reduced significantly.
- Formal agreements and institutions that contribute to a perceived sense by all parties of a sustained assurance of minimum security and survival, as well as greater equity and agency, make for a stronger condition of functional coexistence but also enable the possibilities for a functional coexistence approach, ultimately making constructive engagement more likely.
- A functional coexistence approach can assist in a transformation from enmity to engagement over time and incrementally, particularly through a continuity of patterns of engagement and small steps that help perpetuate existing positive relationships at a local level and a recognition of contextual, relational, internal, and historical factors.

Cases of Enduring Functional Coexistence

In many ways, these enduring conflicts remain so because the parties of the conflict have goals that are mutually incompatible, and the way they define and understand their conflict makes compromise or cooperation, much less a negotiated agreement, almost inconceivable. And yet, in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, after decades and generations of conflict, there is a kind of maturity such that even in light of incompatible political goals and visions of the future, there is no desire to return to past, violent manifestations of the respective conflicts. The encouragement of greater engagement has clear benefits. All sides in these two conflicts appear to have concluded that they cannot succeed in, nor should they continue to try, subduing the aspirations of and undermining the daily lives of the other. And, in both cases, the number of potential spoilers and those with extremist agendas have decreased significantly. That is

not the case with the Western Balkans, in which many Serbs continue to harbor dreams of less engagement with the other and they nurture the possibility of secession, independence, or union with Serbia.

However, it is important to note that in the cases of Northern Ireland, Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, functional coexistence has resulted from, or has followed, actual negotiated peace agreements, or peace plans—Good Friday Agreement (1998), Paris Peace Agreements (1991), Dayton Accords (1995), and Rambouillet Agreement (1999), respectively. Weak or almost non-existent implementation of these agreements reflects negative peace. At a minimum, the defining characteristic of functional coexistence is a condition of non-fighting. As Mac Ginty argues in Chapter 6, there can be more evolved conditions of functional coexistence that would include governance, social relations, and economic development—or as he notes, "whether political institutions work, whether the economy delivers for people, and the extent to which individuals and communities can enjoy 'the good life'" (Chapter 6, Mac Ginty). This is what has enabled the functional coexistence in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and Cambodia to be sustained. And, this rationale is why Doga Eralp proposes that agonistic democracy is critical for ensuring functional coexistence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Cambodia

In most of these cases, there is neither mutual recognition nor fighting. The seemingly irreconcilable differences linger but they differ from case to case. The historical case study of Cambodia from 1979 to 1993 provides an example of a society recovering and rebuilding after a genocide. The challenge for Cambodians is how many of the perpetrators or those who aided and abetted the genocide can either be reconciled, reintegrated into a community, or simply find a quiet place to live out the rest of their lives. It is not an identity-based conflict in the way that the other cases are since a main party to the conflict—the Khmer Rouge (KR)—cannot truly be considered an "out-group." Many see them only as perpetrators—essentially, from the same group, but ones who at all levels of society perpetrated and carried out genocide. SungYong Lee concludes that "An enduring state of functional coexistence had a significant influence on the formation and transformation of the inter-group relations between community members and former KR leaders," thus highlighting the important contextual and relational factors that played a role (Chapter 4, Lee).

The reintegration was dependent on the goodwill, mercy, and, some would argue, acquiescence, of the new regime and a broad segment of society in communities throughout much of the country toward a defeated party. This is a challenge faced by countries such as Colombia and Sierra Leone. The reintegration of the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia/ Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) in Colombia or the Fambul Tok process of reconciliation in Sierra Leone, are cases in which former

combatants were reintegrated into many of the very communities in which they had been engaged militarily and from which many of the victims of their violence came. Many ex-combatants were from those same villages. In Cambodia, the tolerance of "a pragmatic and minimalist mode of coexistence with former KR cadres living in their neighborhoods" has been possible because of a condition of functional coexistence (Chapter 4, Lee). Lee shows that Cambodian society wanted the killings to end and there was a desire to move on, even though it meant abandoning opportunities to punish war criminals and seek justice—"let bygones be bygones," as one local noted (Chapter 4, Lee).

An interesting element of the Cambodia case to consider is whether a more common cultural and religious affinity among the communities and their members has enabled the possibility of functional coexistence and greater acceptance of the perpetrators. Has Buddhism or the distinct cultural expression of a Cambodian identity played a role in which there is a place for "forgiveness" or "mercy" that may not emerge as easily in conflicts across other religious or ethnic divides? This idea reinforces the emphasis on local buy-in and the use of local practices, traditions, and values as a way to reinforce peace processes and reconciliation efforts. As Lee notes, "community members sought to leverage the social conditions fostered by functional coexistence to promote more harmonious social relations within their local areas" (Chapter 4, Lee).

Cyprus

The Cyprus case, a "frozen" conflict, a cold peace, has endured for generations. The Turkish Cypriot community has not participated in state institutions since 1963. Despite its apparent dysfunction, governance that was intended to be a stopgap measure continues to function, including to the point that Cyprus became a full member of the European Union (EU) in 2004. As Gül M. Gür notes in her analysis, more engagement and interaction between the two groups has evolved over time. In Cyprus, there is a much greater degree of separation and avoidance than in Cambodia. Thus, rather than the forced engagement that defines much of the Cambodia case, engagement in Cyprus reflects a gradual pace of growing comfort with the status quo in which encounters with the other have increased and the possibility for developing relationships has risen. Gür also notes that once established, an enduring state of functional coexistence allows space and opportunities for building constructive engagement and relationships. The United Nations peacekeeping forces have helped secure that space and thus the risks of engagement are more political and social, not security risks.

One important point that Gür makes is, as with the situation in Northern Ireland, those with higher social and economic status are more likely to take advantage of increased trade, a more open border, and engaging with those from the other side. Even though there have been no peace negotiations since 2017, Gür concludes that there has been "a *cumulative impact* of the conflict

parties' sustained interactions and dialogues on essential issues that have long divided them" (Chapter 5, Gür). At the same time, the breakdown of the negotiations between 2014 and 2017 reinforced a lack of trust and a suspicion among many in the Turkish north that the Greek Cypriots will be perpetually satisfied with the status quo and thus the Turkish Cypriot aspirations for two independent states is farther away than ever. Gür ultimately concludes that there are considerable unmet expectations, and Cypriots on both sides are increasingly disillusioned about meaningful peace negotiations resuming or changing anything if they do. Thus, at what point is the enduring conflict unacceptable? Despite the stark differences between the two sides regarding their conditions for resuming negotiations, they keep their communication channels open and engage in nonviolent conflict. The ongoing functional coexistence may be sufficient in the short term, but over the long term, anger, resentment, and a rise in spoilers could emerge. In addition, some Turkish Cypriots are growing concerned that the Erdogan government in Turkey is taking a more active role in Cyprus, which could become a second pressure point for the North. Greater involvement by Ankara in education, religion, and economic life is not wholly welcome in the north and could impinge on the current benefits felt by some with the growing engagement with the south (International Crisis Group 2023). The situation could deteriorate if functional coexistence is not adequate compensation for the suppression of the national goals and aspirations of the Turkish Cypriots.

The bi-communal technical committees that continue to meet have worked to address the everyday challenges that Cypriots face, despite Cyprus's difficult political climate, mutual distrust, and the two sides' reluctance to resume formal negotiations. This demonstrates that relationships and patterns of cooperation can be established by addressing areas of common interest such as restoring cultural heritage sites, tackling crime, education projects, public health concerns, and responding to natural disasters. This reflects an aspiration of functionalism in that mutual problem-solving may spill over into more political or national-level areas, even though not intended by the conflict parties (Mitrany 1966). Such engagement can be an important method of building trust, and successes achieved in this manner can be seen as confidence-building measures. To this point, most of the interactions and engagements between Greek and Turkish Cypriots are short-term encounters intended to meet the immediate interests of those involved and thus transactional in nature rather than relational.

The Western Balkans

Doga Eralp argues that functional coexistence is only a temporary fix that in the short term prevents an escalation of violence but ultimately contributes to conditions that make a resumption of violence increasingly likely. He thus argues for agonistic democracy as a way to move the adversarial engagement into the political sphere and enable a transition from enemy to adversary—within

the context of political conflict rather than deadly conflict. The Federated Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska are each structured differently and function differently, resulting in quite dysfunctional central state institutions. This dysfunctionality is an unintended consequence of the Dayton Peace Agreement because much greater power was given to the two constituent entities. Eralp points out that this institutional governance arrangement reinforces the adversarial relationship between Serbs and Croats/Bosniaks. Developing agonistic democratic culture in these countries is a way forward and a space for the conflict to continue nonviolently.

While most in the federated Bosnia-Herzegovina want greater integration and centralization, the Serbs in Republika Srpska want greater autonomy and ultimately independence. Yet, while the dysfunction of the political institutions is high, Bosnia-Herzegovina is relatively stable and negative peace holds, even if the undercurrent of potential violence remains just below the surface. Kosovo is both dysfunctional, and violence is recurring. A significant Kosovo response to the push for greater autonomy by the Kosovar Serbs has been to try to force more integration on the Serbs. This is not a live-and-let-live response. Neither side wants to coexist with the other and sees all issues, problems, and situations through the lens of divisive identity politics. Eralp argues that functional coexistence only works to the extent that violence has been prevented, and must, therefore, be replaced with agonistic democracy—in effect finding a more productive way to manage the adversarial relationship. He emphasizes that "[i]mplementation of integration of public institutional spaces…will lead to a form of agonistic politics that would in practice mean an end to the enduring functional coexistence … as parties will be required to cooperate and validate each other's presence" (Chapter 7, Eralp).

The integration he envisions is that there is an acceptance of a common political community in which the opponent is not considered an enemy to be destroyed but an adversary whose existence is legitimate (Mouffe 2016). There is an important distinction between an enemy and an adversary. Conflict ultimately plays out through democratic pluralism in which citizens have meaningful options in choosing between real alternatives. Agonistic democracy takes the premise of adversarial relationships as the centerpiece of political life, so that functional coexistence enables enduring conflict to be balanced by "enduring coexistence"—coexistence that holds the promise of engagement that can hopefully become more constructive. All citizens must have incentives to cooperate and engage with each other. They must also feel that they have equity and agency and that they have a place in a collective future. And, as Eralp notes, there are strong forces, particularly but not exclusively the Serbs, who do not feel incentivized to adhere to the existing peace agreements—thus, creating a precarious functional coexistence. Proponents of agonistic peace recognize that conflicts do not simply end but they continue through other nonviolent means. What Eralp is recommending is that functional coexistence cannot last and must serve as a transition from potentially violent antagonism to agonism. Eralp concludes with an interesting observation: "Agonistic politics work only

when adversaries desire to cooperate with one another. Enduring functional coexistence works when secession is not an option." The adversaries may not desire to cooperate with each other but they see the value in cooperation to a point—not to agree, not to reconcile, but to prevent a reemergence of violence.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland presents a particularly unique case because, as Roger Mac Ginty points out, there are almost no impediments or restrictions directly caused by the conflict that negatively impact most people's lives. "The Troubles" are over and the peace is cold, but it is not a complete separation. The choices many people make reinforce the growing separation. They have chosen to live in peace, but also to live apart. Segregation in schools has worsened since the Good Friday Agreement. Northern Ireland is clearly stagnant. There is no violence but there is little political consensus; nor is there any active reconciliation or any meaningful attempt to address the past. Dysfunction (or "dysfunctional functionality") has become hardwired into the political institutions, as in the Balkans and Cyprus. The result is, as Mac Ginty notes, a transformation from a sectarian and violent conflict to "everyday sectarianism"—a more benign but still deep-rooted sectarianism. There has been almost no success by peacemaking organizations or external parties working to create a united Northern Irish identity.

And yet, for many, the social space is very livable, even prosperous. Life for most has improved considerably in the past twenty-five years. Unlike most of the other cases of enduring coexistence, there appears to be a consensus that the peoples of Northern Ireland have a shared future, albeit one that is not what most want and one that is increasingly based on deepening separation. Northern Ireland is perceived by many, although not all as Mac Ginty's examples demonstrate, as both a prosperous and desirable place to live. There is even increasing inward migration. The present state of functional coexistence in Northern Ireland is much more positive than in the Balkans while less separate than the deeply divided society in Cyprus.

Mac Ginty makes an important point when he argues that functional coexistence is not a means to address the root causes of a conflict but is important in "lowering the costs of the conflict." "Many people are able to thrive in Northern Ireland and living standards far exceed those found in many other conflict-affected contexts. In this interpretation, Northern Ireland is both functional and the site of successful coexistence" (Chapter 6, Mac Ginty). That seems to reflect the lived experiences of many, if not most, in Northern Ireland. He also notes that peace and conflict can exist at the same time in very passive and perhaps less meaningful ways. In all these cases, we see functional and dysfunctional coexistence in tandem, almost as mirror images. To the extent that this represents a power balance or a check on the other, it is beneficial in the short term since violence is very unlikely. But what does this mean for the minority or the weaker party that feels a great sense of grievance or injustice?

Will the costs of the conflict, or the costs of failing to address the root causes of the conflict and the needs of the aggrieved, in the West Balkans or between Israeli Jews and Arabs, begin to escalate?

Lessons from Enduring Cases

The key starting point in cases of enduring coexistence is that political violence has ended—whether as retaliatory killings in Cambodia or the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland and Cyprus. The insecurity of the past has greatly diminished or been eliminated. Even the spasmodic violence of the Western Balkans has not undermined the negative peace. Intergroup interactions in Cambodia, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland have increased—more Khmer Rouge have been reintegrated into local communities; greater numbers of Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks travel across the Green Line and engage economically and socially with communities on the other side; and in Northern Ireland, although neighborhoods may remain separate, intergroup interaction has become increasingly normalized in such areas as workplaces, universities, and retail sectors. Such normalization of this coexistence has not diminished the strong bonds of identity, culture, religion, and historical legacy. That is why the situation in the Balkans is more fragile because the coexistence there feels for many, particularly the Serbs, as an impediment to their national and cultural aspirations.

One could argue that the Serbs only want what exists in Northern Ireland or Cyprus: enclaves in which they are the majority. Most people in Northern Ireland reside in an area where they are the majority, giving much of the territory the character of a series of enclaves that are safe and convenient spaces for one group but exclusionary to another. The benefits of a negative peace become more and more apparent and not just an "abstract concept" (Chapter 6, Mac Ginty). A final note is that in deeply polarized identity-based conflicts, including Northern Ireland, without functional coexistence resulting in constructive engagement, perpetual separation may be the outcome, one in which non-resolution discourages inter-group encounters and institutionalizes perpetual separation, while still enabling people's access to basic human needs.

Case Studies of Transition and Potential Emergence

A Transition to Functional Coexistence: The Potential Transformation of Armenian-Turkish Relations

In this case, sustained negative peace seems to be a strategy. It is the most optimal outcome, reducing violence while also preventing a rush to formal negotiations, peace processes, or premature settlement. A positive outcome for the conflict between Armenia and Turkey and the century-long lack of recognition by both sides would be a normalization of relations, followed by recognition and reconciliation. The potential for transforming the engagement between

Turkey and Armenia seems to have improved, particularly since Armenia's loss of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. If so, the challenge for Armenia is how to manage the two different conflicts, one with Turkey and the other with Azerbaijan. In fact, as Tadevosyan states, "Turkey explicitly stated that the ratification of the protocols would depend on progress in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, openly supporting Azerbaijan's position and interests" (Chapter 8, Tadevosyan). Moreover, she argues that the Turkey-Armenian conflict has transformed from a contest over historical narratives and perceived injustices to one that is very much focused on the present and the future, given Azerbaijan's newfound control over Nagorno-Karabakh and Turkey's support for Azerbaijan's claims and control over the territory.

Tadevosyan points out that a functional coexistence strategy is incremental with small steps toward Armenian-Turkish normalization, with predictable ups and downs, that can be more productive than a rushed peace process. In her view, functional coexistence is a means of slowly bringing about normalization without pushing reconciliation that neither country, particularly Armenia, is ready for.

The second Karabakh war in 2020, along with Turkey's direct and active involvement in it, in contrast to the first war in the 1990s, had a significant impact on the Armenia-Turkey relations since 2020. The war transformed Armenian perceptions of Armenia-Turkey relations from the past to a much greater emphasis on the present and the future. Turkey was no longer the historical enemy but a more immediate threat. Armenia's challenge is that it is the weaker party with respect to both Turkey and Azerbaijan. Functional coexistence can freeze that asymmetry or, on the other hand, may provide space in which Armenia can incrementally demonstrate the benefits of normalization while contributing to greater security from violence for its people. As Tadevosyan notes, there are increasing people-to-people interactions and increased Turkish business engagement in Armenia. At present, however, Armenia may be at a disadvantage because its current power is significantly weaker than Turkey's. In light of the prescriptive thinking presented in Chapter 3, a strategy of functional coexistence may help Armenia strive to gain more leverage and find better opportunities for constructive engagement to emerge. Functional coexistence allows for a slow thaw between the two sides.

Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: "Superficial" Coexistence

Israeli governmental and non-governmental organizations have long invested in strengthening the Israelization of Arab citizens, while negating their national expression as Palestinians. This is neither new nor unique to the experience of Israeli Arabs. In many conflict-affected multi-ethnic and multi-racial societies, identities are suppressed in the name of a common national identity. Arab citizens of Israel face an especially difficult challenge. To express and promote their identity as Palestinians is to engender mistrust and accusations of

disloyalty to a state in which most feel their minority status acutely and are not accorded the full range of rights and privileges that other citizens have. At the same time, the ongoing conflict and resulting violence between Israel and Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation has repercussions among those Arab communities in Israel. Abu-Nimer notes that coexistence among Arabs and Jews has, at most, been superficial. He also observes how the Israeli narrative stresses Palestinian life in Israel is much better compared to life in the Palestinian Authority and Gaza. And, the war in Gaza that began in October 2023 has reinforced for many Arab Israelis that whatever coexistence might have existed before the war no longer provides basic security necessary to pursue daily activities without fear of politically motivated, persistent, or systemic violence. This is reinforced by the insecurity resulting from the Israeli police's cavalier attitude to rising organized crime in Palestinian communities. As in the Western Balkans, there is little sense among the minority that the national government provides any benefits for them and is concerned with their welfare and interests. This runs counter to the Israeli narrative of a pluralistic democracy. Abu-Nimer's argument, as supported by the basic tenets of functional coexistence outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, is that a precondition for functional coexistence is the absence of an extreme, debilitating form of power asymmetry. Such a destructive form of asymmetry categorically deprives a conflict party of its agency, namely, the independent will and ability to make decisions and act on them, however imperfectly. As discussed previously, when a party's agency has been greatly weakened or is no longer present, functional coexistence ceases to exist.

Abu-Nimer argues that an alternative, a transformational model, is required—one that enables "creating a space for Arab citizens in Israel to explore and express their Palestinian identity" (Chapter 9, Abu-Nimer). While the functional coexistence approach treads cautiously and incrementally to foster conditions to alter the fundamental causes of the enduring conflict and inequities within the prevailing reality of non-resolution and negative peace, the transformational model of coexistence goes further to advocate for "the principles of equal recognition of the rights of Palestinians and Jews in Israel." The important point he makes is that such a transformational model is "a fundamental change in the nature of the relationships between the two communities" that "requires a shift in their mindset from a predominant view of security as a mutually exclusive condition to an alternative one viewing security as a mutually beneficial condition" (Chapter 9, Abu-Nimer). But Abu-Nimer identifies a significant challenge resulting from the proposed adoption of such a model as well:

> There are heavy costs associated with an effort to realize such a major shift. For example, Jews in Israel must abandon the automatic privileges assigned to them. Palestinians, in the meanwhile, must accept Israeli Jews' right to live in the land.
>
> (Abu-Nimer, Chapter 9)

Therefore, for Abu-Nimer, a functional coexistence approach opposes the accommodationist model and can be the basis of the transformational model.

Armenia-Azerbaijan: Anticipating Functional Coexistence

The way the ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is playing out, the potential for functional coexistence is possible. Armenian and Azerbaijan officials have met, but the situation remains one in which renewed violence or escalation of the conflict remains very real. A sustained negative peace has yet to be established between Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite the November 2020 truce agreement. Armenia is in an insecure place and its actions, including potential incremental steps toward normalization with Turkey and efforts to engage more constructively with the EU and the West, reflects its need to ensure greater security for its territory and its people. It is not clear, however, that Azerbaijan is interested in anything other than consolidating its territorial gains. For Azerbaijan, particularly since its military has established control over all of Nagorno-Karabakh, there is seemingly little cost to the conflict continuing since, as William Zartman would argue, a stalemate has not emerged that significantly hurts its interests (Zartman 2015, 480).

While there are ongoing discussions about opening economic links and transit corridors as part of peace negotiations, functional coexistence is predicated at this point on what could or might result if there is greater engagement. Ultimately, all parties attempt to use such policies or actions to their own advantages. It is rarely done in the name of peace; rather, it is often motivated by self-interest. Such a self-interested motive will be the turning point for Azerbaijan, if it comes. Ann Phillips makes a compelling case for why functional coexistence can be both a viable and realistic way in which Armenia and Azerbaijan can pursue their respective security needs. However, her argument comes with a cautionary note that when one party continues to gain from the conflict, it has little incentive for negative peace. This chapter holds out the promise of functional coexistence contributing to the transformation of short-term actions into long-term relational change. But, functional coexistence can only operate in whatever void between war and peace might exist.

A Conflict Resolution Lens

For John Paul Lederach, the key to conflict transformation lies in shifting conflict from destructive processes to constructive ones. The goal is not to seek rapid fixes for immediate problems, but to create innovative frameworks that address both surface issues and transform underlying social structures and relationship dynamics simultaneously (Lederach 1998). There is a connection between functional coexistence and conflict transformation in that a slow, iterative process during negative peace provides space for new ideas to achieve long-term change to emerge or ripen. In each of the cases, there is an assumption that at some point, change is ultimately needed in order to address the

causes of conflict and build sustainable peace. If, as Lederach argues, relationships are key to sustainable peacebuilding, then the cases that hold the greatest promise of moving from functional coexistence to constructive engagement are those in which there is the possibility of ongoing engagement with the other that over time could evolve into more functional and meaningful relationships. A functional coexistence approach may enable minimal coexistence to mature into more productive engagement.

A key feature of the enduring cases is that functional coexistence provides for the possibility of intergroup encounters and relations to be strengthened through regular involvement. While this seems to reflect some of the same goals and assumptions behind contact theory, the actual contact is limited mostly to fleeting and casual interaction. Yet, as transitory as they may be, such encounters may also become increasingly positive and enduring (Maoz 2011; Allport 1954). The more and deeper the person-to-person engagement, the more individual members of a group or community may develop a multidimensional view of each individual with whom they interact. And, that may in turn evolve into more accepting views of the "other" as a group. As can be seen in Cambodia, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland, an increasing number of members of each society may be ahead of the rhetoric from the leaders that delegitimizes and refuses to acknowledge the other, thus continuing to promote the conflict. As the Armenia-Turkey case shows, it is also more difficult to engage constructively with the other when circumstances make it harder for such encounters to occur because the two parties are divided by a border that rarely allows for much human-to-human interaction. By contrast, the circumstances of the enduring cases force such groups in conflict to share space and account for the other in one's daily lives whether acknowledging them or not.

One question that occurs is whether (and if so, how) the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention can help lay the groundwork or contribute to trust building that would enable the parties to engage more seriously in a peace process or engage more directly in activities that could help them move beyond non-resolution to more productive interaction. It may be worth exploring whether functional coexistence can help "ripen" the situation. Zartman describes ripeness as the recognition by parties in conflict "of being in a mutually hurting stalemate and of sharing a willingness to look for a joint way out" (Zartman 2015, 480). In the cases of enduring conflicts in this book, the goal of functional coexistence is not a way out but rather a way forward. Although the parties have incentives to avoid both the killing and a formal peace, a functional coexistence approach, while incremental, is ultimately proactive. Functional coexistence incorporates a long-term perspective, informed by years of (mostly) destructive interaction and enmity and also the idea that any meaningful systemic change requires a long-term framework. The appeal of functional coexistence is that its practitioners will not sit idly by accepting a mutually beneficial stalemate but will seek practical and accessible opportunities within their reach to strive for positive change and relationship building.

As some of the cases presented in this book illustrate, enabling conditions for functional coexistence can only exist and retain public support if people's lives are enhanced or at least not disrupted and threatened. Thus, a functional coexistence approach can serve as a useful conflict mitigation tool in the absence of either the strong will or capacity to find a decisive, transformative way forward—a productive or, at a minimum non-destructive, way to develop or take advantage of a "mutually enticing opportunity," in Zartman's words (Zartman 2015, 481).

The Diversity of the Cases

To what degree is functional coexistence a result of the limited and reluctant engagement that has emerged over time as a means of living together? Is there a sense of shared space, much less a sense of a shared future together? The benefit of these cases is their diversity, but that also means that the assumptions and observations are preliminary and will need to be tested with more robust empirical evidence.

Incrementalism seems to have slowly improved the situation in Cyprus while worsening, or at least impeding any progress in, the case of Israeli Arabs and Jews. This contrast leads to the observation that the more successful intergroup engagement within the context of functional coexistence is mutually constructed rather than unilaterally imposed. It also illustrates and reinforces the necessity of sustaining the agency of all the conflict parties if functional coexistence is to have a chance of providing a basis for some form of meaningful intergroup engagement.

A key condition of an "enduring" state of functional coexistence is whether it provides conditions and an environment that enable community members to potentially change their attitudes and behavior toward the other. At a minimum, most of the citizens and leaders on all sides are no longer willing to resort to violence. The cases seem to show that the stronger the disincentives for violence, chances of attitudinal and behavioral changes increase to favor coexistence. These positive changes appear to be reinforced when there is a perceived economic benefit, including increased prosperity. As Louis Kriesberg has noted, "in general, economic well-being and prospects of continuing improvement ease problems of mutual accommodation" (Kriesberg 2001, 56).

Economic incentives appear to play an increasingly significant role in enabling parties as well as outside interveners to lay the groundwork for constructive engagement. In Northern Macedonia, the EU used its distinct adaptation of a functional coexistence approach (using the incentive of EU membership) as a way to entice the parties to move toward dialogue and mutual accommodation. Polling in Cyprus since EU membership (2004) shows that the Turkish Cypriots are increasingly reluctant to give up their EU passports (Turkish Cypriot travel massively increased after EU accession) and other (mainly economic) privileges (International Crisis Group 2023).

The tension between Moldova and Transdniestria has endured since 1991, despite violence having mostly disappeared and stability, if not meaningful engagement, emerged between the two societies. While neither side is yet working on restoring or restructuring the relationship, there exists a MLSS and ongoing nonviolence and negative peace as well as areas of compatibility around common cultural norms from food to shared holidays (Kappmeier et al. 2020, 120). One of the key themes that emerged in this book's cases has been supported by a series of interviews of both Moldovans and Transdniestrians conducted in Moldova in 2009 to understand how each group perceived the conflict and where their interests diverged. The only areas where the perceived interests of both Moldovans and Transdniestrians aligned were around "good life – economic stability" and "(e)conomic development of the region" (Kappmeier et al. 2020, 122). Transdniestria has developed into a de facto state, with its own currency and governing institutions, much like the Republika Srpska. However, due to Transdniestria's inability to obtain international recognition thus far, separation between the two political entities remains unrealized. At the same time, increased economic prosperity for some members of the respective societies has created opportunities for greater intercommunal engagement.

The new and significant changes faced by Armenia as a result of the loss of Nagorno-Karabakh and the displacement of Armenians from territory previously controlled by Armenia has greatly affected the nature of both its conflicts with Azerbaijan and Turkey. In particular, as Phillips notes about the Armenia-Azerbaijan case, a nascent form of functional coexistence that appears to be emerging has enabled the parties to take initial, if tentative, steps toward constructive engagement. This reflects functional coexistence defined as "a sustained negative peace which enables conflict parties and intermediaries to resist premature settlement and stay *constructively* engaged in an enduring state of non-resolution" (Chapter 10, Phillips). It may be premature to determine whether constructive engagement between Armenia and Turkey is sustainable, and whether functional coexistence is even possible between Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, the Armenia-Turkey case provides some optimism, while the Armenia-Azerbaijan chapter provides a useful blueprint for what might be possible if Azerbaijan sees benefits in functional coexistence. Ultimately, however, a constructive relationship, much less reconciliation, depends on enabling the conflict parties to eventually embrace such a mental state where they neither see the past as defining the future nor the future as simply a continuation of the past (Staub 2001).

The cases of Cambodia and Northern Ireland are more optimistic. In Cambodia, an extended period of functional coexistence has enabled more and more communities to initiate or expand ways to engage former Khmer Rouge. This case illustrates that a state of functional coexistence can serve as a bridge between an end to the violence and a beginning of post-genocidal reconciliation and reconstruction. And, as Lee noted, the "long-term maintenance of functional coexistence enabled community members to explore

social reconciliation" (Chapter 4, Lee). Despite the de facto separation at many levels of Northern Ireland society, the Good Friday Agreement redressed its longstanding political imbalance through a significant policing reform and the development of greater agency within the minority Republican/Catholic community.

Recent decades have seen a growing international trend of subsidiarity in which peace processes empower minorities and qualified local actors to influence and even enable decisions traditionally falling within the dominion of the nation-state. Subsidiarity within the EU context, has enabled minorities to be self-determining vis-à-vis the majority. This was important in North Macedonia when the EU intervened in 2007–2008 after fifteen years of enduring and mostly nonviolent conflict between Macedonians, Albanians, and other minority groups (Vasilev 2011). The same was true in the Southern Philippines, where increasing constructive interfaith engagement between Catholic and Muslim leaders enabled minorities to attain and exercise greater autonomy in the decade and a half preceding the 2014 peace agreement.

Cyprus provides guarded optimism of another type. This fifty-year conflict has quietly transformed even in the face of very little progress on the political front. Negotiations between 2014 and 2017 went nowhere, and no resolution to the conflict is on the horizon. However, the likelihood of violence continues to recede. In large measure, this is due to the entrenched and well-managed separation of the two sides, such that Greek and Turkish Cypriots have opportunities to engage with each other through border crossings and other avenues of intercommunal exchange. Travel and trade are freer and the daily lives of those on both sides are mostly improved, if not equally so. The engagement is a matter of choice, not forced. The longer-term question is whether improved engagement could spill over into the political sphere in light of the functionalism discussed earlier; and whether the time will come in which the two sides trust each other enough to commit to meaningful negotiations about a possible political peace.

The benefit of the separation in Cyprus is reinforced when compared to the Israeli Arab case—a case in which Arabs in Israel live as minorities in a society dominated by Israeli Jews. In Abu-Nimer's view, the highly problematic version of coexistence that appeared to have evolved in that context was not functional coexistence at all. While preventing most violence within Israel among Arabs and Jews, the coexistence that has existed, albeit in different phases since 1948, has reinforced the conflict asymmetries and enabled the continued inequities and domination of the Israeli state over its Arab population. Numerous accommodationist attempts at promoting Arab-Jewish engagement in Israel have not led to Israeli society ever committing itself seriously and systematically to give the alternative transformationalist model a real chance of succeeding. This case is instructive because the power asymmetries, the systematic deprivation of the Arab community's agency, and the constant spillover of the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict into the domestic arena continually exacerbate the conflict dynamics and the Jewish-Arab relationship.

The Armenia-Turkey case shows how Armenia has begun to explore the possibility of normalization with Turkey because of its heightened insecurity. This insecurity was further exacerbated by the loss of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan (with Turkey's support), as well as the displacement of Armenians from the territory it previously held. Functional coexistence, if established, may provide space for small steps in which violence is avoided and incremental actions of relationship building and normalization are explored. The situation in the Western Balkans, especially Kosovo, barely qualifies as functional coexistence because the prospects for renewed systematic violence remain quite high. The key will be to transfer the adversarial dynamics to political processes and institutions, agonistic democracy, so that the conflict is less destructive and zero-sum. There, the lack of effective separation stokes the desires for greater autonomy and secession. Furthermore, the case illustrates that functional coexistence is not necessarily stagnant but it may in fact be contributing to a lack of sustainable peace. In Kosovo, the threat of conflict remains very close to the surface, bubbling over at times. Finally, the chapter on Armenia and Azerbaijan presents how functional coexistence *could* provide an opportunity for these two neighboring countries to establish a status quo worth preserving by avoiding violence.

Achieving or regaining a normal life is an important measure of the success of functional coexistence, and this seems to cut across all the cases. A second critical factor seems to be physical (and in some cases, psychological and social) separation. One might even term this "passive coexistence," perhaps even passive-aggressive coexistence since neither side feels a need to step back from the intolerance. In Cambodia, passive-aggressive coexistence means silent shunning and exclusion from social activities. In Northern Ireland, it plays out as self-selected segregation or avoidance. Functional coexistence in these enduring cases enables individuals and communities the capability of choosing how much engagement with "the other" to have, if at all, reinforcing the long-term importance of developing relationships and the long-term cost of not doing so.

Conclusion

These different cases show that while functional coexistence cannot substitute for conflict resolution, under certain circumstances it can contribute to peacebuilding, and in other circumstances, it may simply serve as a placeholder that makes it less likely that violence will reemerge. Functional coexistence reflects efforts at managing conflicts rather than resolving them. Resolution would require getting at the root causes and problem solving through collaboration—which in all these cases is almost non-existent, and in many, would most likely be premature, counterproductive, and even dangerous for the present. The more accessible threshold of peacebuilding provided by functional coexistence is, therefore, the best possible process and even the best foreseeable outcome given the major distrust of the parties and the existential nature of the deep-rooted enmity between them.

Bernard Mayer affirms one of the central conclusions of this chapter when he states:

> The most significant conflicts people face are the enduring ones—those struggles that are long lasting and for which a resolution is either irrelevant or is just one in a series of partial goals in service of a long-term endeavor.
>
> (Mayer 2009 vii)

As noted above by Mayer, those in the conflict intervention field often "act as if resolution is our entire purpose and focus." In fact, some of the most meaningful work—that reduces violent conflict and has the potential to make positive peace possible—is in dealing with conflicts that are ongoing and likely to be around for a long time" (Mayer 2009 vii)

Functional coexistence provides a valuable alternative to prevailing conflict resolution and reconciliation objectives because it recognizes non-resolution and negative peace as legitimate and viable means for addressing a deeply entrenched condition of mutual denial or non-recognition for which a premature attempt at settlement would prove highly destructive. At the very minimum, functional coexistence serves as a much-needed alternative to the outbreak or resumption of large-scale systematic violence. The cases hold out the possibility that in the course of enduring functional coexistence, enmity can move to reluctant or minimal engagement and eventually to constructive engagement. For the peacebuilding field, it is useful, in the first place, to view functional coexistence as an analytical tool that helps explain how and why non-resolution and an enduring stalemate can be mutually beneficial. Additionally, functional coexistence provides a framework of prescriptive thinking and action that upholds the prospect of conflict transformation, reconciliation, and sustainable peace when such possibilities have long been lost or discredited. The comparative analysis of these cases demonstrates that there is no general blueprint to follow in order to sustain functional coexistence; rather, it is sustained by the human desire for economic and social well-being, meaningful disincentives for violence, the prospects for greater political equity and agency, and creation of relationships that move people away from mutual enmity. The strategies, tools, and processes that can lead to, strengthen, or build on functional coexistence must be based in and reflective of the social, historical, and cultural contexts of the societies in which the people live. That said, where there is commonality between the cases is the goal of meeting basic human needs and a desire to regain and sustain "a normal life."

The premise of this book is that the value of functional coexistence is to ensure that parties to a conflict as well as outside interveners remain constructively engaged in an enduring state of conflict non-resolution, instead of avoiding or abandoning it. The functional coexistence approach is intended to continue a state of nonviolence while, if possible over time, enabling the relationship between conflicting parties to evolve into a more constructive

engagement. Ultimately, a more constructive relationship could create the foundation for reconciliation, and over time, enable the conflict parties to accept and even co-create a shared future.

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12 Implications of Functional Coexistence for Peacebuilding Evaluation, Policymaking, and Funding

Tatsushi Arai and Margarita Tadevosyan

Introduction

This chapter presents the implications of functional coexistence—a sustained negative peace unfolding in the context of conflict non-resolution and mutual non-recognition—for evaluation research. It focuses especially on sustained evaluation research designed to examine the cumulative impact of the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding. As discussed in Chapter 3, this framework of purposeful social action applies enhanced historical consciousness and a structural view of social conflict to a sustained incremental process of enabling systemic, transformative change. Evaluation research is defined here as systematic and empirical research on both the impact and process of social intervention, aimed at facilitating program participants' continuous reflection and learning while simultaneously ensuring program impact and improvement based on research findings and resulting action plans.

Making use of our inquiry into evaluation research as an overarching framework of analysis, we also briefly examine the implications of the functional coexistence approach for two related subjects of practical importance: funding and policymaking. Funding is a process of mobilizing and providing financial resources to their intended recipients, enabling them to achieve a desired outcome. Policymaking, meanwhile, is a purposeful process undertaken by a government institution, an international organization, or a public sector organization to produce a statement of intent to realize a well-defined objective and generate a desired social impact. The two sets of activities are mutually constitutive and inseparable: policymaking justifies the resource allocation required to deliver policy, and the availability of acquired resources enables policymakers to formulate a viable policy in the first place. Yet, for the purpose of the present inquiry, we consider evaluation research the most foundational among the three interconnected areas of work because both funders and policymakers are decision-makers, and decision making requires a sound evaluation of the context of social action and its impact.

Having identified the three broad themes of the inquiry, we would like to clearly note that this chapter's principal aim is to identify what we, as

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peacebuilding scholar-practitioners, view as the most useful starting points for an expanding scope of discussion on these themes. Consequently, we do not aim to comprehensively discuss evaluation methods and theories,[1] their applications and implications, or the anticipated challenges related to the functional coexistence approach. Instead, we address two questions identified to set the stage for future inquiry:

1 Considering the extended period of the functional coexistence approach and its highly inhospitable context, what does an evaluation research framework responsive to these distinct challenges look like?
2 How can funders and policymakers adopting the functional coexistence approach justify their sustained engagement with an enduring state of conflict non-resolution and the persistent resistance to resolution, which prevent them from realizing immediate, tangible program impacts?

The first question concerns evaluation methodology. The second question identifies its implications for funding and policymaking. These questions reflect some of the most significant challenges faced by conflict parties, intervention practitioners, policymakers, and funders in deeply conflict-affected societies where the functional coexistence approach is applicable. To address these questions, this chapter first lays out the conceptual foundations of our inquiry, which provide useful guidance and points of reference for both questions. It then responds to each question, using our response to the first as a basis for addressing the second.

The three sources consulted to respond to the questions are the relevant literature cited throughout, insights from the preceding case study chapters, and the senior practitioner interviews we conducted from June to July 2023. Regarding the case study chapters, which inferred the potential usefulness of the functional coexistence approach from their authors' empirical analysis, we selectively refer to them to illustrate evaluation methods and indicators unique to their respective contexts, for further theory building.

With respect to the senior practitioner interviews, we identified six established US-based peacebuilding professionals with one to three decades of sustained practitioner engagement in deeply conflict-affected societies relevant to our study of functional coexistence. While currently based in US research and educational institutions and civil society organizations, these interviewees have worked in a broad range of regional contexts, from the Caucasus to sub-Saharan Africa. They all have extensive successful fundraising and/or grantmaking experience, and two of them have long-held senior positions in

1 Recommended foundational works on peacebuilding evaluation include the writings of Tamra Pearson d'Estrée, Esra Çuhadar, Thania Paffenholz, Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church, and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, as well as reports by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), and the Alliance for Peacebuilding.

well-recognized government and semi-government entities working in the field of peacebuilding and development. The interview questions we posed mirror the two thematic questions outlined above. Relevant parts of their responses and case illustrations are cited anonymously within the context of our response to the second question. Recognizing that the interviewees primarily focused on US and European contexts of funding and policymaking, we have made a conscious effort to use their insights to broaden the scope of our inquiry and discussion beyond the Western-centric view of peace and conflict research.

This study is significant for two reasons. First, it extends the concept of functional coexistence to research methodology. Since functional coexistence is a conceptual innovation in and of itself, its application to research also extends the existing knowledge of research methodology accordingly. Second, it explores how to undertake a program of evaluation research over an extended period, from years to decades. This is an important unanswered question in peace and conflict research, which has long stressed the need for long-term engagement. There is thus value in articulating what a decades-long process of evaluation looks like to support a decades-long peacebuilding process. This chapter addresses this question while recognizing that such a decades-long process evolves in a highly adversarial context of mutual non-recognition and existential tension.

Conceptual Foundations of Evaluation Research on the Impact of a Functional Coexistence Approach

As the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding has evolved, evaluation practices have also undergone significant transformation. Major peacebuilding organizations have now designated staff members specializing in evaluation. The accelerated pace of technological innovations enables researchers to acquire and analyze an increasing amount and complexity of data for conflict research and program evaluation. It is also becoming commonplace for policymakers to consult the outcomes of credible evaluation research when making consequential decisions on peace, conflict, security, and related topics. While these trends in institutional practice further elevate the status of evaluation research in academic, policy, and public discourse, significant ambiguities remain regarding how to conduct evaluations and how to effectively utilize evaluation outcomes. Moreover, the field of peace and conflict studies continues to struggle with the absence of a common understanding of what successful evaluation outcomes should entail for peacebuilding programming, what kind of evidence is credible enough to confirm those outcomes, and which specific tools should be used to measure them (Scharbatke-Church 2020).

To provide a partial response to these questions for the field, this section presents some of the conceptual foundations on which we rely to perform evaluation research focused specifically on the impact of a functional coexistence approach to decades-long conflict intervention. Our presentation of the three foundational concepts—evaluation as learning, the continuum of prescriptive,

transactional, and retrospective conflict goals, and action research—lays the groundwork for more specialized responses to the two research questions stated earlier.

Evaluation for Learning and Reflective Practice

Following Culbertson (2010), we identify two general paradigms of evaluation in the field: the accountability model and the learning model. The accountability model is a form of inquiry assessing the value and merit of an initiative, and it is essentially retrospective in nature. In contrast, the learning model focuses on enabling program participants to make discoveries and apply them to their future actions for continuous program improvement and impact. Evaluators' preferences for one paradigm of inquiry over the other often follow the preferences of those utilizing the evaluation outcomes. We recognize that the learning model is more closely aligned with the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention. However, we also acknowledge the potential merit of augmenting the learning model with a purposeful use of the accountability model. We will illustrate this integrative thinking in the course of answering our research questions.

The learning model needs to be mainstreamed to implement a functional coexistence approach, as its effectiveness and sustainability depend on a continuous cyclical process of feedback, learning, and adaptation. This iterative process enables practitioners adopting the functional coexistence approach to seize emerging opportunities to learn through participatory evaluation exercises. They can use insights gained from these opportunities to continuously refine their skills and enhance their performance. As Tamra D'Estrée (2020) emphasizes, the process of evaluation "prepares us to be continually open to new input and new learning and to approach each new and unique situation with humility and a 'beginner's mind'" (p. 18). This highlights the importance of sustained, self-reflective learning as an essential requirement of the functional coexistence approach. Moreover, evaluation processes designed for ongoing learning help practitioners avoid defaulting to familiar and comfortable practices. Instead, these processes foster readiness for new modes of learning, allowing practitioners to respond effectively to evolving conflict dynamics and shifting contexts. Finally, evaluations supporting the functional coexistence approach are crucial for developing and refining context-specific working theories of conflict intervention and peacebuilding. These theories ensure clarity of purpose, effectiveness, and accountability in peacebuilding practices.

Prospective, Transactive, and Retrospective Conflict Goals

William Wilmot and Joyce Hocker (1998) propose that conflict parties and intermediaries distinguish between prospective, transactive, and retrospective conflict goals to gain a clearer understanding of how the parties' motivations

and justifications for their conflict behavior evolve and interact over time. They define prospective goals as "intentions people hold before they engage in conflict" (Wilmot and Hocker 1998, 72). Prospective goals are what motivate conflict parties to choose the specific courses of action they take before they realize that their goal-seeking behaviors result in interlocked relationships of conflict. Since parties with prospective goals, by definition, lack an actual conflict experience in which they purposefully seek their goals, these goals are likely to be less conspicuous in their self-awareness.

In contrast, transactive goals refer to the parties' motivations and justifications for their conflict behaviors, which come to form and/or crystallize in the midst of experiencing expressed conflict episodes, not before or after. As Wilmot and Hocker (1998) note regarding how transactive goals work in interpersonal communication, "your goals change in conflicts as you get a chance to express your feelings, be heard, and talk through your opinions and wishes (while the other party does the same)" (p. 73). In other words, transactive goals reflect the emergent realizations of reasons for goal-seeking behavior borne from the lived experiences of talking through ongoing conflicts.

Finally, retrospective goals are defined as justifications for conflict behavior presented after the conflict episodes in which the behavior took place are over. Retrospective goals explain why conflict parties did what they did with the benefit of hindsight. As Wilmot and Hocker (1998) observe, "since we do not know the implications of a conflict until we look back on it, retrospective goals serve as *explanatory* as well as a predictive function" (p. 76). Their reference to the predictive use of retrospective goals highlights the usefulness of conflict experiences and retrospective explanations thereof as a way of learning lessons to prepare for better-educated responses to future conflict episodes.

Developed as a framework for self-reflection and conflict intervention planning, the continuum of prescriptive, transactive, and retrospective thinking is useful for understanding the iterative nature of action research cycles in evaluating sustained conflict engagement. It also captures the dynamic, evolving, and tumultuous nature of the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention. Although the concept was originally developed to describe different types of conflict goals, it also serves the broader purpose of explaining diverse, shifting views of conflict history and social change among conflict actors, intervention practitioners, and policymakers, as illustrated below.

Action Research

Action research is a generic term to describe a broad range of programs of evidence-based, scientific research designed to achieve emancipatory social change (Dick 2009; Lewin 1948; Robson 2011). Like evaluation research, action research is an umbrella concept open to the application of different forms of established research designs and methods—qualitative, quantitative, or a mix of both—which are justified to be called under its name because of their purposeful use for social action and change. Reflecting the methodological

foundation laid by Kurt Lewin (1948), many action researchers adopt a cyclical process of designing a social change process, taking action based on the design, evaluating its impact, deriving lessons from the experience of engagement, and applying them to future iterations of the design-experimentation-reflection cycle for continuous program improvement.

Action research projects encourage the participation of diverse program leaders, beneficiaries, and stakeholders (Chevalier and Buckles 2019; Lennette 2022). They require sustained relationship building and communication between these participants and evaluation researchers (if the latter choose to distinguish themselves from the former). They must also adapt to shifting contexts of social action and evaluation, and facilitate the participants' direct and voluntary involvement in resulting social change initiatives. Integrating action research principles and conflict resolution research, Jay Rothman (2018) developed action evaluation, a systematic way of defining conflict resolution impact and success based on the cumulative evidence collected from "a baseline definitional phase, a formative developmental phase, and a summative judgmental phase" (p. 17). Rothman's three phases—baseline, developmental, and summative—parallel prospective, transactive, and retrospective conflict goals described above. Both sets of concepts anticipate the iterative and circular nature of strategic social action and complex social change, rather than a predictable linear progression toward change.

Action research designed to support decade-long conflict engagement offers a framework for thinking and action that concerned conflict actors, intervention practitioners, and policymakers can use to define and redefine their goals and strategies in response to contextual shifts at local, national, regional, and global levels. These actors can also use the framework of action research to respond to these shifts. For example, they can incorporate their responses into ongoing assessments of program needs and contexts, as well as their strategic choices regarding the specific types and sources of necessary data, data collection and analysis methods, and presentations and applications of evaluation findings. Such a highly dynamic and resourceful adaptation of action research requires concerned conflict actors, interveners, and policymakers to be both principled and flexible to ensure that their conflict engagement and evaluation practices remain practical, relevant, and impactful.

While action research supporting a functional coexistence approach follows the learning-centered model of evaluation mentioned above, it must also reflect a commitment to accountability regarding its long-term impact on conflict-affected relationships and societies. Specifically, evaluators and participants in an action research program must strive to identify measurable outcomes and supportive evidence to demonstrate, when possible, that the conflict interventions undertaken have reduced the vulnerabilities inherent in the state of functional coexistence toward not only violence but also a loss of low-power parties' agency. This aspect of the action research process, like any other process of conflict research, requires detailed documentation and rigorous assessment of the drivers of destructive conflict and violence, possible countermeasures to these

drivers, and their measurable contributions to preventing the rise or resurgence of systematic violence over an extended period. These measures will be discussed in greater detail below.

Defining Characteristics of Evaluation Research for the Functional Coexistence Approach

Evaluation research designed to implement a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention is a distinct, purposeful adaptation of action research. It emphasizes a learning-action cycle from an integrative perspective comprised of prospective, transactive, and retrospective views on long-term systemic change. This approach draws upon a broad range of established and emerging research designs and methods—qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both—with an emphasis on a participatory, inclusive, and multidisciplinary orientation useful for peace and conflict research. Recognizing that conflict and its management involve a multitude of interconnected components—attitudinal (trusting, distrusting, etc.), behavioral (violent, nonviolent, etc.), and relational (interactive among parties; open, closed, equal, unequal, etc.) (Galtung 2010; Mitchell 1981)—the evaluation of a functional coexistence approach identifies, collects, and analyzes data based on the use of indicators corresponding to these components.

None of these qualities of the proposed framework of evaluation are new to experienced conflict researchers. What makes it distinct, however, is the highly restrictive, polarizing context of functional coexistence within which the evaluation is performed, and its goal of enabling and accompanying a decades-long process of conflict engagement. These qualities of functional coexistence have serious consequences for evaluation research programs and their participants. This section, therefore, first summarizes the unique nature of its context, then describes the qualities required of evaluators in this context, identifies the specific types of change and learning on which the proposed evaluation framework focuses on, and finally reflects on its broader vision and significance within the context of peace and conflict research.

Functional Coexistence as a Context for Evaluation Research

As discussed in Chapter 3, an enduring state of functional coexistence provides the context for implementing a functional coexistence approach to sustained conflict engagement. This context serves both as the setting for evaluation research and as its focus of inquiry. As a working environment, functional coexistence restricts and challenges what evaluators can achieve as researchers. As a focus of inquiry, functional coexistence poses a significant intellectual challenge due to its duration, dynamics, and complexity.

More specifically, as both a context and research focus, functional coexistence has a long history of formation and evolution, and it is likely to continue evolving for years, even decades. Consequently, a program of evaluation must be prepared for an extended period of commitment and include a vision and

plan of leadership development and succession, sustained resource mobilization and teambuilding, and adaptation to likely setbacks, contextual shifts, emerging program priorities, and new requirements for evaluation criteria and methods. Moreover, functional coexistence as a context is characterized by conflict non-resolution, mutual non-recognition, and an extended state of non-fighting, which is far from ideal for collaborative research through information gathering and sharing. Evaluators must be prepared to face security concerns, shifting political dynamics, and the challenge of building trust with conflict parties and stakeholders both within and across conflict-affected societies, all of which are likely to constantly affect the feasibility and quality of program implementation and evaluation outcomes (Abu-Nimer 2020).

Perhaps most challenging for action research participants trying to use evaluation for continuous joint learning and program improvement are the inter-societal (horizontal) and intra-societal (vertical) divides in human interactions and communication, either in person or through digital space, that keep them apart. Cybersurveillance and intimidation exacerbate the difficulty in human interaction for learning and community building in many of the severely conflict-affected societies in which functional coexistence evolves. The remainder of this chapter seeks to selectively respond to some of these challenges and mitigate their adverse program impacts.

Who Evaluates: Useful Qualities for Evaluators Working in the Context of Functional Coexistence

Evaluators enabling and supporting a functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention must be individuals or groups with vision, skills, and openness to calculated risks. These individuals and groups may include, but are not limited to, concerned and self-conscious conflict parties, intervention practitioners, professional researchers, policymakers, civil society leaders, and funders from diverse socio-political, institutional, and professional backgrounds within, between, and across conflict-affected societies. Ideally, they share a critical self-awareness of the enduring status quo of conflict non-resolution and functional coexistence, the need for long-term systemic change (with or without agreement on the desired nature of change among them), immersion in or proximity to the context of the conflict, and a commitment to sustained resource mobilization. A shared willingness to work for the long term as a team, or at least within an emergent network of connected actors, as well as a willingness to learn lessons from evaluation and integrate them into an action-learning cycle, is ideal.

However, the ability of actors from one conflict-affected society to reach out to their counterparts on the other side, though advantageous and ideal, should not be considered a prerequisite or starting condition for their participation in evaluation, because the severity of social divisions may prohibit the fulfillment of such a requirement. Moreover, while trained and experienced conflict researchers are assets for evaluating long-term conflict engagement processes of such magnitude and complexity, broad-based participation outside the

network of professional researchers is required and essential for their social impact and sustainability.

Viewed from this broad, inclusive perspective, leaders and participants in action research for evaluation contribute to the long-term development of a community and culture of sustained reflective learning and program improvement. These actors may include expert researchers, non-expert citizens, and policymakers who aim to introduce evaluative thinking and a culture of self-reflective learning and improvement into their routine professional activities, such as project planning meetings and media discussions. They may also incorporate evaluative thinking and practices into their personal lives through informal civic conversations, social media discussions, and other accessible means of civil society exchange. Whether consciously or unconsciously, these actors can contribute to an emergent movement for public education that challenges prevailing social practices and cultures of mutual non-recognition and polarization. The incremental growth of these steps forms an important part of enhanced macro-historical consciousness, a foundational requirement of the functional coexistence approach revisited below.

What to Evaluate (1): Focus on Outcome

Following our presentation on the functional coexistence approach in Chapter 3, we consider its three objectives as useful criteria for outcome-oriented evaluation of its program effectiveness and social impact. The term "outcome" is used broadly to describe discernible and plausible results of program inputs, such as a short-term workshop or an extended training series, to meet the accountability requirements important for program delivery and evaluation. Our reference to "outcome," however, does not endorse the prevailing view of time-bound, project-oriented thinking that favors a mechanical view of cause-and-effect relationships. Rather, it is used as a concept contrasted with a *process* in program implementation and action research, which we will discuss shortly. It is also a conceptual tool to bring forth a retrospective mode of assessing achievements and challenges to inform a prospective approach to decades-long conflict engagement.

The three general objectives of the functional coexistence approach are restated below as questions for evaluation concerned with program accountability:

- Has the program of a functional coexistence approach measurably reduced or contained vulnerabilities—political, economic, psychosocial, or security-related—that are likely or proven to generate *violence*, thereby terminating the extended period of non-fighting, or negative peace?
- Has the program created or enhanced underlying conditions—political, economic, psychosocial, or security-related—that are likely or proven to alter the enduring state of mutual non-recognition to promote *peaceful and sustainable coexistence*?
- Has the program protected and ideally enhanced the ability of people living in the highly restrictive environment of functional coexistence to meet their *basic human needs* for survival and livelihood, irrespective of the program's impact on the other two areas of conflict engagement mentioned above?

Working within a short-term project cycle or a continuum of multiple cycles, evaluators may identify indicators of attitudinal, behavioral, and relational shifts and use them to examine their program's impact in relation to one or more of these three objectives. Such an effort to measure the program's outcomes for accountability may be enhanced by a complementary effort in process evaluation, aligned more closely with our emphasis on the use of action research and evaluation for a decades-long process of continuous learning.

What to Evaluate (2): Focus on Process

In Chapter 3, we compared the functional coexistence approach to an extended, discovery-oriented journey supported by a purposeful use of four guideposts:

- Enhanced macro-historical awareness of decades-long processes of conflict formation and social change
- Systemic view of conflict structure, and strategic conflict engagement
- Commitment to staying constructively engaged in an enduring state of conflict non-resolution
- Demonstrated capacity to leverage short-term projects to foster conditions that enables long-term systemic change

In this section, we use these guideposts to develop an action research framework for evaluating a decades-long *process* of conflict engagement. Here, a process is defined as "a systemic series of actions" (Arai 2022, 143), which may lead to outcomes but are distinct from them. Process evaluation on the functional coexistence approach employs a cyclical mode of learning. It integrates lessons from applying prescriptive, transactive, and retrospective lenses to the unfolding experience of decades-long conflict engagement.

Despite the conceptual distinction between process and outcome-oriented evaluation, however, the two overlap significantly and can even be indistinguishable in practice. The blending of process and outcome occurs because sustained conflict engagement undergoes cycles of project input and output, process improvement, and outcome development, thereby making process and outcome mutually constitutive within the broader, continuous movement of conflict engagement. Therefore, we recommend that evaluators choose either approach, highlighting the relative simplicity of the outcome-oriented three-point framework that may appeal to emerging practitioners. However, the complementary use of both process- and outcome-oriented evaluation may be viable and advantageous for advanced researchers familiar with complex, integrative thinking and robust multi-angled analysis.[2]

2 Chapter 3 presents an additional insight into how to integrate outcome-oriented and process-oriented thinking for implementing the functional coexistence approach.

The framework of process-oriented evaluation outlined below, like the functional coexistence approach it evaluates, assumes that the conflict-affected societies where evaluation occurs remain in a state of negative peace, and that the conflict parties involved retain agency regardless of the degree of power asymmetry they may face. Should either condition—negative peace or agency—cease to exist, the proposed framework of process evaluation, structured around the four guideposts, should be replaced with other existing frameworks more suitable for contexts involving ongoing violent conflict and/or debilitating forms of power asymmetry. Existing literature on evaluation methodology and the broader theme of peace and conflict research can provide guidance in such situations.

It should also be made explicit that the proposed framework of process evaluation neither requires nor anticipates linear progress from one condition to another, nor does it imply that all four conditions must be fully met at any point in an extended conflict engagement process. Instead, these four conditions should serve as guidelines to select from and interact with according to the context-specific adaptations of a program or related programs of a functional coexistence approach and process evaluation.

Having described the nature and purpose of the proposed framework, we now briefly present each of its four components. To accomplish this, we pose an *illustrative* question for each component to frame process evaluation. Evaluators using this framework can develop context-specific, customized indicators of attitudinal, behavioral, and relational shifts that either enable or obstruct impactful conflict engagement. We consider not only indicators of program success and effectiveness related to the four components but also indicators of program failure and ineffectiveness, aiming to ensure program accountability.

Guidepost 1: Historical Awareness

Is there any visionary leadership, organization, and/or movement formulating and advocating for broadening the conflict parties' view of conflict history and social change?

This is arguably the hardest condition to fulfill under the prevailing circumstances of mutual non-recognition, existential tension, severe distrust, and hopelessness. Nevertheless, action researchers should search for and support, as appropriate, those who resist the prevailing trend of short-sightedness and adherence to the seemingly unchanging status quo. They may detect and build upon signs of pioneering leadership that articulate and communicate a historic and aspirational vision of conflict transformation—a sustained process of responding to destructive manifestations of conflict in such a strategic way as to foster patterns and systems of human interactions capable of promoting social equity and mutual respect (Curle 1971; Lederach 1997, 2003; Mitchell 2002).

Guidepost 2: Systemic Change

Does the program foster conditions enabling systemic, transformative change?

Evaluation research informed by this guideline recognizes the hierarchical and structural nature of each conflict-affected society, the relationships between them, and the broader international context in which they are embedded. It also acknowledges how the structural inequities and inertia entrenched in these relationships resist the systemic changes necessary for mutual recognition and constructive relationship building. Moreover, evaluation research examining systemic challenges requires prospective thinking about scenarios of possible systemic change that transcend the existing reality of changelessness, while identifying well-defined initial conditions for realizing transformative systemic change over time. Possible examples of such initial conditions include the opening of previously closed border crossings separating one society from another (Cyprus, Chapter 5), confidence building through trade and transit routes (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Chapter 10), and community rituals enabling former perpetrators and victims of mass violence to cautiously observe each other (Cambodia, Chapter 4). An in-depth analysis of each context of functional coexistence, along with grounded yet imaginative thinking about a proposed working theory of systemic change, facilitates the discovery of such enabling conditions and their possible contributions to the desired systemic change.

Guidepost 3: Sustained Conflict Engagement

Does the program encourage and enable conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers to stay constructively engaged in the enduring condition of conflict non-resolution?

Action researchers seeking indicators of effectiveness regarding this guideline need to focus on two areas of inquiry. The first area involves indicators that demonstrate a shift in mindset and potentially in the cost-benefit analysis of actors, particularly regarding the prohibitive cost of premature withdrawal (such as an impending scenario of violence) and the potential benefits of continued engagement. Effective efforts to promote such a shift in collective thinking can themselves be considered as useful indicators.

The second area of inquiry concerns indicators showing an increased capacity for long-term engagement, possibly spanning decades. Examples of such indicators include organizational programs focused on leadership development and succession planning that support sustained conflict engagement. Succession planning is crucial as it ensures that new leaders and institutions contribute to program sustainability. This process must also involve a broader effort to cultivate a sustained network of collaboration among participants and the growing community of stakeholders involved in conflict engagement and action research.

Another example of an indicator of increased capacity for long-term engagement is demonstrated commitment, resourcefulness, and skillfulness in

facing and adapting to setbacks, temporary reversals of project gains, and unforeseen contextual shifts within and across specific short-term actions and projects. These moments of challenge are akin to seemingly unproductive detours and circular movements within the broader context of an extended, discovery-oriented journey. Key questions that need answers, with the help of indicators specific to program needs and context, include whether program participants can identify and communicate lessons useful for program improvement, and whether they can devise effective means to mitigate the adverse effects of challenging experiences and prevent them to the extent possible.

Guidepost 4: Linking Short-term to Long-term Change

Does the program identify and implement short-term (months to a few years) actions and projects in such a strategic manner as to enable long-term (decades) systemic change?

Process evaluation of a functional coexistence approach to sustained conflict engagement requires closely examining how concerned conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers make use of their pragmatic choices of short-term actions and projects, and then use their impacts to orchestrate long-term processes and patterns of social interactions conducive to systemic change. This integrative and strategic thinking necessary for evaluation finds support from John Paul Lederach's (1997) view of peacebuilding, which he characterizes as "simultaneously long-term slow and short-term intensive" (p. 131), drawing upon Edward Hall's concept of polychronic simultaneity (Hall, 1984). Another useful insight Lederach (1997) introduces to support such an integrative and strategic thinking is conjunctural analysis, which he defines as a synthetic thinking which mobilizes "the capacity to identify, understand, and strategically analyze the immediate situation-in-context, with an eye toward locating the social, political, economic, and cultural relationships that may block or enable the creative transformation of conflicts" (p. 119).

Recognizing the distinct nature and purpose of the integrative and strategic thinking that connects short-term steps to long-term change, action research for evaluation must examine the lessons for long-term change that program leaders and participants draw, transactively and retroactively, from their experience with each of their short-term actions and projects. While these short-term actions and projects may generate varying degrees and types of intended and unintended social impact, the broader significance and potential utility of the impact need to be discovered, articulated, and even negotiated in relation to how they can strategically convert the achieved impact into an enabling condition for long-term systemic change. This is essentially a purposeful and prospective process. However, it is also a multidimensional process, analyzing the empirical evidence of short-term project impacts transactively and retrospectively while creating and adapting an emergent and aspirational vision of possible systemic change prospectively. Evaluators' search for indicators needs to match this multidimensional nature of the action research process. Specifically,

they need to identify indicators of (a) short-term project impact, (b) the quality of lessons learned, and (c) the capacity for utilizing the lessons to discover a practical yet creative way forward from a long-term perspective.

To facilitate this long-term, iterative process of action research and purposeful learning, evaluators may introduce outcome harvesting as a complementary research strategy to their principal methods. Outcome harvesting retroactively identifies, formulates, and interprets the combined outcomes of a program implemented and various contextual factors affecting the program (World Bank 2014; Wilson-Grau and Britt 2013). As Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt (2013) state, "Outcome Harvesting does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes or objectives, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved and works backward to determine whether and how the project or intervention contributed to the change" (p. 1). Steps to carry out outcome harvesting include: developing a research design reflecting the principle stated above; reviewing relevant documents and other forms of evidence related to specific outcomes of interest, which may be positive or negative, intended or unintended; drafting outcome descriptions that detail "who changed what, when and where it took place, and how the change agent contributed to that outcome…" (p. 6); working with program participants to formulate outcome descriptions; and analyzing and interpreting the outcome descriptions to develop action plans for social change.

As Wilson-Grau and Britt (2013) note, the backward thinking used for outcome harvesting is especially useful when analyzing highly complex program contexts and the contributions of specific program outcomes to broad systemic changes. In addition to these advantages, outcome harvesting supports the functional coexistence approach by centering on backward thinking, which is beneficial for participatory action research that tracks decades-long cumulative conflict engagement comprised of an unfolding series of multiple short-term actions and projects. In short, outcome harvesting can usefully support an extended, discovery-oriented journey of conflict engagement comprising many short trips.

Indicators of Ineffective and Unsuccessful Processes

Having outlined the four guideposts as guidelines for process evaluation and identified examples of indicators associated with them, we now turn to the question of what ineffective and unsuccessful processes in the implementation of a functional coexistence approach look like. This question is important because our emphasis on long-term learning, which includes strategic responses to and learning from setbacks, reversals of project gains, and unexpected contextual shifts within short-term project contexts, does not excuse the leaders and participants in the functional coexistence approach from the requirement of accountability for their actions. The application of the learning model must be purposeful with respect to its goal and value in conflict transformation. The quality of these purposeful efforts is ascertained by the ability to uphold a

well-articulated standard of accountability that complements our focus on evaluation as learning.

As a general principle, we consider any willful actions, systemic negligence, or inaction clearly attributable to program implementers' decisions and choices that disable or reverse social processes and patterns of social interactions—thus hindering collective, reflective learning and the advancement of the functional coexistence approach—as signs of ineffective or unsuccessful program development. In light of this general principle, illustrative examples of indicators pointing to the absence of program effectiveness and success may be identified as follows:

- Withdrawal from conflict engagement due to failures in mobilizing political will, resources, or personnel.
- Conspicuous absence of a demonstrated ability or willingness (or both) to learn meaningful lessons from the cumulative experience of concrete steps taken and projects implemented. If lessons are learned, they should help gain greater clarity about vision and/or find meaningful next steps.
- Inability to identify and initiate any practical steps or projects, however small or symbolic, over an extended period of time, indicating program stagnation.
- Inability to undertake a readily available and manageable scope of work designed to prevent or contain an outbreak or resurgence of systematic violence, thus becoming complicit in the loss of a foundational condition for the functional coexistence approach.
- Inability to undertake a readily available and manageable scope of work to prevent conflict parties from losing their agency, thus becoming complicit in the loss of a foundational condition for the functional coexistence approach.

Awareness of these and other examples of program failure and ineffectiveness should be used to ensure program success and effectiveness.

Why Evaluate: A Broader Vision and Significance of Evaluating a Functional Coexistence Approach

Our final point on the defining characteristics of the proposed evaluation framework addresses why evaluation is necessary from a decades-long perspective. As explained above, our evaluation framework, like the functional coexistence approach to conflict engagement itself, emphasizes continuous learning and program enhancement. However, a decades-long process of learning entails learning across generations, which is no ordinary task. Transgenerational cumulative learning, in turn, develops and transmits a system of historical memory on conflict and society's response to it to future generations. The field of peace and conflict studies in general, and peacebuilding evaluation in particular, have not framed a long-term program of evaluation research in such transgenerational terms or with such broad historical significance.

Viewed from a decades-long perspective on continuous learning, those who lead and support the task of program evaluation for the functional coexistence approach are, in fact, historians in action, exercising a retrospective view of conflict and historical social change. While working amid the dynamics and complexities of unfolding program activities and contextual shifts, however, they may also employ journalistic skills, providing a transactional view of conflict and evolving social change. From time to time, they must also think prospectively and look forward into future years and decades, linking lessons from programs to a broader vision, akin to a creative playwright.

The Need and Possibility of Long-Term Funding and Policy Support for the Functional Coexistence Approach

This section presents our response to the second research question: How can funders and policymakers adopting the functional coexistence approach justify their sustained engagement with an enduring state of conflict nonresolution and persistent resistance to resolution? To answer this question, we identify an alternative to the prevailing mindset and framework of grantmaking and policymaking that prioritize immediate, tangible project outputs over long-term social and policy impact through conflict transformation. We also explore practical ways to bridge the gap between the familiar short-term input-output cycle and the requirement of the functional coexistence approach for long-term conflict engagement. Since funding and policymaking both rely on an assessment of needs and goals informed by research and evidence, the preceding discussion on evaluation provides the basis for our critique and proposals on funding and policymaking.

We acknowledge that funders and policymakers, as two distinct categories of actors, have different needs, priorities, and constituents. Within each of these actor categories, there is considerable diversity, including government institutions at national/federal to local levels, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and nonprofit organizations, corporations, and religious groups. The Global South and North, as well as the East and West, provide varied contexts for each of these organizational activities. Recognizing these and other variables of diversity, we limit our aim and scope of this brief section to raising a few essential questions and presenting illustrative examples and concepts likely to cross the different actor categories, sectoral interests, and regional contexts, thereby preparing a ground for future inquiry. Additionally, we devote much of this section to funding practices while identifying their implications for policymaking and policy delivery, enabled by enhanced funding programs.

There are two parts to our response to the research question. First, based on the findings from the preceding section, we summarize the proposed rationale for supporting long-term funding and policy commitments. Second, we use this rationale to identify institutional changes and shifts in practices that funding and policymaking organizations should consider to align their activities with the requirements of long-term conflict engagement. These two areas of

inquiry both address the need to narrow the existing gap between short-term project cycles and the imperative of long-term conflict engagement. To address this gap, we begin our discussion on institutional changes within the context of government funding and then proceed to an illustrative example of nonprofit funding committed to long-term conflict engagement.

As we present examples of funding and policymaking practices, we acknowledge that they focus more on how to prioritize long-term engagement than on how these actors can tackle the other defining element of functional coexistence—a state of mutual non-recognition and conflict non-resolution. Our aim in this section is to learn lessons from each of the examples despite our primary emphasis on the former, so that policymakers, funders, and other concerned actors can apply the lessons to more complex scenarios of sustained conflict non-resolution and mutual non-recognition.

Rationale for Supporting Long-Term Funding and Policy Commitment

Presenting the proposed rationale for change requires at least a general idea of what kind of change is desirable and possible. Such a vision of change, in turn, must address well-defined problems regarding current funding and policymaking practices that necessitate a response.

Focusing specifically on donors' roles, one of the most fundamental problems that need addressing is that institutionally sponsored activities for conflict intervention are, and will most likely continue to be, heavily dependent on donor funding. This prevailing trend in funding, in turn, will ensure the continued influence of donor policies and priorities over projects for conflict intervention (Tadevosyan 2022). Within this sustained, restrictive environment of donor conditionality and the power asymmetry between donors and the recipients of their financial support, donors' understanding of the functional coexistence approach and the framework of evaluation supporting it will have a decisive effect on the approach's visibility and impact on policymaking and civil society actions. Furthermore, donors' familiarity with and appreciation for the need and efficacy of sustained conflict engagement, based on their enhanced understanding of conflict history and systemic social change, are essential to make the functional coexistence approach relevant to policy and financially sustainable.

However, current funding practices generally follow an unrealistic expectation to demonstrate systemic social change and policy impact in conflict-affected societies based on one- to two-year projects. Despite the apparent gap between these funding practices and the realities of conflict-affected societies resisting change, donors' expectations often demand that program evaluators produce and demonstrate tangible project outputs within a very short period. While logical frameworks (logframes) required by donors structure project planning, delivery, and monitoring and evaluation, they deprive project participants and evaluators of the much-needed flexibility required to respond to evolving conflict environments. A more tailored approach that recognizes the

contextual shifts in conflict zones and allows for a context-specific use of funding is urgently needed (Practitioner Interview 1 2023). As an interviewee with over a decade of ongoing experience in conflict engagement as an NGO professional states, "Real change takes time, consistency, … and relationships" (Practitioner Interview 2 2023).

Our primary response to the challenge of the constant demand for short-term project outcomes is to underscore its long-term adverse consequences, some of which are identified below, and to emphasize the utility of the functional coexistence approach as an alternative, particularly in conflict-affected societies grappling with mutual non-recognition and existential tension. Simply put, funders and policymakers need to know what the functional coexistence approach is, what it does, and what benefits they, and their societies at large, gain by practicing it.

More specifically, based on insights from the above discussion on process evaluation, we support creating and expanding diverse, inclusive opportunities for public, policy, and scholarly discussions about the likely consequences of short-term project cycles. We also suggest that policymakers and funders use these opportunities to learn about the long-term consequences of inaction and abandonment in conflict-affected societies that are unfit to attract and utilize short-term funding. A significant portion of these opportunities for learning and dialogue should be dedicated to realizing, with the support of robust evidence and theory, the possibility of violence and social disintegration that may result from prolonged inattention to conflict-affected societies, for which investments in sustained conflict engagement are missing yet required (Jentleson 2000; Lund 1996; Waller 2016).

Finally, we suggest socializing funders, policymakers, and other peace and conflict stakeholders with the general concept of enabling conditions (Practitioner Interview 3 2023), which we consider essential for mainstreaming long-term conflict engagement in general and the functional coexistence approach in particular. As discussed earlier in this chapter and elsewhere in this volume, including in Chapter 3, there are many practical and necessary steps that concerned conflict parties, intervention practitioners, and policymakers can take in enduring contexts of conflict non-resolution and functional coexistence without expecting immediate, tangible impacts on the fundamental structure of the underlying conflict. Examples of such steps include upholding the existing condition of negative peace, ensuring the ability of conflict parties to maintain their agency, sustaining a minimally livable social space (MLSS) essential for people's survival and livelihoods, opening mutually acceptable channels of communication to prevent miscommunication, and fostering successors willing and able to stay engaged. Basic knowledge of what concrete, attainable contributions to long-term conflict engagement look like enables funders and policymakers to identify well-defined fundable activities, with the assurance that they and their program partners can measure their long-term, cumulative impact based on the robust evaluation framework discussed above.

Proposed Changes in Institutional Practices at Government Funding and Policymaking Organizations

Funding and policymaking organizations can incorporate our proposed rationale for sustained conflict engagement into concrete institutional practices with purposeful effort. Doing so, however, requires not only technical and administrative changes but also a shift in mindset, and indeed, structural and cultural shifts. Despite the far-reaching nature of the institutional changes necessary to mainstream the functional coexistence approach, we would like to present selected starting points for policy, public, and scholarly discussions to support these shifts. In doing so, we heed the advice of a peacebuilding NGO leader: "Consider how you can help change the big system requirements keeping us in this short-term project cycle" (Practitioner Interview 2 2023). To this end, we highlight useful insights from institutional practices in US government agencies.

In the context of US government funding agencies, the prospect for any deep, meaningful shift toward sustained conflict engagement is limited. A realistic starting point is to identify existing practices that move, however marginally and incrementally, in the direction of long-term conflict engagement through sustained financial support. A senior professional with extensive experience in both US government agencies and European funders highlights the Global Fragility Act (GFA) as an illustrative example of US government funding moving in that direction (Practitioner Interview 1 2023). Enacted in 2019, the GFA authorizes US government funding with a ten-year plan named the Global Fragility Strategy, aimed at achieving closer inter-departmental coordination to effectively prevent violent conflict and promote post-conflict stabilization.

To implement the GFA, in 2022, the Biden administration identified Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Libya, Mozambique, and the coastal West African region, including Benin, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea, as Washington's initial focus for a decade-long conflict prevention action plan. The United States seeks partnerships with their respective national governments to implement this plan. The launch of the GFA reflects US policymakers' growing recognition of the excessive costs of responding belatedly to the aftermath of mass violence, large-scale armed conflict, and systematic political disintegration, as seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also underscores US policymakers' increasing realization of the relative advantages of early action and long-term government investment for conflict prevention and stabilization assistance.

Generally speaking, however, US government agencies tend to tightly link their international assistance to Washington's immediate geopolitical interests, resulting in short-term and fragmented support. In contrast, European government agencies generally have a more long-term commitment to foreign assistance (Practitioner Interview 1 2023). Examples cited by this senior professional for long-term European assistance include the European Partnership

for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK), active from 2010 to 2019. During this period, EPNK aimed to support peaceful conflict resolution efforts through dialogue and confidence-building measures. It was followed by European Union 4 Peace (EU4Peace), a program established in 2020 that promotes peace and stability through multi-year conflict prevention and resolution efforts, and European Union 4 Dialogue (EU4Dialogue), another program established in 2021 comprising a series of Track 1 and 1.5 dialogues, as well as civil society, culture, and education programs. Lessons from comparing American, European, and other national and regional funding practices provide a useful basis for further inquiry and dialogue on their respective rationales for short-term and long-term funding. They may also highlight areas of potential shifts and improvements in government funding practices.

Apart from identifying and building on existing funding practices that hold promise as a starting point for necessary shifts, it is important to recognize the challenges within government funding institutions and engage in candid and constructive public and policy discussions about them, with a commitment to problem-solving. Institutional practices at US government agencies reveal, for example, persistent staff resistance to altering familiar logframes due to concerns about job security, lawmakers' limited knowledge of and interest in the utility of foreign assistance, and their inability to link foreign aid to a well-defined long-term national interest in peace and security (Practitioner Interview 1 2023).

Another significant challenge to long-term government funding support for effective conflict engagement is the two- to three-year rotation cycle of foreign service officers, who are assigned to different regional contexts without establishing adequate regional expertise and relationships (Practitioner Interview 1 2023). Effective policy engagement requires officials to remain in a specific conflict-affected region long enough to acquire in-depth contextual understanding and build trust with local partners. Attaining such deep understanding and trust is crucial for ensuring continuity in regional analysis, coherent policy formulation and implementation, and efficient delivery of foreign assistance. Therefore, addressing the systemic challenge of building a broad cadre of regional experts in foreign services is necessary to facilitate effective long-term engagement for the functional coexistence approach. It also enables policymakers and intervention practitioners to make more informed decisions about addressing the challenges of conflict non-resolution and mutual non-recognition on the ground.

While the above examples illustrating the proposed rationale for sustained conflict engagement are limited in scope, they suggest a general approach to framing purposeful inquiry and dialogues among government and intergovernmental funding agencies, policymakers, and other opinion leaders regarding the need and promise of the functional coexistence approach. This approach to inquiry and dialogues involves identifying the sources and drivers of resistance to shifting away from a singular focus on short-term funding and

project cycles, building on existing supportive practices and conditions for transitioning to long-term conflict engagement, and leading discussions to address obstacles and challenges in search of practical and systemic solutions. Although our recommendations in these areas are exploratory and aspirational in nature, they serve our immediate goal of articulating a starting point and laying a promising foundation for sustained public, policy, and scholarly discussions.

Nonprofit Funding for Peace over Decades: A Case Study of The McConnell Foundation's Peacebuilding and Development Initiative in Nepal

Having discussed examples, possibilities, and challenges of US government funding for sustained conflict engagement, we now turn to nonprofit funding to broaden the scope of our inquiry. We introduce a brief case study of The McConnell Foundation (TMF) in Redding, California, a small philanthropic organization with an asset base of five hundred million dollars (McConnell Foundation n.d.). Since 2002, TMF has provided two decades of continuous financial support for peacebuilding and development in Nepal, offering a useful illustration of sustained peacebuilding philanthropy. The selection of TMF's ongoing engagement in Nepal for this case study is intended to show a concrete example of what an actual decades-long funding commitment looks like. This case study also helps us identify broader themes and questions about how funders can stay engaged in enduring conflicts and what benefits such sustained engagements can generate.

Established in 1964 by Carl and Leah McConnell as a local charity, TMF significantly scaled up its scope of giving in 1988. In 2002, TMF decided to enter the field of international peacebuilding and chose Nepal, a country undergoing intense civil war (1996-2006), as the regional focus of its first program of international philanthropy. TMF enlisted leading peacebuilding scholar-practitioner John Paul Lederach for a leadership role in this first overseas mission (Lederach 2015). Upon Lederach's suggestion, the TMF board pledged a decade-long commitment to uninterrupted financial support for Nepal. Between 2004 and 2015, Lederach and The McConnell Foundation staff made approximately fifty visits to Nepal to help develop TMF-funded initiatives. This first decade of TMF's groundwork, with Lederach's deep involvement and the local partners' extensive mobilization efforts, laid the foundation for the second decade of its sustained commitment led by TMF's Director of International Programs, Jesica Rhone.[3]

According to Rhone, TMF's peacebuilding and development support in Nepal has helped create community spaces, civil society movements, and government-sponsored institutions, enabling its local partners to harness their own expertise to tackle their conflict and development challenges. TMF serves

3 The remainder of this brief case study of The McConnell Foundation is based on our interview and correspondence with Jesica Rhone in July 2023 and June 2024.

as a co-learner with its local grantees in their shared peacebuilding and development efforts, distinct from the donor-driven international aid and national policy processes.

Despite the relatively small size of funding support, with an annual average investment of 1.5 million dollars to the international programs, the two decades of TMF's support for Nepali-led initiatives have established significant peacebuilding and development platforms, including:

- Mahila Shakti Bikash Kendra Nepal (MSBKN): This broad-based national network consists of over 20,000 rural women dedicated to rural women's participation in decision-making and governance processes. These processes include the development of their communities' climate resilience and cooperative land use for ecological, economic, and social well-being.
- The Natural Resource Conflict Transformation Center (NRCTC): This multi-stakeholder conflict transformation process has resolved and/or constructively engaged with over 350 community disputes, successfully secured diversified funding, and become an essential part of the Nepali government's nationwide mediation support mechanism. NRCTC's expertise, methods, and experiences have been incorporated into the widely disseminated manual of the Mediation Council of Nepal, a government institution to which NRCTC's Executive Director, Chup Thapa, was elected as a member in 2023.

NRCTC's organizational development is particularly noteworthy for our inquiry into the link between evaluation, policymaking, and funding, because it cogently illustrates how the combined strength and perseverance of nonprofit funding from abroad and local grassroots mobilization began to shape national policymaking and institutional commitment. This impact has become increasingly evident, at least within a well-defined scope of civil society and government-sponsored activities aimed at mainstreaming mediation for dispute resolution.

In any of its funded activities, TMF does not require evaluation reports from its grantees. Regarding TMF's perspective on grantees' accountability, Rhone notes, "It's a better use of our dollars and everyone's human investment to help our partners work toward more creative financial and programmatic sustainability to keep the momentum of their movement rather than having to pivot to donor-driven spins on their core work." For monitoring and evaluation, TMF relies on its long-term relationships with its grantees, an earned and shared commitment to reciprocal accountability and responsibility through partnership, and sustained dialogues on the ground to gauge its Nepali partners' program effectiveness and challenges. Rhone maintains that the reciprocity of the desire for and necessity of sustained relationships and engagement holds each participant—in both Nepali communities and at TMF—accountable for what they owe the other participants, as well as for what they owe the entire system of human relationships in which they live and

interact. Along this line of thinking, Rhone offers a useful insight into the notion of program "failure":

> Permission to fail is a privilege not often given to nonprofits…. We all need the opportunity to try, refine, adapt, and learn from experience. That needs time and trust. Reporting and indicators set up a tendency to give a false narrative. Two-way transparency, built relationships, respect, and donor humility allow community leaders to put their spine into their work.

Still, TMF closely examines specific areas of inquiry regarding its local partners' activities in order to make sure that its funded programs are moving in a positive direction. These areas of inquiry include Nepali partners' organizational capacity, their ability to diversify funding, and the strengths of their local networks.

Two decades of sustained philanthropic commitment have meant facing significant challenges together, such as the April 2015 earthquake, the resurgence of violence and political unrest, repeatedly stagnated peace processes and political transitions, and COVID-19. These and other challenges could have justified withdrawal from continued financial support. However, TMF has made a deliberate choice to stay engaged throughout. "Remove withdrawal off the table and you will take each of the challenges as an opportunity for learning and growth," Rhone notes. She then adds, "Changing our view of the timeframe for an initiative completely changes what is possible." Reflecting Rhone's perspective on peacebuilding timeframes, TMF's decades-long commitment to funding has enabled significant ongoing investment in its Nepali partners' leadership development and succession, as well as a shared commitment to facing setbacks constructively and learning lessons each step of the way to progressively deepen their partnership and program impact.

While TMF's US-based nonprofit status, small size, and distinct mission of service make this case study truly unique, it still offers an evocative model of sustained conflict engagement funding worth consideration by governmental and nongovernmental funders and decision-makers. The two decades of TMF's partnership-based philanthropy cogently demonstrate that it is possible, rather than impossible, to move away from short-term project funding cycles. They also illustrate the tangible benefits of long-term engagement, supported by concrete results unlikely to be achieved through fragmented short-term project cycles constrained by the inflexible and uninspiring nature of prescribed logframes. Furthermore, this case study highlights how to rebalance donor-grantee relations through donor humility and shared ownership. Finally, it suggests how to ensure that joint learning and program accountability through participatory action research and evaluation mutually reinforce, rather than contradict, each other.

Conclusion

Drawing upon an integrated understanding of the theory of functional coexistence, case study chapters, and practitioner interviews, this chapter identified defining characteristics of an evaluation framework for decades-long conflict engagement as well as its implications for funding and policymaking. Three conceptual foundations—evaluation for learning; prescriptive, transactive, and retrospective views of conflict goals and social change; and action research—offered guidance and points of reference throughout the chapter.

The essential characteristics of the proposed evaluation framework can be summarized using the "five Ws and one H" (Strimling 2002) as a way of synthesizing various points we presented:

- ***What to Evaluate*:** The evidence of (1) enhanced macro-historical awareness of conflict and change, (2) a systemic and structural view toward conflict engagement, (3) a decades-long commitment to staying engaged, and (4) purposeful short-term to long-term linkages for change. This process-oriented evaluation framework may be complemented by a simpler outcome-oriented framework.
- ***When to Evaluate*:** Evaluation performed over years to decades combines short-term (months to a few years) project cycles with long-term (several years to decades) processes of conflict engagement.
- ***Who Evaluates*:** Actors "within, between, and across" conflict-affected societies (Ramsbotham 2017), especially those willing and able to uphold a sustained program of evaluation despite likely setbacks. This includes leadership development and succession planning across generations.
- ***Why Evaluate*:** Not only for the essential dual goals of continuous learning and program improvement but also for the distinct additional goal of building a historical record, necessary to foster a macro-historical consciousness of enduring conflict and systemic change.
- ***How to Evaluate*:** Find and analyze accessible evidence linked to context-specific indicators, exercise prospective, transactive, and retrospective views of conflict and social change, and demonstrate skillfulness in design chocies and logistical arrangements amid structural constraints and social divisions.

These defining characteristics of the evaluation framework offer funders and policymakers the methodological and empirical support they need to incorporate a decades-long perspective into their program planning and delivery. The proposed evaluation framework can also provide a useful frame of reference for understanding and demonstrating why and how prevailing funding and policymaking practices in short-term project cycles run counter to the requirement of long-term conflict engagement essential for addressing enduring conditions of mutual non-recognition and conflict non-resolution. As a first step toward overcoming these prevailing practices, we propose the need to launch and expand public, policy, and scholarly discussions on the merit of alternative

funding and policymaking practices that enable the functional coexistence approach. These discussions should draw upon evidence of best supporting practices and a commitment to problem-solving.

Ultimately, the proposed evaluation framework for the functional coexistence approach contributes to building a culture of continuous learning and program improvement. We hope this culture emerges among a growing community of evaluation researchers, supportive conflict parties, intervention practitioners, policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders committed to long-term systemic change for conflict transformation. This sustained, inclusive process of community building and collective learning encourages these actors to adapt strategically to the evolving contexts of conflict engagement and strive for transformative social change. The adaptive and strategic thinking inherent in this process ensures that sustained, purposeful efforts in conflict engagement evolve with emerging challenges, remain relevant and impactful, and promote a culture of long-term peacebuilding. One of the immediate, necessary steps to initiate and sustain this process is to implement the proposed evaluation framework, along with its context-specific application to funding and policymaking, focusing specifically on the existing and emerging contexts of enduring conflict and functional coexistence.

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13 Conclusion

On the Journey of Functional Coexistence – Looking Back and Looking Forward

Tatsushi Arai

Introduction

The two decades of experiential learning and action research that led to the development of functional coexistence turned out to be only the beginning of an extended, discovery-oriented journey—an analogy used in Chapter 3 to describe the functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding. Within the context of this journey, the two-year project of writing this volume proved to be an intensive, time-bound trip that added significant value to it. This trip accelerated the pace and depth of the journey intellectually and sharpened the clarity of focus in search of a better-articulated goal for the unfolding journey. In this concluding chapter, we take stock of the lessons from this trip, recognizing their significance in the broader context of the ongoing journey. We then consider two additional findings revealed in the course of the cohort-based learning process that led to this volume, which the preceding chapters have yet to articulate. Finally, we identify the next steps in this journey, inviting our readers to join our effort.

The Origin and Initial Focus of the Journey

The journey of functional coexistence began in the early years of my practitioner engagement in Israel-Palestine civil society exchange and training from 2007 to 2009. It underwent significant developments and refinements through subsequent work in various other conflict-affected societies and regions, usefully augmented by scholarly exchanges. When the concept of functional coexistence still did not have its present name, the initial question that required answering was: Can we imagine peacebuilding, if not a formalized peace process, broadly enough to encompass a deeply entrenched state of active mutual denial as a starting point and essential condition to build on? Attention to mutual denial—a condition characterizing conflict parties' reciprocal views of their statehood, political legitimacy, social identity, and other self-identifying causes of historical significance—sheds light on the conflict's degree of intractability. Due to its severe intractability, the conflict parties and many of their stakeholders consider its likely consequences as existential to their continued

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survival as states, nations, identity groups, or other collective statuses of foundational importance to them.

Searching for an answer to the above question and faced with a strong rejection of established ideas such as conflict resolution and reconciliation by participants in trainings, workshops, and fieldwork, I began to realize the need to develop a new framework of thinking these participants could readily accept as more realistic and practical, instead of rejecting it as idealistic and unattainable. This learning process led me to undertake an extensive search for an alternative framework that is *large enough* in scope and intent to accommodate mutual denial and "existential conflict" as its essential component (Mitchell 2014, 23–44), not as a justification for conflict avoidance (Mayer 2009), inaction, or a use of force.

The addition of another requirement for functional coexistence—a condition of non-fighting lasting over a generation, two to three decades—was derived from observing the empirical conditions of contexts where "existential conflict" could potentially be dealt with through nonviolent means. This requirement also emerged from a theoretical inference about its usefulness in clearly defining the nature and scope of functional coexistence. The same applies to the other condition of functional coexistence: the conflict parties' ability to exercise their agency, which is especially important for low-power parties in asymmetrical conflicts. Without this requirement of agency intact, functional coexistence would not serve the ultimate aim of peacebuilding. Its contribution to peacebuilding would remain unfulfilled because a state of functional coexistence devoid of parties' agency would become complicit in colonialism, imperialism, apartheid, slavery, and other debilitating forms of structural violence, favoring high-power parties' unchallenged domination.

By accepting the defining conditions for functional coexistence outlined above, the question of how to stay constructively engaged in an enduring state of conflict non-resolution (Mayer 2009) becomes essential because conflict intervention carried out within the context of functional coexistence must be realistic. For this reason, the functional coexistence approach deemphasizes idealism informed by a normative commitment to "positive peace," as conflict parties facing existential threats and tensions reject unfounded optimism, viewing it as disrespectful to their histories and identities. Our journey of functional coexistence thus started with a pragmatic, if grudging, acceptance of non-resolution as a starting point, hoping to build a new framework of practice based on this acceptance.

The functional coexistence approach to conflict intervention and peacebuilding, which proposes a strategic way of finding and utilizing peace potential within the existing context and condition of functional coexistence, emerged through considerable trial and error. The experiences of co-leading a civil society dialogue movement across the Taiwan Strait (2005-present) (Arai 2016, 2023), working intensively with Syrians to support their capacity building during the civil war (2014–2018) (Arai 2019), assisting in the reintegration of former Boko Haram associates into conflict-affected communities in

northeastern Nigeria (2016–2018) (Arai 2017), actively supporting Burmese civil society initiatives in Rakhine State, Shan State, and other violence-affected areas (2010-present), and providing focused assistance in interethnic and interreligious relationship building in Sri Lanka (2016 and 2024–) contributed significantly to the emergent framework of practice and policymaking presented in this volume. The four guideposts for the extended, discovery-oriented journey of the functional coexistence approach—enhanced macro-historical consciousness of conflict history and change; systemic engagement with structural conflict; decades-long effort to stay constructively involved in the enduring state of conflict non-resolution; and the strategic use of short-term steps for long-term systemic change—were crystallized through a combination of field-based reflection and literature review.

Expanding the Scope of Inquiry into Functional Coexistence

The case study chapters have advanced this journey far beyond what we initially imagined, convincing us that functional coexistence has global reach and relevance. Without repeating the findings and conclusions from the case study chapters, which are divided into two categories—enduring functional coexistence (post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia, SungYong Lee; Cyprus, Gül M. Gür; Northern Ireland, Roger Mac Ginty; Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, Doga Eralp) and potential transition to or emergence of functional coexistence (Armenia-Turkey, Margarita Tadevosyan; Jewish-Arab relations in Israel, Mohammed Abu-Nimer; Armenia-Azerbaijan, Ann Phillips)—below are the four common threads across the cases that Jeffrey Helsing found, as cited from his Chapter 11:

- Economic well-being helps create strong incentives for continued and evolving engagement.
- The stronger the disincentives for violence, the greater the possibility (although by no means an inevitability) of attitudinal and behavioral changes. Functional coexistence can provide the space for trust building and potential negotiations because the expectation of violence may be reduced significantly.
- Formal agreements and institutions that contribute to a perceived sense by all parties of a sustained assurance of minimum security and survival, as well as greater equity and agency, make for a stronger condition of functional coexistence but also enable the possibilities for a functional coexistence approach, ultimately making constructive engagement more likely.
- A functional coexistence approach can assist in a transformation from enmity to engagement over time and incrementally, particularly through a continuity of patterns of engagement and small steps that help perpetuate existing positive relationships at a local level and a recognition of contextual, relational, internal, and historical factors.

While guided usefully by Helsing's synthesis of the case studies, we present these four points as interim findings which others may expand on, challenge, or even contradict with new evidence, rather than as definitive statements on how functional coexistence forms and operates empirically. Our cautionary note reflects our critical self-awareness of the small sample size, which we acknowledge lacks representativeness and generalizability. However, the pioneering nature of this evidence-based inquiry, deducing potentially generalizable patterns in sustained conflict engagement processes that illustrate different elements of functional coexistence, is worth noting. We hope that others will undertake iterations and extensions of this evidence-based empirical analysis presented by the case study authors and Helsing, thereby expanding the universe of cases in functional coexistence research.

Armed with these empirical findings and case synthesis, and aiming to enhance the contributions of functional coexistence to applied peacebuilding practice, Chapter 12 identified its implications for long-term program evaluation, policymaking, and funding. This chapter developed an action evaluation framework by applying the four guideposts of the functional coexistence approach, among other principles, to a sustained program of conflict engagement evaluation. It then used this evaluation framework to identify illustrative ways to overcome existing policymaking and funding practices that prioritize short-term, result-oriented thinking.

An important contribution of this inquiry is the reframing of program outcomes and benefits of conflict interventions, policymaking, and funding. This reframing results, in part, from adopting a more balanced understanding of both process-oriented and outcome-oriented perspectives, which are essential for realizing incremental systemic change over decades. Moreover, Chapter 12 proposes the need to overcome institutional resistance to depart from prevailing short-term project-oriented thinking through candid, inclusive, and multisectoral problem-solving dialogues. These dialogues must be informed by robust evidence and knowledge of best practices that demonstrate the measurable benefits of remaining constructively engaged in enduring conflicts.

Emerging Themes from the Ongoing Journey of Functional Coexistence Research and Dialogue

Evidence-based empirical research on functional coexistence is a scientific effort first and foremost, guided by a well-articulated and standartized research method, and an explicit commitment to following evidence from the research. However, this research process, co-led and joined by an international team of peacebuilding scholar-practitioners with decades of field-based experience, and enriched further by cumulative dialogues during webinars and workshops inviting peer critiques, has expanded our thinking about functional coexistence significantly. Five of the academic seminars organized between 2022 and 2024, in particular, provided different members of the research team with opportunities to present both concepts and case studies in progress (e.g., Jimmy and

Rosalynn Carter School's Peace Week 2023; International Studies Association [ISA] 2023), respond to questions and critiques, and undertake additional research and internal deliberations afterward based on lessons from these cumulative exchanges. I would like to describe two such discoveries from these dialogues, hoping that they are helpful for others' inquiries.

The Functional Coexistence Approach as a Way of Negotiating What's Non-negotiable

Negotiation is an ongoing process of transactional exchange between two or more parties attempting to achieve their respective goals by finding a mutually acceptable way of resolving or at least managing their differences. If the parties do not wish to communicate, let alone engage in problem-solving, negotiation does not take place. In contexts characterized by "existential conflict," parties often denounce or deny their adversaries' statehood, political legitimacy, regime status, foundational policies (such as the One China policy), social and historical identities (e.g., the ethnic identity and self-identifying name of the Rohingya in Myanmar), or a combination of these and other significant markers of their social standing. Many of these parties under existential tension assert that accepting such social standing, which holds existential significance, fundamentally threatens their own survival and continued existence.

At this writing, the relationships between Hamas and Israel, Kiev and Moscow, Pyongyang and Washington, and until 2023, Riyadh-Teheran, illustrate such a state of active mutual denial with existential dimensions, sometimes involving varying degrees of physical violence. Viewed through the lens of negotiation theory, the functional coexistence approach represents both a decades-long historical process and the emergent outcome of that process. Specifically, once developed, the functional coexistence approach involves parties in a state of sustained mutual denial who manage, often without direct contact or negotiation, to grudgingly and cautiously develop and maintain a highly regulated social space characterized by minimal interaction and strict constraints on such interaction. This tacit arrangement ensures their own survival and continued existence. Essentially, the functional coexistence approach is an practical way of negotiating a functional social space that supports mutual survival. This space may be maintained through deliberate mutual avoidance rather than direct negotiation.

Recognizing the dynamics and effect of the functional coexistence approach through the lens of negotiation theory, self-conscious conflict parties, intervention practitioners, policymakers, and funders may find the key message from this volume useful: think broadly and macro-historically, placing the presenting challenge of mutual denial in broad historical perspective. The concept of the elastic boundaries of mutual non-recognition, which challenges and overcomes the popularized notions of stalemate, frozenness, stuckness, and changelessness (Chapter 2) in negotiation and peace process literature, reinforces this

message. Stated plainly, do not succumb to the prevailing assumption of changelessness and hopelessness; do not give up.

As negotiators guided by a macro-historical perspective of conflict and an aspirational vision of systemic change, these actors can identify practical negotiating leverage to make the existing state of conflict non-resolution and mutual denial less entrenched and incrementally more flexible and negotiable. The development of a minimally livable social space (MLSS) within and across political, economic, socio-cultural, and/or security-related domains (Chapter 2), addressing challenges of communication and relationship building across levels of social hierarchy—elite (Track 1), middle (Track 2), and grassroots (Track 3)—and leveraging pragmatic short-term steps to foster conditions for long-term systemic change are among the many options this volume has discussed to support exploratory negotiations useful for the functional coexistence approach. The case study chapters illustrate the application of these options in contexts such as bicommunal working groups and cross-border contacts in Cyprus, as well as cultural and religious rituals and community gatherings in post–Khmer Rouge Cambodia.

The Functional Coexistence Approach as a Sustained Effort to Integrate Process- and Outcome-Oriented Thinking, and Learning and Accountability

The functional coexistence approach to conflict engagement and peacebuilding likely involves a decades-long process of fostering conditions for systemic social change while facing many obstacles and setbacks. It requires process-oriented thinking first and foremost. However, it also accounts for project outcomes and impacts because each step toward creating such conditions must become an effective contribution to the broader vision of the functional coexistence approach.

Outcome is as much an empirical reality (reflected, for example, in a measurable reduction of destructive conflict behavior) as a reflection of our mindset—we provide program input, then we *expect* measurable output and outcome proportional to the input. Attention to outcomes is crucial for program accountability, both in short-term project contexts and long-term process contexts. However, it is impractical to expect immediate outcomes from any input, whether short-term or long-term, when the input is specifically directed at engaging strategically with a state of functional coexistence characterized by mutual denial and non-resolution lasting over decades. The task of evaluating such complex macro-causal relationships is conventionally left to historians. Practitioners and policymakers tend to focus on more immediate and practical tasks, including the urgent need to mitigate human suffering resulting from unresolved conflict.

Herein lies the dilemma—the need for accountability, focusing on tangible, measurable *outcomes* from program input, and the necessity of advancing a sustained *process* of the functional coexistence approach, which, like the more ambitious pursuit of positive peace, is unlikely to have a definitive end date.

Due to this latter requirement of process orientation, this volume placed considerable emphasis on the functional coexistence approach as a *process* of sustained learning. The accountability requirement within this process concerns the quality of learning more than immediate program outcomes. Such a sustained learning process must accommodate setbacks and even short-term project failures as long as quality learning and improvement mechanisms are in place.

Addressing this dilemma, this volume has essentially argued that within decades-long conflict engagement using the functional coexistence approach, we should prioritize progressive improvement in the quality of ongoing learning to enhance the process. However, we must also remain committed to the accountability requirement regarding achievable program outcomes, both from short-term projects and long-term engagements. On the other hand, we reject the counterproductive trends in funding, policymaking, and funded civil society projects that demand short-term returns from short-term project inputs. We adopt an integrative position, with a clear emphasis on enhancing the overall process. We support this integrative position because uncritical compliance with existing trends leaves little room for conflict actors and intervention practitioners to seek a balanced approach between long-term process-oriented learning and the accountability requirements of distinct short-term projects.

We hope our readers will join us in finding creative and effective ways to address the tensions between outcomes and processes, as well as between accountability and learning. Our aim is to make these seemingly contradictory needs more complementary and mutually supportive in both theory and practice. The example of over two decades of continuous funding provided by the California-based McConnell Foundation in Nepal, as presented in Chapter 12, is instructive for this purpose.

Looking Ahead: Challenges and Possibilities in the Journey toward the Functional Coexistence Approach

Looking ahead to the unfolding journey of functional coexistence in the coming years and decades, many questions arise about the steps we need to take next and the challenges that lie ahead. Below, we outline two immediate steps that need to be taken to enhance the visibility and impact of the functional coexistence approach through research and practice, along with one cautionary note regarding the longer-term future that requires further research and critical reflection.

Expanding the Scope of Functional Coexistence Research

As mentioned earlier, the collection of case studies included in this volume is limited in number and scope, despite our initial, more ambitious effort to cover a much broader range of cases from different regions of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Moreover, this volume, which primarily focuses on states, nations,

and large political groups, needs to be complemented by future works examining different levels of analysis, from interpersonal to organizational, communal, and global. Functional coexistence is as theoretically relevant to divorced couples and neighbors with transgenerational vendettas as it is to multinational groups of nations in global politics. An expanded scope of empirical research needs to match the intended breadth and versatility of functional coexistence.

Additionally, this volume has adopted a broad, multidisciplinary approach to analyzing each of the conflict-affected societies on which the case study chapters focused. Interwoven in these case studies are the psychosocial challenges of distrust and trust-building, untreated and evolving transgenerational traumas, cultural and educational practices that either sustain or resist functional coexistence, shifts and choices in political leadership, regimes, and economic systems, and the influence of international environments and institutions that either encourage or discourage systemic stability and predictability ensured by enduring functional coexistence. Each of these and other related themes should be examined closely with expert analysis specific to the respective thematic areas and disciplines.

Putting the Functional Coexistence Approach into Practice

The case studies presented in this volume analyze social and regional contexts where their authors found parallels between their empirical realities and the concept of functional coexistence, or where a purposeful application of the functional coexistence approach can possibly play a positive role in conflict intervention. In other words, the case study chapters used functional coexistence as their analytical framework, but not as an evaluative framework for actual decades-long interventions applying the functional coexistence approach.

We acknowledge that the ultimate test of a social theory lies in its application. Yet, we also recognize that application is a purposeful, laborious, and resource-intensive process that requires personal commitment and political capital. Our next and more ambitious step beyond the production of this volume is to put the functional coexistence approach, or at least selected elements thereof, into practice, monitor and evaluate its usefulness and efficacy over time, and ideally compile a collection of case studies on decades-long conflict engagement enacted in real-world contexts. We invite policymakers, funders, researchers, and civil society leaders to join us in this effort.

As we extend this invitation, we are reminded of its urgency, observing the global scale of large-scale conflicts unfolding as we write these pages. The profound intractability and far-reaching consequences of these conflicts lead us to infer that the decades-long processes of transition and recovery from them, once initiated, are more likely to follow the path of functional coexistence rather than conventional peace processes, conflict resolution, or reconciliation that depend on mutual recognition as a requirement.

Future Decades: Navigating Uncharted Terrain

The conceptual and methodological framework presented in this volume, along with the case studies based on it, reflect our understanding of conflict history and social change observed mostly in the twentieth century and the first quarter of the twenty-first. While distinctly modern in the broader sweep of history, the extended period on which the cases selected for this volume focus presumably represents continuity and coherence in terms of its political, economic, technological, ecological, and cultural undercurrents. Although none of the authors in this volume chose to discuss the implications of this shared assumption about the historical present, this tacit assumption has proven indispensable for the volume's coherence because, without it, we could not have compared these cases in the first place.

Another assumption, which is still to be fully developed but is no less important, is that functional coexistence emerges largely due to the deep-seated need and tendency of conflict-affected societies to maintain a semblance of stability for survival and continued existence. To uphold this semblance of stability, leaders and members of these societies often develop and follow a set of routines—political, economic, psychosocial, cultural, security-related, and otherwise—to safeguard the perceived gains from stability against destabilizing social forces. Conflict theorists refer to this phenomenon as conflict habituation (Bar-Tal 2013; Diamond 1997). Yuval Noah Harari, a leading macrohistorian writing about long-term trends and changes across the entirety of the 200-million-year human history, discusses an empirical study on human psychology regarding how people connect their experiences of painful illness to happiness. Citing this study, Harari (2015b) offers an evocative analogy helpful for us to think about the nature of conflict habituation:

> Illness decreases happiness in the short term, but is a source of long-term distress only if a person's condition is constantly deteriorating or if the disease involves ongoing and debilitating pain. People who are diagnosed with chronic illness such as diabetes are usually depressed for a while, but if the illness does not get worse they adjust to the new condition and rate their happiness as highly as healthy people do.
>
> (p. 381)

If unresolved conflict in society is likened to illness in the human body, the above quote offers a useful analogy for understanding why and how conflict habituation, with varying degrees of social illnesses and sufferings contained within it, helps sustain social and institutional routines that ensure decades-long endurance of functional coexistence. Once the dysfunctionality and pain of conflict non-resolution and mutual denial become constant and stable, society builds a new set of routines to accommodate and normalize this dysfunctionality and pain. Once these new routines are established and members of the society depend on their continuity to sustain their livelihoods under the

semblance of stability, they fear attempts to change these routines and resist them. Over time, their routines become a necessary evil with significant staying power.

The two observations mentioned above—the assumption of historical continuity over decades and conflict-affected societies' tendency for conflict habituation—will increasingly face challenges in the coming decades due to unprecedented and accelerating social changes across various domains of life and global affairs. To illustrate this potential for future social changes, consider a thought experiment. Imagine reflecting on each of the following years and attempting to recall or infer the significant political, economic, strategic, technological, ecological, and cultural trends influencing major conflicts and their resolution efforts during each period:

- 2025
- 2000
- 1975
- 1950
- 1925
- 1900

The intensive campaign of massacres of Armenians, considered in the case study of Armenia-Turkey relations, took place in 1915–1918. The war and mass displacement that set the stage for today's Israel-Palestine conflict, which in turn reflected the legacy of the Holocaust perpetrated during the Second World War, occurred in 1948, providing essential context for Arab-Jewish relations in Israel analyzed in this volume. Given the distinct historical and social contexts of these and other formative events setting the stage for the case studies presented in this volume, we are reminded that these contexts vary significantly.

Yet, putting aside the varied and specific answers that readers might contemplate for now, the primary focus of this thought experiment is to emphasize that the contexts surrounding each of these quarter-century marks listed above are qualitatively distinct. For instance, consider periods before or after the establishment of the United Nations, or before or after the global proliferation of mobile phones connected to the Internet. Throughout this volume, however, we have used the term "decades-long process" generally without distinguishing between these significantly different historical epochs and the varying social, national, and global contexts in which they unfolded.

Next, we invite readers to imagine what kind of political, economic, strategic, technological, ecological, and cultural trends are likely to prevail in each of the following future years, with implications for conflict formation and functional coexistence:

- 2050
- 2075
- 2100

There is no one capable of predicting precisely what will happen in any of these future years. This challenge arises not only from the inherent unpredictability of the future but also from our current understanding of emerging global trends, which suggest that the speed and magnitude of social changes across various domains of social life and global affairs will accelerate exponentially. Among these known trends are:

- Deepening global connectivity through cyberspace and the diffusion of affordable mobile and electronic devices (Schirch 2021; Seib 2012).
- Innovations in artificial intelligence leading us into uncharted territories of socio-economic restructuring, intelligence gathering, military technology, and human experience of perceived "reality" in general (Harari 2015a; Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher 2021).
- Revolutionary progress in life sciences, including the increased ability to modify DNA, cure and prevent previously incurable illnesses, and extend longevity, while increasing risks of compromised privacy on medical data (Harari 2015a; Isaacson 2021).
- Global warming and ecological changes with profound social consequences likely distributed unevenly between the rich and poor, between the Global North and South (Matthew et al. 2022; McDougal and Patterson 2021).
- Likely shifts in global energy supplies, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and increasing dependence on renewables (Gelles et al. 2003).
- Global demographic shifts, including declining and aging populations in advanced industrial societies, especially in the Asia-Pacific and Europe, and Africa's sustained, exponential demographic growth (Hirano 2022; Todd 2004).
- Future waves of global pandemics and cumulative experiences of global consequences and responses (Long 2011; Rubenstein and Simmons 2021).
- Resulting changes in the patterns of communication and relationship building in general, in both wartime and peacetime contexts.

This volume presented case studies and analyses based on our understanding of what a decades-long process can achieve within the context of our lived and remembered history from 1900 to 2025, in relation to the time frames used in the thought experiment. However, our future efforts in conflict intervention, policymaking, funding, and research must not rely entirely on this historical knowledge. Instead, our future efforts must respond to what a decades-long process of history-making and social change will actually entail amid the uncharted terrain of unfolding human experience.

In this context, a hypothesis worth considering is that the perception of the pace of social change, along with a perceived sense of time lapse, will increasingly accelerate. This is because we and our descendants will experience the existing modes of social life—technological, ecological, societal, and perhaps even mental—becoming outdated within increasingly smaller intervals. The tendencies inherent in conflict-habituated societies to resist change, discussed

earlier, will increasingly run counter to these trends of paradigmatic social changes in future years and decades. While we have emphasized the need to stay engaged in enduring conflicts over decades throughout this volume, we may soon be compelled to adjust our proposition to: stay vigilant and committed to continuous adaptations required by the coming waves of global paradigmatic shifts (Arai 2022, 144–145). The consequences of these shifts for entrenched states of conflict non-resolution, mutual non-recognition, and existential tension under the present circumstances are unknown and perhaps unknowable, but they are vital for the future of the functional coexistence approach and for peace and security in general.

The implications of these global historical shifts for the field of peace and conflict studies are profound and far-reaching. They will influence how we conceptualize the content, priorities, and methods of peace and conflict research, conflict intervention training, conflict resolution dialogues and problem-solving workshops, curriculum development in peace and conflict studies, diplomacy, policymaking, and funding strategies—and how we continuously update them.

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